

# ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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## VETO MESSAGE

**TO:** Victoria Fabella, Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature

**FROM:** Patrick K. Ryan, Ulster County Executive

**DATE:** November 26, 2019

**RE:** Resolution No. 374 Dated November 19, 2019

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Pursuant to Ulster County Charter Section C-12, I am returning Resolution No. 374, Dated November 19, 2019 with my veto.

Integrity in public service, whether it be service to our nation as a military officer or service to the community as a government official, is vital to our democracy. Since assuming office, I have made ethics and integrity a top priority for every single member of my administration. I remain committed to working with the Legislature on a broader discussion about ethical standards and enforcement pertaining to all who are in service to our county.

However, legislation that focuses on political vendettas against a specific individual rather than good public policy undercuts the public's faith in government. Protecting and ensuring the public trust is my most solemn responsibility, and one that I take very seriously.

As an effort to improve public policy, this resolution falls disappointingly short. While veiled as a conflict resolution measure, the rich irony of the resolution's primary author being a similarly placed appointee of a statewide official in the State Assembly while holding elected public office cannot be ignored.

The resolution as written directly impacts just a single county employee at present. This employee, while a private citizen, was among the first to publicly note the ethical transgressions of a member of the Legislature which have since been validated by an independent investigation. That legislator then passed the deciding vote on this bill. Allowing this legislation to stand as written would send a chilling message to those who find themselves in the position of speaking up against individuals who abuse the public trust.

Moreover, under our County Charter, this resolution stands as an overreach by the resolution's authors to the unfettered authority of the executive and other countywide officials to appoint the best and brightest candidates as they see fit.

I remain committed to engaging with the Legislature to develop and adhere to policies that increase the public's faith in government and which all our constituents can view as a model of good governance. As for the measure at issue, setting a different standard for the author than for others in public service does not withstand scrutiny, and therefore I return it with my veto.