



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION

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Ulster County Legislature Holds 2025 Organizational Meeting, Re-Elects Peter Criswell to Serve as Chair, Adopts Committee Structure

(Kingston, New York) – The Ulster County Legislature voted on party lines to re-elect Legislator Peter Criswell (District 7, City of Kingston) to serve as Chair of the Legislature during the 2025 Organizational Meeting this evening and announced a restructuring of the Legislature’s committee system to align with recent departmental changes and better address the evolving needs of the community.

"I'm honored that my colleagues continue to place their trust in me to lead the Legislature. Serving as Chair is both a profound honor and a significant responsibility. I remain deeply committed to fostering respectful dialogue, thoughtful decision-making, and collaborative leadership. Together, we will tackle critical challenges such as housing, access to mental health and addiction services, enhancing emergency response, and developing our workforce. I look forward to building on the partnerships we've cultivated to uphold the exceptional standard of service our constituents expect from Ulster County," **said Chair Peter Criswell.**

In addition to re-electing Chair Criswell, the Democratic Caucus selected Abe Uchitelle (District 5 – City of Kingston) to continue to serve as Majority Leader and the Republican Caucus chose Kevin Roberts (District 12 – Town of Plattekill) to serve again as Minority Leader.

"I am grateful to my Democratic colleagues for placing their trust in me to lead our Caucus. Together we will continue the work of improving access to housing, upgrading our public transportation system, improving healthcare services, enhancing our emergency services, and other critical issues affecting the lives of Ulster County residents. I look forward to a productive relationship with Chair Criswell and Minority Leader Roberts," **said Majority Leader Abe Uchitelle.**

"We in the Minority Caucus are steadfast in our advocacy to provide real tax relief for overburdened families, ensuring an equitable distribution of resources throughout Ulster County, and keeping our communities safe places to live and work. It is an honor to be entrusted to speak

for the Republican Caucus again this year and make certain our constituents have a strong voice in Ulster County government. I remain optimistic that the Democrat members of the Legislature are open to Minority perspectives and willing to work together in common cause," **said Minority Leader Kevin Roberts.**

As part of a maneuvering of County departments and the growing need for affordable housing and adequate public transportation options, the Legislature has found it necessary to be flexible in its committee structure and has accordingly modified several standing committees to better suit the needs of Ulster County.

"In December, the Legislature adopted a series of Local Laws that restructured several County departments, and these changes require corresponding updates to our committee structure," **said Chair Criswell.** "By realigning committee jurisdictions, we're ensuring that legislative oversight is more effective and responsive to the priorities of Ulster County, including housing, transportation, and other critical community needs."

These changes include:

- Foremost in the restructuring is the creation of the Housing and Transportation Committee, which consolidates oversight of housing issues currently spread across multiple committees and outward-facing transportation services such as Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT).
- Situating the newly formed Department of General Services under the oversight of the Ways & Means Committee.
- Moving the restructured Department of Risk Management to the Laws, Rules & Government Services Committee to monitor efficiency and effectiveness.
- Transferring the Department of Human Rights to the Health and Human Services Committee, reflecting its expanded role and funding.

"Housing and transportation are two critical components of supporting our community and workforce," **Criswell explained.** "By creating a dedicated Housing and Transportation Committee, we can provide the focused attention these issues deserve and ensure our committee structure reflects our commitment to addressing them."

These changes reflect the Legislature's ongoing dedication to enhancing efficiency, improving oversight, and addressing the critical needs of Ulster County residents.

According to the Rules of the Legislature Committee assignments and a schedule of meetings are to follow within twenty days.

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