

**County Legislator Ted O'Brien
Irondequoit – District 17**

Rochester, New York – May 24' 2007

**Democratic Legislators Cry Foul: Legislature Refuses to Act on Division Of
Criminal Justice Services Grant to Assist District Attorney's Office**

Background: Monroe County employs some four thousand employees. Of these, about 250 are categorized as “management professionals”. A full 30% of these management professionals are employed as prosecuting attorneys in the Monroe County District Attorney's Office. This is important because for, three of the last five years, the salaries of “management professionals”, including the salaries of the men and women we entrust to convict our most heinous criminals, have been frozen in response to county budgetary problems. This salary freeze has led to a serious imbalance with regard to the salaries of Assistant District Attorneys as compared to other lawyers, and to others in the criminal justice community. Obviously, this makes it more difficult to attract and retain good prosecuting attorneys.

Mike Green's Initiative: Monroe County District Attorney Mike Green applied for and obtained approval for, a grant in the amount of \$66,246.00 from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services – a grant specifically designed for Assistant District Attorney Recruitment and Retention. The grant would enable the District Attorney to provide bonuses to prosecutors employed by the DA's office. County taxpayers would not pay even *one cent* in increased county tax burden. This is a grant, made available to county DA offices across the state, and approved for acceptance by Monroe County.

The GOP Roadblock: District Attorney Green submitted his grant approval notification to the county administration on February 13, 2007. Numerous grant approvals are processed by the

county administration every month for submittal to the county legislature. This particular grant, however, was not submitted to the legislature. DA Green forwarded his grant approval directly to the Legislature Majority Office in March. Again, the grant approval was not submitted to the legislature. In spite of repeated attempts to get the acceptance of the grant by the county acted on, DA Green was continually put off.

Democratic Legislator Steve Eckel submitted the referral for grant acceptance to the legislature in the current legislative cycle. Unfortunately, the GOP legislators controlling the committees the referral came before “referred it to the administration” for further study – even though the administration has had this grant before it since February 13th! Says Legislator Eckel: “Referral to the Administration’ has long been a tactic for killing a referral without having to vote on the merits of the referral.”

Why not accept a grant, at no county taxpayer expense, supportive of our hardworking criminal prosecutors? Legislator Ted O’Brien, a co-sponsor of the referral to accept the grant, says “Its not hard to connect the dots...a Democratic District Attorney running this election year...Republican leadership decides not to accept a grant helpful to his office...

unfortunately, it looks like another example of the County Executive and the Majority Office of the legislature putting politics above the interests of the community. Here we have a grant specifically recognizing the difficulties that exist throughout the state in retaining prosecutors, and *our* county doesn’t avail itself of the funds. Its really sad.”

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