



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

President, PHILIP RUMORE

June 21, 2021

Dear Colleague:

**There are several important Primary races to be decided on
Primary Day Tuesday, June 22, 2021.**

As is our policy, the Political Action Committee interviewed those candidates virtually who requested BTF support and made recommendations to the Executive Committee and then to the Council of Delegates for their endorsement. No comparison of these candidates and their general election opponents was done. The Political Action Committee will conduct interviews for the general election candidates in the fall.

The Council of Delegates has voted to endorse the following primary candidates:

INDIA WALTON - MAYOR OF BUFFALO

In the Democratic and Working Families Primary, two candidates running for the Mayor of the City of Buffalo, the incumbent Mayor Byron Brown and **India Walton** asked for our endorsement. The PAC interviewed them both virtually. After an extensive discussion, the PAC voted to recommend that **India Walton** receive the BTF endorsement. The continued lack of an increase in funding for the Buffalo Public Schools was a major reason why the incumbent did not receive our endorsement.

During the interview, **India Walton**, a former BPS school nurse and BPS parent stated that she will introduce legislation to allocate a fixed percentage of the city's budget to the Board of Education, noting that the City has not increased its funding for many years. As a supporter of neighborhood public schools, **India** would propose a moratorium on new charter schools. She also stated that if a child returns to BPS from a Charter school, the allocated money for that child should be returned to BPS.

If elected as Mayor, **India** would also concentrate her efforts on the lack of safe, affordable and lead free housing and the need to provide adequate meals for all city residents. She would use the pandemic relief money so earmarked to assist those who were harmed the most during the past year.

ERIE COUNTY SHERIFF

The PAC interviewed two candidates for Erie County Sheriff who requested our endorsement. Both Kimberly Beaty and Brian Gould were interviewed virtually and also completed an informational questionnaire. After a lengthy discussion, the PAC, the Executive Committee and the Council of Delegates determined not to endorse a candidate for the primary and instead leave the decision up to you.

KEVIN HARDWICK – ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

As a professor of good government at Canisius College for the past thirty-two years, **Kevin Hardwick** stated that he is seeking the position of Erie County Comptroller to restore integrity to the office. His goal is to restore respect to the office and the civil servants who work there.

As a current county legislator, **Kevin** will use his positive relationships with Erie County elected and nonelected officials to benefit the residents of Erie County by having a collaborative working relationship with all the stakeholders.

Kevin Hardwick stated that he believes in educational affordability and accessibility. As a county legislator, he made Erie Community College a high priority and has spent the last six years focused on improving the infrastructure on the three campuses. He will continue to focus on ECC initiatives that will benefit our Buffalo Public Schools students. Kevin's wife and daughter are currently Buffalo Teachers.

HOWARD JOHNSON – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATOR DISTRICT 1

As a two-year incumbent, **Howard Johnson** is a strong supporter of public education and looks forward to becoming more involved in the Buffalo Public Schools. He would work with the BTF to make a motion to share additional 1% sales tax revenue that Erie County receives with the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Public Schools. He also stated that more support is needed for educating our students in the skilled trades. **Howard Johnson** believes that skilled trades provide an opportunity for many students to create and own small businesses.

Howard Johnson also supports a five-year infrastructure plan for improvements and upgrades to Erie Community College. He stated that Erie Community College is underfunded. In order to provide equality throughout the county, broadband access must be improved. Also, an increase in funding for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System is necessary to provide services to all our residents.

JACQUALINE BERGER - AMHERST TOWN BOARD

Jacqueline Berger is the current deputy supervisor of the Town of Amherst. As a strong labor supporter, **Jacqui** has negotiated several labor contracts with the different labor unions in town. She is currently sponsoring a program for pre-apprentice painters and roofers. She stated that she works at giving labor a voice in town government.

As a former early education special education teacher, **Jacqui** went on to teach education disabilities and human services at SUNY Empire State College for the past twenty years. Education is her top priority and she will continue to speak in favor of fully funding education.

As an active NYSUT member, she is involved with NYSUT PAC and serves on the NYSUT Civil Rights Committee. **Jacqui** has joined BTF at many of our rallies and worked to support the BTF endorsed candidates for the Buffalo Board of Education in 2019.

Judicial Races

As per our past policy, the BTF PAC does not interview judicial candidates. They rely on the Bar Association ratings in determining endorsements. The following candidates received BTF's endorsement.

Grace Hanlon- New York State Supreme Court

- Bar Association of Erie County-Well Qualified
- Women's Bar Association-Highly Qualified

Honorable Judge Philip Dabney – Buffalo City Court Judge

- Bar Association of Erie County-Qualified
- Minority Bar Association of WNY- Superior
- Women's Bar Association-Highly Qualified

Rebecca L. Town – Buffalo City Court Judge

- Bar Association of Erie County-Qualified
- Minority Bar Association of WNY-Well Qualified
- Women's Bar Association-Highly Qualified

Please remember to vote!!

Sincerely,



Philip Rumore,
President



Rebecca Pordum, Chairperson
Political Action Committee