

NEWS RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Office of the Minority 270-2892

Minority Leader Ginny O'Brien 434-3347 H Deputy Minority Leader Keith Hammond 283-3329
Flora Fasoldt 466-1703 H Peter Grimm 273-1500 H Kevin Harrington 330-9114 H Brian Zweig 326-3980

www.renselaercountygov.com

November 30, 2007

GOP PROPOSE DOUBLE DIGIT PAY RAISES; DEMOCRATS CALL FOR TAX CUT

TROY--- Rensselaer County Legislature Minority Leader Ginny O'Brien said today, "The GOP has failed to address our recommendations to eliminate pay raises in the 2008 Tentative Budget -- to provide taxpayers with a tax cut."

According to O'Brien, "Our budget proposal is anchored on elimination of pay raises to selected county employees who are already enjoying substantial salaries. Our numbers are solid and would definitely cut the tentative budget."

According to O'Brien, "If the Legislative Majority gets its way Monday night, their chief staff aide Rich Crist will be making \$88,000 in 2007--\$8000 more than County Clerk Frank Merola. That is the epitome of arrogance and fiscal irresponsibility."

"In two years Rich Crist has enjoyed a 32% pay increase at taxpayers' expense," said Legislator Kevin Harrington. "That will bring him close to the 33% pay raise his bosses gave themselves in December 2005." Crist will go from \$67,000 in 2006 to \$88,000 in 2008.

O'Brien has salary information for over 50 employees who will be getting double digit salary pay raises in the GOP budget. "That's \$850,000 that can be cut as a starting point," said O'Brien.

Keith Hammond of the Legislature's Finance Committee says, "Cutting these salary perks for political appointees will be part of our budget amendment offered at Monday's meeting."

Another item to be included is the new position in the County Executive's Office for Assistant for Public Information & Operation at \$75,000.

The Democrats' plan, according to Legislator Flora Fasoldt, also calls for elected officials to rescind their pay raise voted in December 2005. According to Fasoldt, "If legislators, county executive and county clerk returned the raise, we could save another \$150,000 in the 2008 budget. We should lead by example and gave back those raises that were adopted after the elections of 2005."

"These double digit pay raises show a complete lack of respect for the taxpayers," said Fasoldt.