



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS, LOCAL COALITION CALL ON ALBANY TO TIE MANDATE REFORM TO PROPERTY TAX CAP

Representatives from the Monroe County Council of Governments push Governor, Legislature to include real mandate relief in reform agenda for 2011

Standing in partnership with a coalition of local leaders representing Monroe County's towns, villages, and school districts, Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks** today urged Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to include meaningful mandate reform, in addition to a State-wide property tax cap, in proposed legislation for 2011.

*"With property taxes in New York State nearly 80% above the National average, a Tax Cap is a solid first step towards protecting already overburdened taxpayers, but must come with corresponding mandate reform in order to be an effective solution. That's why I am proud to stand in partnership with leaders from across our community today in calling on Albany to including real mandate relief in Governor Cuomo's reform agenda for 2011," said **Brooks**. "There is no question that mandates play a lead role in this State's property tax crisis, and implementing a cap without corresponding mandate relief would effectively limit the result without addressing the cause. We stand ready to work collaboratively with the State to tie mandate reform to any proposed Tax Cap legislation, to ultimately achieve property tax relief while also maintaining quality of life services residents expect and deserve."*

The coalition, which arose out of a common goal to protect taxpayers expressed during regular meetings of the Monroe County Council of Governments (COG), includes: Webster Town Supervisor and COG President **Ronald Nesbitt**, representing Monroe County's 19 town governments; Honeoye Falls Mayor and member of the New York Conference of Mayors' (NYCOM) Task Force on Mandate Relief **Richard Milne**, representing Monroe County's 10 village governments; and Monroe County School Boards Association Executive Director **Jody Siegle**, representing the 21 local school districts that serve Monroe County students.

*"True mandate relief is of the utmost importance to the success of state-wide Property Tax Cap legislation, and must be accomplished prior to, or in conjunction with, the implementation of a Cap in order to best protect taxpayers," said **Nesbitt**. "The COG, and the members of this coalition, are ready and willing to work with Governor Cuomo and the Legislature on advancing a reform driven agenda that calls for Tax Cap, but we strongly believe that significant Mandate Relief must be included to achieve meaningful results for local governments."*

“Working together as a non-partisan group, we stand ready to work with Governor Cuomo to support the proposed property tax cap, but must have meaningful mandate relief at the same time,” said **Milne**. *“Over many years, the state has collectively created this serious situation, and it has been created across party lines. This situation must be remedied the same way. We must work together for the betterment of those we represent, and we are willing to do so. I have met with Mayors from across New York State, and all that I’ve spoken with support the property tax cap – but only with meaningful mandate relief. We ask Governor Cuomo and our leaders in Albany to include the necessary mandate relief now.”*

“Mandate relief must accompany any tax cap if we are to find solutions to New York’s fiscal problems,” said **Siegle**. *“Decisions made in Albany drive up the costs of public education every year. School districts have a natural tax cap in that communities vote on their school budgets, and for the last three years the school property tax levy in Monroe County has averaged 1.7%, a number below the proposed cap. Yet rising costs continue to strain the ability of local taxpayers to support our schools and only mandate relief will ease that pressure.”*

Mandated spending, which represents a staggering 82% of Monroe County’s total expenditures for the coming year, increased by \$24,567,186, or 3.7% for 2011. The magnitude and growth of mandated spending in the County budget reinforces a report by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), that nine mandated programs – probation, early intervention, pre-school, indigent defense, youth detention, welfare, child welfare, pensions, and Medicaid – compose 90% of the property tax levy State-wide.

The Monroe County Council of Governments was established in 2000 to facilitate greater communication and collaboration between Monroe County and its constituent towns, villages, and city. In 2009 **Brooks** introduced, and helped bring to passage, legislation that added local school district representation to the existing COG.

Brooks has served as President of the New York State Association of County Executives, an affiliate of NYSAC, and President of the County Executives’ of America (CEA) since January 1, 2011. Additionally, **Brooks** is a sitting member on Governor Cuomo’s Mandate Reform and Redesign Team.

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