Monroe County Legislature

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DEMOCRATIC MINORITY LEADER

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Minority Leader Felder Makes Announcement Regarding Ethics Reform Legislation

Rochester, NY – July 26, 2021. Monroe County Legislature Minority Leader Vince Felder has released the following regarding the ethics legislation sponsored by Majority Leader Steve Brew and himself:

"While I remain to a thorough overhaul of the County's ethics rules and the Ethics Board itself. However, it has become abundantly clear to me that too many of my fellow Democrats are more interested in playing politics with this issue and using it to try and win elections than they are about enacting substantive ethics reform.

We must deal with the issues of harassment and sexual harassment, and make sure that we have strong rules to prevent them from occurring.

We also must protect the rights of individuals who are accused of ethics violations and ensure that they are treated fairly throughout the investigative process. The loopholes exposed by the report about a sitting Legislator that brought personal information not germane to his investigation into the public sphere must and will be eliminated. In addition, we must ensure that no County Executive or any other individual is able to use the Ethics Board as a tool against his/her political opponents. We must also ensure that those individuals who are selected for the Ethics Board have a demonstrated record of impartiality and aren't political cronies.

Finally, we must ensure that before any information is released to the public, if it is to be released, that the information is vetted for relevance and salaciousness, and that the public's right to know outweighs legitimate privacy concerns.

I am therefore asking for the legislation I submitted to be tabled, and I am calling on President Carbone to convene a bipartisan committee to update and strengthen the County's ethics laws, consistent with the principles I have outlined."