



Monroe County Legislature

ERNEST FLAGLER-MITCHELL

Black and Asian Democratic Caucus Leader – District 29

VINCENT R. FELDER

Minority Leader – District 22

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CONTACT: Alex Palmer

Phone: (585) 753-1951

Joint Statement on Override of County Executive's Veto of Resolution that Provides Funding for Fine Arts Organizations in Monroe County

ROCHESTER, NY – On Friday, Monroe County Executive Adam Bello vetoed the Legislature's resolution entitled "Authorizing Allocation of Emergency Grant Funding to Support Arts Organizations Negatively Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic" that was approved in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 26-3. At tonight's Special Meeting, the County Legislature overrode that veto with yet another bipartisan vote of 20-9. This law will draw money from the Legislature's Community Contingency Fund to provide a lifeline to fine arts organizations who have been struggling to stay afloat when unable to host guests during the pandemic. *"This just shows that Mr. Bello's veto was for purely political reasons, as he is still irritated that the Legislature wanted to be able to wield its own power and not give him absolute authority over Monroe County,"* said Black and Asian Democratic Caucus Leader **Ernest Flagler-Mitchell**.

In his veto letter, County Executive Bello himself said that local arts organizations are "an essential part of the fabric of our community." He also questioned the way in which organizations were chosen. There is absolutely nothing in the resolution that would preclude the funding of other organizations in the future, and to deny funding to the groups identified in the resolution is illogical, says Legislator **Flagler-Mitchell**, adding that he looks forward to continue to aid residents in need whether the County Executive wants to help or not.

"The County Executive's cynical veto of this important legislation, based on specious legal reasoning, once again demonstrates his lack of respect for the County Legislature. He had more than a year to secure funding for these organizations. In fact, he met with many of them and promised to help, yet he did nothing until the Legislature chose to act. The most egregious thing, however, is that he held on to this legislation for close to two weeks before vetoing it. If he had any issues with the legislation after it was sent to him, he could have communicated those issues to the Legislature. Instead, he held the legislation while he sought to find a way to replace what the Legislature had done with his own program. This kind of gutter politics is what we see in Washington, and has no place here in Monroe County. If the County Executive wishes to supplement what the Legislature has done with the program he announced yesterday, I welcome it. But the Legislature will be following through on our promise to these organizations," said Minority Leader **Vincent R. Felder**.

The arts groups funded by this legislation have traditionally been left behind fighting for resources. We're disappointed in the County Executive, especially since he knows that the RASE Commission's report specifically addresses funding for marginalized organizations. We're committed to continuing to ensure that organizations that support communities of color receive the access to resources that they deserve from the County of Monroe.

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