



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
244 FAIR STREET
KINGSTON, NEW YORK, 12401

PHONE: 845.340-3900
FAX: 845.340.3651
www.co.ulster.ny.us
www.ulstercountyny.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 21, 2011

CONTACT: Frederick J. Wadnola, Chairman
(845) 340-3699

Legislative Chairman to Create Safety Net Task Force

Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature, Frederick J. Wadnola, has announced the creation of a 12 member task force to evaluate the viability and financial impact of the Safety Net program to taxpayers of Ulster County. The state-mandated Safety Net, a public assistance program for people in financial need, has recently become a hot-button issue with the State's announcement that the cost-sharing ratio for the program will no longer be a 50/50 split between the State and counties. The 2011- 2012 State Budget calls for the state to pay only 29 percent of the cost, imposing a burden on the counties of 71 percent.

"I'm creating this task force so an in-depth study will reveal all of the ramifications Safety Net will have on municipalities and residents," said Chairman Wadnola. "It's an opportunity to evaluate the efficiency of County government," he said.

The Safety Net Task Force, which will be created via resolution in July through the Health and Human Services Committee, will include 3 members of the Legislative majority, 3 from the minority, 3 town supervisors, and 3 individuals from the Executive branch of government. Chairman Wadnola will work with John Valk, Jr., President of the Supervisors' Association, to select the town supervisors who will serve on the task force.

"It is imperative that we sit down with the supervisors, Executive's Office and Legislative members to create a formula that would allow for the County to take over this 71% unfunded mandate sent down from the State," said Legislative Minority Leader Jeanette Provenzano.

Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Walter Frey, Jr., feels the Task Force is integral to helping Ulster County move forward. "Again, we are dealing with unfunded mandates and the State's inability to balance its budget," said Legislator Frey. "Shifting the burden is a recipe for economic disaster. Addressing these issues as a team is the only way we will survive."