



Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.
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President, PHILIP RUMORE

October 22, 2021

Dear Colleague,

Again this year there are more opportunities for you to be able to cast your vote in the 2021 General Election. Early voting will take place from Saturday, October 23rd through Sunday, October 31st.

There will be a total of thirty-seven (37) poll sites in Erie County for early voting (a list of poll sites for early voting may be found on the BTF website – www.btfny.org under “News & Alerts”). You may vote at any poll site during the early voting window. However, on the **General Election Day, November 2nd**, you must go to your usual assigned poll site to vote. For further information, visit the Erie County Board of Elections at <https://www.elections.erie.gov>

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 Erie County, the Minority and Women’s Bar Associations.

Due to the fact that the Erie County Legislature appropriates funds for SUNY Erie, we also indicate the endorsements of the Faculty Federation of Erie Community College (FFECC).

In the Town races, we spoke with the local teacher union presidents prior to our endorsements to ensure that the candidates are supportive of public education and our issues.

The Council of Delegates has voted to endorse the following:

Mayor – City of Buffalo

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

KIMBERLY BEATY – ERIE COUNTY SHERIFF

With over thirty-five years of law enforcement experience, **Kim Beaty** is highly qualified to be the next Erie County Sheriff. Her vast experience includes serving as a 911 dispatcher, community police officer, recruiting officer, a master police instructor training Buffalo Police officers in mental health issues and chief of E District. As a Buffalo Police officer, she moved through the ranks and was appointed as Deputy Police Commissioner of Operations & Homeland Security. **Kim** is currently the Director of Public Safety at Canisius College.

One of **Kim Beaty's** major goals is to improve the Sheriff's Office by changing the culture. As a speaker at several conferences on law enforcement and diversity-related issues and community policing, she will work to ensure that all county residents are treated with respect and dignity. **Kim** will use her skills as a training officer for the Buffalo Police Training Academy to provide on-going training for all of her staff.

Erie County Sheriff deputies staff both the Erie County Holding Center and the Erie County Correctional facility. **Kim** stated that there needs to be more deputies assigned to both facilities in order to keep a continuous watch on some of the incarcerated men and women. Mental health and crisis service training for officers should improve the conditions at both facilities.

Kim sought our endorsement for the General Election. Her opponents did not.

KEVIN HARDWICK – ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER *(Also Endorsed by FFECC)*

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.

Kevin, as a current county legislator, will use his positive relationships with Erie County elected and non-elected officials to benefit the residents of Erie County by having a collaborative working relationship with all 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 such as ensuring funding for a wide range of available courses. **Kevin's** wife and daughter are currently Buffalo teachers.

HOWARD JOHNSON – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 1

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

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 the 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 equity 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.

APRIL BASKIN – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 2

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

As a four-year incumbent, **April Baskin** has served the past two years as Chair of the Erie County Legislature. During her tenure, **April** has been a proponent of providing quality youth services and is a financial supporter of our Say Yes Summer Youth programs. As a strong supporter of our Buffalo Public School students, **April** also advocated against our students being denied the ability to participate in Section VI athletic programs and assisted in negotiating a new contract with the NFTA for student bus passes.

As chair of the Legislature, she worked to ensure that all the COVID funding was spent equitably across the entire county. **April** is willing to explore the possibility of sharing the additional 1% in sales tax revenue with the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Public Schools.

LISA CHIMERA – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 3

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

Lisa Chimera recently retired as a Kenmore-Tonawanda special education teacher. As a NYSUT member and voting delegate at state conventions, **Lisa** understands the importance of organized labor and supports working men and women.

As a two-year incumbent and Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, **Lisa Chimera** is actively involved with providing services for children of poverty. She is currently on the childcare task force and helped to organize virtual learning centers during the pandemic. As a former teacher, she understands the importance of increasing student literacy and has donated books to children as well as being very supportive of our public libraries. **Lisa** stated that she is willing to introduce a motion to share the additional 1% sales tax revenue with the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Public Schools.

JOHN BARGNESI, JR. – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 4

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

John Bargnesi has been a councilman and deputy supervisor of the Town of Tonawanda for the past sixteen years. Given his experience as an elected official, John is seeking the open position of Erie County Legislature District 4 and wants to bring harmony to the Legislature in order to promote programs and initiatives that will benefit county residents. **John** has run his own company for thirty-five years and stressed his strength in economic development.

John stated that education is his highest priority. Both of his parents are retired teachers/administrators of the Buffalo Public Schools and his wife currently is a BTF member working as an art teacher for the past twenty-five years. His daughter is also a teacher and a NYSUT member.

John discussed the need for the Buffalo Public Schools to have additional funding and would champion the cause to share the additional 1% sales tax with the BPS.

TIMOTHY MEYERS – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 7

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

As a lifelong union member, **Tim Meyers** was a teamster member working at the Niagara Falls Airport for thirty-two years. Before beginning his tenure in the Erie County Legislature, **Tim** served as a Cheektowaga Councilman. He is currently the Majority Leader in the Legislature and advocates for increased transparency in government.

Tim stated that education is at the top of his list of priorities. He is promoting youth recreation programs that provide opportunities for youth to gain important life skills. He was active during the pandemic distributing PPE at Southside Elementary School. He stated that he is willing to introduce a motion to share the additional 1% sales tax revenue with the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Public Schools. When asked about our community colleges, **Tim** supports a five - year infrastructure plan to improve the campuses.

JOHN GILMOUR, ESQ – ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE DISTRICT # 9

(Also Endorsed by FFECC)

John Gilmour, Esq is a two-year incumbent seeking re-election. **John's** wife is a teacher and a NYSUT member. Education is a high priority for him and he will introduce a motion in the Legislature to share the additional 1% in sales tax revenue with the Buffalo Public Schools.

As an attorney in private practice, **John** represents unions and union members and strongly supports the rights of workers. He will work on improving internet service, making it a utility, and wants to be a watchdog to make sure county money is spent appropriately, especially after the pandemic.

BRIAN KULPA – TOWN OF AMHERST SUPERVISOR

Brian Kulpa is currently serving his first four-year term as the Town of Amherst Supervisor. Prior to being supervisor, he served as both Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Williamsville. Using his Master's Degree in Urban Planning and Architecture, he has been working to increase the property value in Amherst, repurpose the Boulevard Mall, and make Niagara Falls Blvd. safer for all motorists and pedestrians.

Brian currently teaches at the University of Buffalo. He stated that he has a great relationship with the school superintendents and meets with them regularly. He believes that a high quality of life is achieved by being exposed to a quality education including a student's ability to attend after school programming. He affirmed that education involves the entire community and doesn't stop at the end of the school day. He is the son of a retired Buffalo Teacher.

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.

RICHARD D'AGOSTINO – GRAND ISLAND COUNCILMEMBER

Richard D'Agostino has been a BTF member for eleven years and is currently a CSE chair at School #197. As a former Grand Island School Board member, **Rich** states that public education is a stepping-stone for students. **Rich** believes that public tax dollars should be used only for public schools.

Rich promises to promote a transparent, efficient government if elected as a council member. He will increase public input into development on Grand Island and will also increase the amount of green space.

JILL O'MALLEY – TOWN OF TONAWANDA COUNCILMEMBER

Jill O'Malley was appointed to the Town of Tonawanda Board when Assembly member Bill Conrad took office in the NYS Assembly on January 4, 2021. Her experience as the President and two-term Ken-Ton School Board member and active community member allowed her to transition into an active councilmember. **Jill** is a biology professor at the City Campus of Erie Community College and is on the Executive Committee and PAC of the FFECC.

As a school board member, **Jill O'Malley** was an advocate for those students in her district that needed assistance. She opened a clothing closet, handed out free books with the assistance of the Teachers Desk and started a pop up food pantry during the pandemic. A few of her goals if elected are to build strong communities within the schools, improve green technology, advocate for renewable energy and work to engage students through the arts.

(See Next Pg. for Judicial Ratings)

In the ***Judicial Races***, the Political Action Committee relies on the ratings provided by Erie County, the Minority and Women’s Bar Associations.

The following have received the Council of Delegates endorsement:

NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT CANDIDATES

Four (4) Seats Available

| Candidate | Association Rated By | Ranking |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <u>Grace M. Hanlon, Esq.</u> | Women’s Bar Association of the State of NY | Highly Qualified |
| | Bar Association of Erie County | Well Qualified |
| <u>John B. Licata, Esq.</u> | Women’s Bar Association of the State of NY | Qualified |
| | Bar Association of Erie County | Well Qualified |
| | Minority Bar Association of WNY | Well Qualified |

BUFFALO CITY COURT CANDIDATES

Four (4) Seats Available

| Candidate | Association Rated By | Ranking |
|--|--|------------------|
| <u>Hon. Phillip Dabney, Jr.</u> | Women’s Bar Association of the State of NY | Highly Qualified |
| | Bar Association of Erie County | Qualified |
| | Minority Bar Association of WNY | Superior |
| <u>Carrie Phillips</u> | Women’s Bar Association of the State of NY | Highly Qualified |
| | Bar Association of Erie County | Well Qualified |
| | Minority Bar Association of WNY | Well Qualified |
| <u>Rebecca L. Town</u> | Women’s Bar Association of the State of NY | Highly Qualified |
| | Bar Association of Erie County | Qualified |
| | Minority Bar Association of WNY | Well Qualified |

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.

As you know, the BTF does not interview or endorse candidates who do not seek our endorsement in writing.

Sincerely,

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

Philip Rumore
President

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

Rebecca Pordum, Chrsn.
Political Action Committee