



NEWS FROM  
**ULSTER COUNTY**  
County Executive Jen Metzger

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**\*\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*\***

**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024

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## **Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger Vetoes Legislative Budget Amendment Undermining Collective Bargaining Process**

**KINGSTON, NY** - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger has returned the budget with a veto of Operating Amendment #31, issuing the following veto message:

“Pursuant to Ulster County Charter Section C-38(H), I am returning Amendment Number 31 contained within Resolution 621 with my veto. The Legislature’s amendment violates New York State’s Public Employees Fair Employment Act (the “Taylor Law”) protecting the rights of unions to organize and collectively bargain, puts the County in legal jeopardy, infringes on the collective bargaining authority of the County Executive under the Ulster County Charter, and compromises the County Executive’s ability to negotiate a contract that is fair to ALL employees. It is upsetting that the 64 employees affected by this action were given false expectations about a January 1 raise that could not legally be enacted.

The attached legal opinion by the County’s labor counsel shows the violations and potential legal consequences, including making the County vulnerable to improper practice charges under the Fair Employment Act.

Beyond the legal and fiscal consequences of this amendment, it also undermines the most fundamental right of labor to collective bargaining. As the Legislature is aware, the contracts of all five unions representing County employees expire this month, and the action circumvents and interferes with good-faith contract negotiations already underway. These concerns were raised by several Legislators, including the Majority Leader, during debate on the amendment.

I appreciate that many members of the Legislature have come to recognize that this amendment should never have been approved. I am including a letter from the Chair of the Legislature, signed by a majority of Members, in support of this veto.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that all of Ulster County's hard-working union employees get a fair deal, negotiated in good faith."

Amendment #31 would provide a \$5.70 per hour raise to 64 Buildings & Grounds and Central Auto employees, effective Jan. 1. The Legislature took unilateral action without consulting either the union or County officials who are currently negotiating labor contracts affecting more than 1,000 union employees.

The Legal Memo from the County's labor counsel and letter of support from the Chair of the Legislature and other Legislative Members are attached.

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