



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislative Chairman's Statement on \$15 Living Wage Standard

(Kingston, NY) When I submitted a draft County policy to require the payment of a living wage to Ulster County employees, I anticipated this would be a strong Democratic initiative. After all, this is an initiative that has been trumpeted by Ulster County Executive Michael Hein, Governor Andrew Cuomo as well as Vice President Joseph Biden. Regrettably, my attempt to make Ulster County a champion of living wage legislation failed in the Ways and Means Committee.

I am not alone in my desire to see workers compensated at levels that would ensure food on the table and a roof over their heads. I would like to thank my fellow Democratic Legislators, Dave Donaldson, Chris Allen, Thomas "TJ" Briggs, Jeanette Provenzano, and Rich Parete for stepping up and signing on to my Petition to Discharge to bring the legislation to the floor of the Legislature. Legislator Gregorius acknowledged the importance of bringing this measure forward and added his support to those who signed.

I even received unexpected support from some members of the Republican Caucus who saw the value in having a robust discussion on the floor of the Legislature. It is through such debate and discussion that policies that are right for Ulster County, and more importantly, for the hard working men and women who call Ulster County home are created. They agreed, however, that this is a Democratic initiative and that a Petition to Discharge should be executed by the Democratic Caucus.

Despite the backing of Legislators Donaldson, Allen, Briggs, Provenzano and Parete, I was unable to successfully execute my Petition to Discharge. I was just two signatures short.

A significant opportunity to raise the bar and make Ulster County a model for the rest of New York State has been lost. I find it truly revealing of those Democratic Legislators that chose not to sign the Petition to Discharge.

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