



**KEVIN A. ROBERTS**  
**MINORITY LEADER**  
**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**MINORITY LEADER ADDRESS**

**APRIL 16, 2024**

**Kevin Roberts**  
**Ulster County Legislator- District 12**  
**Minority Leader of the Republican Caucus**

Chair Criswell, Leader Uchitelle, Deputy Leaders Levine and Lopez, Legislators, and guests.

Mr. Chairman congratulations on your appointment as Chairman of this body. I look forward to working with you. Thank you for entrusting three Republicans to serve as Committee Chairs.

It is an honor to be standing here as the Minority Leader addressing this body. I would not be here if not for the support of my caucus. We have three new members this year, all with a tremendous amount of experience.

Jason Kovacs, a municipal lawyer who is the perfect choice to lead the Laws, Rules and Government Services Committee.

Eric Kitchen, an 18-year member of the Town of Ulster Town Board and currently a code enforcement agent for the city of Kingston.

Rich Walls, a retired Goshen Police Officer, he has worked for the County Attorney's Office and is a Saugerties Police officer. Rich has already met with DA Nneji about creating a much-needed Public Integrity Task Force.

Our returning members:

Tommy Corcoran is a high school football coach and a Marlboro Code Enforcement Agent. As Chair of the ARPA Committee, Tommy brings a wealth of knowledge in maneuvering through complex federal guidelines.

Herb Litts is a former Lloyd Councilman and a Planning Board member. Herb brings a lifetime of construction and farming experience to this body.

Gina Hansut is the Chair of the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee. Community Service is in her DNA. Gina does her research and always makes educated decisions.

Craig Lopez is an amazing Legislator. He quietly gets the job done. Craig is currently doing research on a couple of Public Health Resolutions. I look forward to seeing them implemented.

Together with Minority Attorney Pascale, we are the Republican Caucus. Over the years we have proven to be responsible partners in providing the best services for our constituents. We will work with our Democrat colleagues and County Executive Metzger whenever possible.

Together we pass 90% of the resolutions put forward each month to ensure the day-to-day operations of this government run smoothly. We must now work together to solve the big issues that confront us.

For years, we have debated our Solid Waste Management System. We can all agree that trucking our waste 570 miles round trip is not sustainable.

A solution must not be limited to, or focus on, dinosaurs from the past. Not one town is stepping up to say, "Put that landfill here". We have for too long neglected to consult town leaders on any landfill discussion.

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A solution should come from this body, not the Resource Recovery Agency. How can Legislators have an open dialogue with an Ulster County created agency, when RRA management has filed a lawsuit against a sitting Legislator in an attempt to silence him.

The RRA Contract with the County expires in March 2025. This body should explore all options before renewing that contract.

I have met with Legislator Stewart, Leader Uchitelle, the County Executive's office to discuss a rent stabilization fund for renters and homeowners in crisis.

Can we find a solution to help families in a temporary crisis, such as taking care of a sick child or the loss of a job?

We have diverted \$18 million for future decarbonization programs, \$18 million for the Government Operation Center, \$15 million for housing developers and \$6 million for a tax stabilization fund. A total of \$57 million. Several Million of that money should be diverted to help families in crisis from losing their homes.

A long-awaited County funded report on EMS Services was released last month. The report should be a starting point to give the towns guidance and support to solve this problem. The Republican Caucus is here to help.

A mental health crisis center for children will pass tonight. Once again, the Southern part of the County has been neglected. This policy of centralizing services in Kingston is not only shortsighted but dangerous. A recent study by the Sheriff's Department shows that more intentional non-fatal overdoses happened in Southern and Central Ulster County than the other 3 regions combined.

Over the last decade or so, property taxes have been flat. 12 years without a property tax increase. We should all be proud. Now, is the time for us to consider major initiatives to lower taxes. With over \$100 million in the bank, we should strongly consider where that money came from. Over taxing the hard-working residents of this great county

Thank you all