



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

June 2, 2016

Honorable Thomas P. DiNapoli
Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli,

We write to you today in the hopes that your office can assist in a matter of great importance to Western New York and the taxpayers of this great state of ours. As you are aware, criminal investigations have recently surfaced surrounding the Executive Branch and the potential illegal misuse of taxpayer funds.

We find these allegations deeply disturbing and hope that the ongoing state and federal investigations will hold any offenders responsible for their actions. We also hope these investigations help restore the public's trust in their government, who have rightfully grown dismayed due to the undeniable culture of corruption that has engulfed state government.

While the Governor's Office has appointed an internal investigator to examine any acts of impropriety, we do not believe such an inquiry can be truly impartial. Therefore, we respectfully request that you commit the expertise and resources of your office to objectively and thoroughly investigate the state contracting process, specifically as it pertains to the "Buffalo Billion."

We have long-supported the concept of public-private economic development concentrated throughout our region to reverse a decades-long trend of economic stagnation and population loss. And we also believe there have been positive, substantial developments in Western New York's economy in recent years. Thousands of workers from nearly every sector have worked diligently to improve our economy and our community.

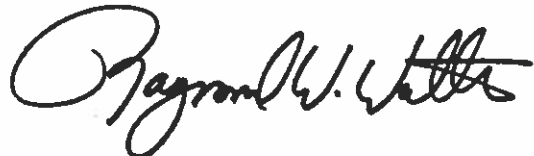
However, due to the seriousness of the charges raised as well as our own experiences with the state's economic development initiatives in Western New York, we believe that dramatic action is urgently required. The current system sees vast sums of taxpayer funds controlled by a select few individuals within government. Further, these funds stand to benefit specific individuals and companies in the private sector. So, with little oversight and accountability, it's easy to see how such a system is susceptible to abuse. Taxpayers, employers, and workers deserve a fair, transparent process.

You recently outlined your concern of interfering with the work of prosecutors. However, we respectfully contend that these criminal investigations show the overwhelming need for a meticulous, top-to-bottom fiscal review. We hope that such an inquiry will root out any inefficient or unlawful procedures, develop best practices, maintain and expand the strides made by our local workforce, and ultimately restore the shattered trust of taxpayers. It is on their behalf that we all serve. And it is therefore our obligation to provide them answers and ensure that their hard-earned tax dollars are spent judiciously, efficiently, and legally.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robert G. Ort in black ink, featuring a stylized 'R' and 'G' followed by a circular flourish.

Robert G. Ort
Senator, 62nd District

Handwritten signature of Raymond W. Walter in black ink, featuring a large, flowing 'R' and 'W'.

Raymond W. Walter
Assemblyman, 146th District