

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Chairman Jay Hood Responds To Erroneous Claims

New City, NY (Oct. 20, 2023) - Rockland County Legislature Chairman Jay Hood Jr. is firing back at County Legislator James Foley for multiple erroneous claims regarding a proposed new law that would protect the county from outside efforts to create housing programs in the county.

“It is not surprising that Legislator Foley has no idea what he is talking about because Legislator Foley has had zero involvement in any of the discussions regarding this law and no involvement in developing it,” Chairman Hood said. “The legislators he is attempting to ‘call out’ are the very ones who have been involved and worked to develop this law.”

Chairman Hood also said Legislator Foley’s “demand” that a special meeting be called are equally absurd. Chairman Hood instructed the Legislative Clerk to schedule a special meeting for 6:50 p.m. on Oct. 24 so a vote could be conducted a day before Legislator Foley made his “demand.”

Additionally, there was a desire by some legislators to review the court ruling made late in the afternoon on Tuesday (Oct. 17), just a little more than two hours before the County Legislature meeting. The New York State Supreme Court issued an injunction prohibiting New York City from housing asylum seekers temporarily at the Armoni Inn in Orangetown or at any other location in Rockland.

This ruling helps to legally protect the county as it works to put a defined process in place regarding whether or how one municipality can relocate asylum seekers to another municipality that may not be equipped to handle the influx. The ruling held that neither another municipality nor a social services program can simply relocate individuals to another community.

“Most shockingly, despite the facts, Legislator Foley has erroneously charged that the votes of some legislators will only go to support the proposed law – which the legislators themselves helped write – if sidewalks are provided in Ramapo,” Chairman Hood said. “The sidewalk issue is separate and involves establishing a sidewalk safety program for all county roads in Rockland – not just Ramapo.”

Legislator Foley, who previously engaged in creating numerous negative memes of Ramapo elected officials, has done so again, this time attempting to smear Legislator Alden Wolfe.

“It is clear that Legislator Foley has reverted to his old playbook of pitting the world against Ramapo,” Legislator Wolfe said. “His false accusations are just that and amount to nothing more than a political ploy.”

Chairman Hood said that the Rockland County Legislature has steadfastly defended Rockland County from becoming a NYC housing & social services annex for people who seek nothing more than to build better lives, but who require incredible resources – housing, food, medical attention, emotional support, education for their children and themselves, and a plethora of additional social services.

A reminder of the facts:

Between September 2022 and March 2023, Rockland County experienced the following:

- ☐ A 35 percent increase in the number of children under foster care.
- ☐ More than 1,000 new students enrolling in a single school district, most needing ESL classes.
- ☐ Food pantries that ran out of food.

In April, Catholic Charities, one of the county’s nonprofit contract agencies, reported that more than 475 households sought food from its pantry, more than double the number seen three years ago.

There is a tremendous shortage of affordable housing in Rockland County and several nonprofits, including Catholic Charities, have expressed concern about meeting the need for residents already here and receiving services, let alone trying to help additional newcomers.

“Rockland County government and its residents continue to step up in the face of need,” Chairman Hood said. “What we don’t need is another municipality – in the case, New York City, transporting hundreds if not more people to a county that is simply not set up to address such overwhelming demand. Nor should local taxpayers have to bear the brunt of what is clearly a national crisis.

“We are and have always been a nation of immigrants in search of freedom and democracy, who love their families and work hard to make their American dream come true,” Chairman Hood said.

“Immigrants built this country and continue to make it a better place every day. They should not be used a political pawns. Shame on Legislator Foley for trying to get votes by doing just that.”

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