



COUNTY OF ERIE

MICHAEL P. KEARNS
COUNTY CLERK

October 24, 2025

The Honorable Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: COMM. 18E-10/Buffalo News Occupation

Dear Honorable Members:

I write to update on the unfortunate situation regarding the occupation of County Clerk office space by The Buffalo News.

As this Honorable Body is aware, the locks were changed on the office space that was being utilized by the County Clerk's Office the evening of October 1, 2025, by the Department of Public Works (DPW), at the request of the County Executive. The removal of County Clerk files, supplies, and materials, along with the changing of the locks, occurred despite prior written objection by the County Clerk's Office and proposal of working together to find alternative space.

Following the filing of an emergency resolution on October 2, 2025, productive discussion was held on this item at the Joint Caucus meeting on October 9, 2025 and at the Government Affairs committee meeting on October 16, 2025. I thank this Honorable Body for the time at these meetings to allow said discussion.

Despite this item being addressed publicly on two (2) separate occasions, and there being no question that the matter has not yet been resolved, The Buffalo News reporter has been seen on no less than three (3) occasions entering and exiting the contested space:

- Friday, October 10, 2025- the day after the Joint Caucus meeting she was present at;
- Wednesday, October 22, 2025- seen with no less than four (4) DPW employees moving various items in and out of the room; and
- Thursday, October 23, 2025.

Photos are enclosed with this letter of the reporter and DPW employees in various stages of entering and exiting the room into the County Hall hallway on October 22, 2025, which is open to the public.

At all times, the door appeared to strangely only be open at the bare minimum amount to allow persons to enter and exit, such that no one could see the entire contents of the room from the outside.

Since the changing of the locks on October 1, 2025, the door to the space has, to the best of my knowledge and testing by staff of the Clerk's Office, remained locked at all times, with the exception of The Buffalo News reporter entering and exiting. Notably, no other individuals from media entities except The Buffalo News have been seen accessing the room either.

It is troubling that this very contested space is being used openly and notoriously by one of the parties claiming being gifted access to it, despite knowing that the matter is being worked on by this Honorable Body and having even spoken on the record about it. Respectfully, as the matter has not been resolved, no one should be taking advantage of that space.

The County Clerk's Office is deeply appreciative of this Honorable Body considering how best to resolve this matter and prays for the return of its office space as soon as practicably possible, given the disruptions to County Clerk business that have already been documented and that are continuing to occur.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL P. KEARNS
Erie County Clerk

MPK/wal

Encl.











