



Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.  
271 Porter Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14201  
(716) 881-5400  
www.btfny.org

President, PHILIP RUMORE

October 28, 2022

Dear Colleague:

Early voting will be held from **October 29 through November 6, 2022**. For a list of early voting polling sites [Click Here](#).

The General Election will occur on **Tuesday, November 8th**.

While we know most teachers take the time to vote, if every teacher voted, we would make the difference in many elections. The BTF is already viewed as a political force as most of the candidates we support are successful. However, if every teacher who received our letter voted in support of our candidates, we would become the major force locally – especially in area elections.

The Political Action Committee interviewed candidates who requested BTF endorsement and recommended candidates to the Executive Committee and the Council of Delegates who voted on their endorsements. In the Judicial Races, the committee relies on the ratings provided by the Erie County, the Minority and Women's Bar Associations.

All of our endorsed candidates are also endorsed by NYSUT.

The Council of Delegates has voted to endorse the following:

### **CHUCK SCHUMER – UNITED STATES SENATOR (Incumbent)**

Senator Chuck Schumer served as a New York State Senator from 1993 - 1999. In 2000 he began serving his first term as a United States Senator. In January 2021 he was elected the Senate Majority Leader. Using his leadership position in the US Senate, Senator Schumer has advocated for many issues that are important to our community and country.

The “For The People Act” is a comprehensive bill that Senator Schumer supports. The bill addresses voter access, election integrity and security, campaign finance and ethics for the three branches of government. The bill expands voter registration and voter access. It also limits removing voters from voter rolls. The bill passed the House of Representatives in March 2021 but has not passed in the Senate.

Recently, Senator Schumer advocated for Micron, one of the world's largest microchip manufacturers that will open a semiconductor plant in New York, promising an investment of up to \$100 billion dollars and bringing approximately 50,000 jobs to the state.

### **UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN BRIAN HIGGINS – NY DISTRICT 26 (Incumbent)**

Congressman Brian Higgins was elected to the United States Congress in January 2005. A product of Buffalo Public Schools, Congressman Higgins attended BPS #27 and #93 and South Park High School. He stated that as a BPS student, he received a secondary education while interacting with people of diverse ethnicities and cultures. His respect for teachers and the teaching profession was made abundantly clear during the interview. He has diligently worked to secure additional funding for BPS as he believes that there is no better investment than investing in public schools. If re-elected, Congressman Higgins stated that he will use his position to help improve BPS by providing more resources from the federal and state governments. He stated, “There should be resources targeted to helping kids become healthier, happier and better learners and this will help them to become independent.”

Congressman Higgins advocates for common sense approaches to stop the murdering of our children in our schools and community. He advocates for comprehensive background checks, raising the age to purchase weapons and a comprehensive ban on assault weapons. He supports earmarking federal funding for additional guidance counselors, social workers, attendance teachers and resource officers. He is currently supporting a bill in Congress that would appropriate approximately \$250 million for community violence prevention that would carry over into the schools. He said that arming teachers was “insane”, and that they have enough to do in the classroom.

When asked about the recent Supreme Court decision regarding Roe -vs- Wade, Congressman Higgins was adamant that he believed the decision was wrong and was very vocal about the current US Supreme Court. He believes that public opinion of the Supreme Court has never been lower.

Congressman Higgins stated that charter schools are funded by New York State, since states issue the charters, it is not necessarily a federal issue. However, if Buffalo Public Schools were adequately funded and supported, the appeal of charter schools would be greatly diminished.

### **SENATOR SEAN RYAN – NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT 61 (Incumbent)**

Senator Sean Ryan is the son of a Buffalo firefighter and a public school teacher. His strong union background is reflected in his commitment to labor and the working middle class. His position on the necessity to fund public schools was articulated during our PAC interview. Stating that since a majority of Buffalo Public School students live in poverty, there needs to be adequate funding for programming, security and additional resources. As a member of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Ryan has been a supporter of implementing the Foundation Aid Formula to increase funding that will impact the financial resources available to BPS. Senator Ryan supports providing our students with wrap around services such as guidance counselors, psychologists, attendance teachers and social workers.

Supported by many labor unions such as NYSUT, NYS AFL-CIO, CSEA and 1199 SEIU, Senator Ryan is a firm supporter of the Triborough provisions of the Taylor Law, which mandates continuation of teacher contracts that have expired until a new one is negotiated. He is also willing to submit legislation establishing a separate funding stream for charter schools and stated that charter school teachers should have at least the same credentials as Buffalo Public School teachers. Senator Ryan would eliminate the Receivership Bill and is opposed to Teacher Evaluation (APPR) as it relates to student test scores.

### **WILLIAM CONRAD - NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER 140th DISTRICT (Incumbent)**

Assembly Member William Conrad taught Social Studies in the Ken-Ton School District for twenty-two years. As a teacher, he served as a union building representative and on the Kenmore Teachers Association's Executive Board. As a NYSUT member, Assembly Member Conrad attended the NYSUT Leadership training, participated in the APPR Task Force and the NYSUT Endorsement Committees.

During his first two-year term in the Assembly, Assembly Member Conrad served on the Education, Local Governments, and Science & Technology committees. As an Assembly Member, Assembly Member Conrad supported and voted to increase school aid, fully restore Foundation Aid funding, suspend APPR during the COVID Pandemic and eliminate the burdensome edTPA requirements for new teachers. He supports limiting the ratio of support personnel in our schools to 250:1 and is advocating for charter schools to have their own separate funding stream.

### **PATRICK BURKE – NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER 142nd DISTRICT (Incumbent)**

Assembly Member Patrick Burke is seeking a third term as a NYS Assembly Member. Prior to serving in the Assembly, Assembly Member Burke served as an Erie County Legislator. His background as a strong labor supporter has enabled him to sponsor bills in both the Assembly and the Legislature that promote public education. Assembly Member Burke has used some of his discretionary funding to improve school safety. He stated he is a strong advocate for public schools and opposes charter schools. He has seen firsthand how the charter schools have impacted the public schools. He does not want to fund charter schools; however, if they are funded, he is supportive of funding them through their own funding source.

In order to curb violence in our schools, Assembly Member Burke suggests getting to the root of the problem, having a stronger security presence and more disciplinary measures. He is supportive of limiting the caseload of counselors, social workers etc. to a ratio of 250:1 to provide intervention measures to our students.

### **MONICA WALLACE – NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER 143rd DISTRICT (Incumbent)**

Assembly Member Monica Wallace ran and was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2016 in order to be an effective and competent leader for her community. As a lawyer, Assembly Member Wallace taught at the University at Buffalo Law School prior to seeking office. She has two children who attend SUNY schools and is a staunch supporter of public education. She credits public education for preparing her to be a strong and credible voice in the Assembly.

Assembly Member Monica Wallace stated that fully funding our public schools is essential in order to provide the necessary support and materials that our students need. Treating teachers as professionals will enable them to be successful with their students. She also is not in favor of the current mechanism for funding charter schools. Assembly Member Wallace stated that there is a limited amount of dollars to fund schools and by adding additional charters, it means less money for the public schools. If re-elected this year, she will also represent the neighborhoods of Lovejoy and Broadway-Fillmore in East Buffalo.

### **KAREN McMAHON – NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER 146th DISTRICT (Incumbent)**

As a two-term incumbent, Assembly Member Karen McMahon stated that her prior experience as a practicing lawyer assisted her in her new role as an Assembly member. Assembly Member McMahon realizes that there are many issues and projects that she has been working on that are still unresolved; therefore, she is seeking a third term. As a strong supporter of public education, she serves on a committee with her husband, a special education lawyer, to ensure that everyone receives an appropriate public education.

When asked about the high caseload for our counselors, social workers, psychologists, and attendance teachers of sometimes 800:1, Assembly Member McMahon stated that she will investigate the issue with her legislative aide to provide targeted funding to lower the ratio. She questioned how any professional could adequately address the needs of eight hundred students. Assembly Member McMahon also expressed the need for a separate funding stream for charter schools and that teachers in charter schools should be required to have the same credentials as Buffalo Public School teachers.

During the interview with the BTF Political Action Committee, Assembly Member McMahon frequently wrote down questions and concerns that were brought up during our conversation to do further research on and possibly submit legislation to the NYS Assembly for action.

### **JON RIVERA – NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER 149th DISTRICT (Incumbent)**

As a two-year incumbent, Assembly Member Jon Rivera stated he has so much more to learn and accomplish as a freshman Assembly Member. Using his previous employment in banking and budgeting for the Erie County Legislature, Assembly Member Jon Rivera worked to fully fund the Foundation Aid Formula, which is the primary formula that funds our schools, and to increase funding for SUNY and CUNY.

Engaging parents in their children's education is one way Assembly Member Rivera said would help curtail occurrences of violence in our schools. He is supportive of requiring districts to provide school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and attendance teachers at a ratio of 250:1. Stating that funding for charter schools should not reduce the money allocated for public schools, Assembly Member Rivera said the funding stream needs to change.

### **ERIE COUNTY CLERK**

The Council of Delegates voted not to recommend an endorsement in this race.

### **BUFFALO BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Political Action Committee interviewed candidates for the Buffalo Board of Education. The candidates for each of the six districts will be on the ballot for Buffalo residents. However, the PAC, Executive Committee and the Council of Delegates voted not to endorse any Board of Education candidate for this election cycle due to our lack of a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. If an agreement is reached prior to Election Day, we may vote to endorse.

In the **JUDICIAL RACES**, the Political Action Committee relies on the ratings provided by Erie County, the Minority and Women's Bar Associations. We are in the process of acquiring Judicial ratings for each Association and will make recommendations upon receipt.

As you go to the polls, please vote for our endorsed candidates. Their positions and records indicate a pro-teacher advocacy. Every vote counts. Your support and that of your family and friends is critical. You can make the difference on whether pro or anti-education candidates get elected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Philip Rumore'.

Philip Rumore  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Becky'.

Rebecca Pordum, Chairperson  
Political Action Committee