



# *Office of the County Executive*

Monroe County, New York

**Maggie Brooks**  
*County Executive*

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**TESTIMONY TO NYS DIVISION OF BUDGET**  
**PUBLIC HEARING IN ROCHESTER, NY**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2007**

Budget Director Paul Francis, Elected Officials, dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Monroe County! Thank you for coming to hear from the residents of this area and from local government representatives. My name is Bill Carpenter. I serve County Executive Maggie Brooks as Special Assistant with specific responsibilities that include the Monroe County Budget. It is in that role, representing the taxpayers of Monroe County that I speak to you today.

There have been several changes made regarding the State Budget that I commend. Thank you for today...for listening to State residents and your government partners regarding our priorities. Thank you for getting the OSC, Senate, Assembly and your office to commit so early on revenue assumptions. Thank you for a State Budget passed on time. Lastly, thank you for requiring that State budget decisions include an analysis of the financial impact on local governments.

Too often in past Budgets the State offered residents of this great state more than Albany could afford. The result is a tax burdened county government partner. Medicaid is the most egregious example. With a program budget larger than the budgets for California and Florida combined, the dramatic expansion of this program has left property tax payers in New York State ranked among the highest in the country. Monroe County's property tax rate is ranked in the top 2 counties in the nation. Gov. Spitzer in his address to the NYS Association of Counties in January committed that State Government would not balance its books at the expense of county government. In April 2007 he showed he meant it for this year. County Executives across the State, and in particular County Executive Maggie Brooks, are not looking for him to change his position on this issue. He got this issue right the first time and he needs to stay the course.

Let me provide some examples where the State has gotten it right:

1. The Medicaid Demonstration Program has allowed Monroe County to purchase the tools necessary to aggressively pursue recipient and provider fraud, waste and abuse. We work collaboratively with the OMIG and the NYS DOH. We have identified and successfully reduced waste in the program, lowering the program cost for State and Local taxpayers and improving the integrity of the program for recipients. **Savings of 37% for restricted recipients costs year over year. Identified \$100k in services provided after date of death. Significant audit findings and referrals to the MFCU.**
2. Monroe County was recently awarded a grant from OCFS. The grant will fund the resources necessary to improve the care and outcome for vulnerable youth and families in Monroe County. The result will be reduced crisis care, reduced costs, healthier youth and families. **Estimated savings of \$13.4M over four years.**

Let me site some examples where the State has gotten it wrong:

1. Early Childhood Development: This is a wonderful program for boys and girls aged 3 to 5 with certain developmental delays. There is a committee on special education that determines the ISP for each child. While the County has a representative on the committee, also on the committee are the parents and school district representatives. In some cases service providers are part of the committee. This is the fox sitting in the hen house. The county is the only representative with fiduciary responsibility. The county cost is open ended. The result is a program cost that is out of control, growing the last 5 years at twice the rate of inflation. **Capping funding at current levels would save \$1M.**
2. County Probation: The ability for local government to provide public safety is being seriously jeopardized. The State strictly regulates Probation Services, each year adding mandates designed to protect local residents. DNA collection, longer supervision terms for sex offenders, stricter DWI laws and more. But the reimbursement rate has dropped from 46% to the current 17%. **Funding at 46% would afford Monroe County an additional 40 Probation Officers.**
3. Regarding the County Jail: Monroe County is reimbursed at \$40 per day for inmates that the State agrees they are responsible for (meaning the inmate should be in a state prison). Monroe County is reimbursed for Federal prisoners at \$78 per day. Our actual cost per day per inmate is \$116. But there is a more important story. There are now hundreds of state parolees in Monroe County. When they are picked up on the most minor charge, they cannot be released from jail until their parole violation status is determined. On average each day we house 85 inmates that would not be in jail except for their status as a state parolee awaiting a hearing on their parole violation. Until the hearing is complete and a determination is made as to whether the inmate is released or sent to a state facility, Monroe County receives no compensation. Monroe County taxpayers are taxed to provide services under a system that needs to be fixed. **Monroe County should be receiving \$5M per year.**
4. Day Care Maintenance of Effort: Monroe County receives 12% of the amount of the Child Care Block Grant outside NYC. In order to receive certain Day Care funding, each county has a MOE requirement. Monroe County's MOE requirement is 28% of the total MOE for all counties outside NYC. If Monroe County was required to pay the same 12% MOE as we benefit from the CCBG, **our savings would be \$2.6M every year.**
5. Juvenile Justice Facilities: NYS administrators last year agreed to a retroactive price increase for these services. These rate adjustments go as far back as 2001, with a cost to Monroe County taxpayers of \$6.2M and a go forward cost estimated at \$1.5M to \$2M annually. County Budgets are not designed to fund double payments. This is a serious error made on the part of the State administrators responsible for negotiating terms for these facilities with the counties footing the bill. **Impact \$6.2M**

Mr. Francis, as you put your recommended budget before our Governor, remember your county government partner. We provide so many services the residents of this great State receive. Be certain that what Albany can afford to do, Monroe County taxpayers can afford as well.