DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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September 9, 2026

Hon. Nicole Watts
Chairperson
Onondaga County Legislature
401 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, New York 13202

Hon. Maurice Brown
Chairperson
Onondaga County Ways and Means Committee
401 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, New York 13202

Dear Chairperson Watts & Chairperson Brown & Members of the County Legislature,

It is my distinct pleasure to report to you that the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office remains one of the finest, if not the finest, prosecutors' office in New York State. We continue to attract and retain only the best attorneys, investigators and staff. Thousands of cases pass through my office each year. I am ever mindful, as is my staff, that each case, whether it be a homicide or a traffic violation, impacts members of the community we all serve. Based on the quality of our work we continue to offset a large percentage of our budget by attracting over four million dollars in grant funding.

I am honored that this year saw the completion of two of the largest prosecutions of my career. Governor Kathy Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James asked me to serve as Special Prosecutor when Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi were brutally murdered by Corrections Officers at Marcy and Mid-State Correctional Facilities in Oneida County. In a first in this state, a total of 40 Corrections Officers were indicted for their respective roles in the murders and the attempted cover-ups that followed.

Ever aware of the catastrophic impact of gun violence on our community, Onondaga County's Gun Involved Violence Elimination Strategy (GIVE) acts as a model other counties emulate. My office, in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office, the Syracuse Police Department, and our Probation Department, employs evidence-based crime reduction strategies to push our gun violence statistics to the lowest on record. We utilize the most up to date crime analysis tools to identify the small number of people whose actions create the most havoc with firearms. Once identified, they are offered services in the hope they will change their criminal behavior. If they don't, law enforcement and my prosecutors will partner to ensure that they are no longer able to create chaos on our streets.

Unfortunately, domestic violence continues to upend lives in our county. Taking lessons learned from our GIVE initiative, the GIVE partners, with the addition of Vera House, have developed evidence-based strategies to identify those at the greatest risk of perpetrating or being the victim of intimate partner violence. Services are offered and cases receive additional investigative and prosecutorial attention and resources.

To accomplish our mission, we have our own police force of full-time investigators. They are sworn law enforcement officers of the very highest caliber. My investigators all have a minimum of 20 years' experience with local agencies before they join my office. District Attorney investigators are a tremendous resource for Assistant District Attorneys and the people we all serve. They investigate serious crimes and make arrests, they interview defendants and witnesses, they are irreplaceable when preparing for trials. Police make arrests based on probable cause; my burden of proof at trial is beyond a reasonable doubt. It is an investigator's job to help an attorney take a case from an arrest to a conviction after trial. Notwithstanding their excellence, ours are paid less than investigators at other upstate District Attorney's Offices as well as other opportunities sworn officers have today. In our budget request I have asked for small salary increases to ensure we can continue to attract the best of the best law enforcement professionals to my office.

I can assure you, my office will never lose sight of our duty to do justice, ensuring the accused are treated fairly, the guilty are held to account, and victims are treated with respect.

Sincerely,

William J. Fitzpatrick

WILLIAM J. FITZPATRICK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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