



## **Raven for Mayor 2027**

**An Independent Citizens' Campaign for Mayor of the City of Elmira —  
Where Frustration Becomes Action, Action Becomes Renewal,  
and Renewal Becomes Hope.**

### **PROPOSAL TO RESTORE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ELMIRA**

By Julian Marcus Raven, June 23, 2026

My fellow citizens of Elmira,

This position paper represents the first major structural reform proposal of my campaign for Mayor of Elmira. It is not merely a policy preference. It is a foundational principle upon which every other reform depends.

The challenges facing our city are substantial. Fiscal instability, declining confidence in government, administrative inefficiency, population loss, deteriorating infrastructure, and a growing sense of civic frustration cannot be addressed through fragmented leadership and diffused responsibility. Before we can solve the problems of government, we must first examine the structure of government itself.

For that reason, I am proposing a Charter Amendment to restore the unity of the executive office and vest full executive authority in the elected Mayor of the City of Elmira.

This proposal will be formally presented to the City Council in the spring of 2027. At that time, the Council will have the opportunity to deliberate upon the measure, debate its merits, and either enact the amendment themselves or decline to do so. If the Council

chooses not to act, or simply ignores the proposal, I will fight to place the amendment directly before the people of Elmira on the November 2027 ballot for their consideration and approbation.

Ultimately, the people are the rightful sovereigns of this city. The question of how Elmira is governed should not belong exclusively to politicians, administrators, or special interests. It belongs to the citizens themselves.

I wish to be equally candid about my own position. I have no interest in serving as a ceremonial or part-time mayor. The office I seek is one of responsibility, accountability, and executive leadership. If elected, I intend to devote my full time, energy, and attention to restoring the City of Elmira. Such a task cannot be accomplished through a divided executive structure in which authority is fragmented, responsibility is obscured, and executive power is dispersed among unelected administrative offices.

The reforms proposed throughout this campaign require a government capable of decisive action, clear accountability, and energetic administration. Those qualities are impossible to achieve when executive authority is divided. They become possible only when responsibility and authority are united in a single elected executive answerable directly to the people.

This proposal does not seek to create something new. It seeks to restore a principle deeply rooted in American constitutional government: that executive power functions best when vested in one accountable officeholder rather than dispersed among multiple competing authorities.

The pages that follow draw heavily from the reasoning of Alexander Hamilton in Federalist No. 70, one of the most influential defenses of executive government ever written. The principles Hamilton articulated in defense of the Presidency apply no less forcefully to municipal government today. They provide a compelling framework for understanding why Elmira's future prosperity depends upon restoring unity, accountability, and energy to its executive branch.

I invite every resident of Elmira to participate in this conversation. Attend one of our town hall meetings. Join one of our live podcast discussions. Challenge these ideas. Question them. Improve them. The purpose of self-government is not passive acceptance but active civic engagement.

Together, let us examine not only the problems confronting Elmira, but the structure of government responsible for addressing them.

The future of our city deserves nothing less.

# **FEDERALIST NO. 70 AND THE CASE FOR RESTORING**

## **AN EXECUTIVE MAYOR IN ELMIRA**

### **A Position Paper to the People of Elmira**

#### **Introduction**

The obvious question before the people of Elmira is whether the government should function effectively, responsibly, and accountably?

The current City Manager-Council system disperses executive authority among multiple actors. Administrative authority resides primarily in an appointed city manager while the mayor serves largely as a ceremonial or limited executive figure. This arrangement diffuses responsibility, obscures accountability, slows decision-making, and weakens executive leadership.

The proposed Charter Amendment would not create a novel experiment. Rather, it would restore the traditional principle of executive government that lies at the heart of the American constitutional system itself: the unity of the executive.

This principle was defended with extraordinary force by Alexander Hamilton in Federalist No. 70. His arguments were not merely philosophical observations. They were practical lessons drawn from history, human nature, and the repeated failures of divided executive authority.

The same reasoning that justified vesting executive power in a single President of the United States applies equally to the executive leadership of a municipality.

#### **Hamilton's Central Principle: Energy in the Executive**

Federalist No. 70 begins with one of the most important propositions in constitutional government:

"Energy in the executive is a leading character in the definition of good government."

Hamilton argued that effective government requires executive energy, meaning:

- Decisive action
- Prompt action
- Vigorous administration
- Steady leadership
- Effective execution of the law
- Capacity to respond during emergencies

Without these qualities, government becomes slow, confused, ineffective, and incapable of serving the public interest. The primary purpose of an executive is not deliberation. Deliberation belongs chiefly to legislative bodies. The executive exists to administer, enforce, supervise, manage, and act. The question therefore becomes: What institutional design best produces executive energy? Hamilton's answer was unequivocal:

***A single executive.***

## **THE FOUR INGREDIENTS OF EXECUTIVE ENERGY**

Hamilton identified four essential ingredients that produce energetic executive government:

### **1. Unity**

Unity is the foundation of executive effectiveness.

When authority is concentrated in one elected executive:

- Decisions are clear.
- Responsibility is identifiable.
- Leadership is unmistakable.
- Successes and failures are attributable.

The public knows exactly who is responsible.

In Elmira, the current structure often blurs responsibility between:

- Mayor
- City Manager
- Council
- Department Heads
- Boards and commissions

When authority is divided, responsibility becomes divided.

When responsibility is divided, accountability disappears.

## **2. Duration**

Executives must possess sufficient stability to implement policy and carry out long-term objectives. Constant fragmentation of authority creates instability and inconsistency. A directly elected executive mayor possesses democratic legitimacy and continuity that an appointed administrator does not. The people themselves become the source of executive authority.

## **3. Adequate Support**

Hamilton argued that executives must possess sufficient institutional tools and authority to perform their duties. Authority and responsibility must travel together. If a mayor is held accountable for outcomes but lacks the authority to direct administration, the office becomes little more than a symbolic position.

This creates a dangerous mismatch:

- Responsibility without authority.
- Expectations without power.
- Blame without control.

A true executive mayor aligns authority with responsibility.

## **4. Competent Powers**

The executive must possess enough lawful power to execute the laws faithfully and effectively. Hamilton rejected the notion that a weak executive protects liberty. Instead, he argued that weakness often produces disorder, inefficiency, and administrative

failure. An executive cannot be judged fairly unless that executive possesses sufficient authority to act.

## **The Dangers of a Divided Executive**

Hamilton devoted much of Federalist No. 70 to exposing the defects of plural or divided executive arrangements. These defects appear repeatedly throughout history.

### **A. Diffusion of Responsibility**

Hamilton observed that shared authority creates uncertainty about who is responsible. Each official can blame another. Failures become impossible to trace.

Citizens cannot determine:

- Who made the decision.
- Who failed to act.
- Who should be held accountable.

This is one of the most dangerous defects of divided government. Liberty is protected not merely by limiting power but by making power answerable to the people. A divided executive weakens that accountability.

### **B. Delay and Indecision**

Multiple executives inevitably produce:

- Delays
- Disagreements
- Administrative paralysis
- Procedural obstruction

Hamilton noted that emergencies often require prompt action. Every additional layer of executive approval slows response times. The result is government that reacts after problems emerge rather than preventing them.

### **C. Intrigue and Internal Conflict**

Hamilton warned that divided executives naturally generate rivalries.

Competing centers of authority create:

- Political maneuvering
- Personal conflicts
- Bureaucratic infighting
- Factional struggles

Instead of focusing on public administration, officials expend energy battling one another. Government becomes consumed by internal politics.

## **D. Concealment of Misconduct**

Perhaps Hamilton's most powerful observation concerns public accountability. When several officials share authority, each can hide behind the others. Failures become anonymous. Mismanagement becomes difficult to identify.

The public loses the ability to distinguish:

- Honest mistakes
- Negligence
- Incompetence
- Corruption

A single executive eliminates these excuses. The public knows exactly where responsibility resides.

## **Historical Lessons Supporting Executive Unity**

Hamilton's arguments were not theoretical inventions. They were grounded in centuries of political experience.

The founders had studied:

- Ancient Greece
- The Roman Republic
- European monarchies
- British constitutional practice
- State governments under the Articles of Confederation

Repeatedly they observed:

- Divided executives generated conflict.
- Committees acted slowly.
- Shared authority weakened accountability.
- Single executives performed more effectively.

The Constitutional Convention ultimately vested executive power in one President because historical experience overwhelmingly supported that arrangement. Federalist No. 70 was written to explain and defend that decision.

## **Applying Federalist No. 70 to Elmira**

The principle does not change merely because the scale changes. A city is smaller than a nation, but human nature remains the same. The same causes produce the same effects.

When executive authority is dispersed among:

- An appointed city manager,
- A limited mayor,
- Various administrative actors,

the predictable result is:

- Reduced accountability,
- Slower administration,
- Diffused responsibility,
- Increased bureaucracy,
- Greater public confusion.

Conversely, when executive authority is vested in one elected mayor:

- Accountability becomes visible.
- Leadership becomes clear.
- Elections become meaningful.
- Administrative responsibility becomes identifiable.
- Citizens know who deserves praise or blame.

The people regain control over the executive government because the executive answers directly to them.

## **The Charter Amendment**

The proposed Charter Amendment would restore a constitutional principle older than Elmira itself. The amendment would restore the full-time executive and chief magistrate mayor to Elmira as defined in the original Elmira City Charter. It would not create an experimental system. The experiment is the present arrangement. The amendment would restore the traditional American understanding that executive power should be vested in a single, elected executive responsible to the people. This principle has endured from the Constitutional Convention of 1787 to the present day because it reflects enduring truths about government, accountability, and human nature. Hamilton's reasoning remains as relevant now as when it was first written.



## Conclusion

Federalist No. 70 teaches that liberty and effective government are not enemies. The people are best protected when executive authority is both energetic and accountable. A divided executive weakens responsibility by scattering it. A unified executive strengthens accountability by concentrating it. The City Manager-Council model obscures responsibility behind layers of administration.

An Executive Mayor restores direct accountability to the citizens of Elmira. The proposed Charter Amendment therefore seeks not innovation, but restoration. It seeks not experimentation, but constitutional consistency. It seeks not more government, but better government. The people of Elmira deserve a government in which authority, responsibility, and accountability reside in the same place.

That was Hamilton's argument in 1788.

It remains a compelling argument today.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julian Raven". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julian Raven  
Independent Candidate for Mayor