

ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE 21st CENTURY COMMISSION

VISION

To review the Erie County Legislature – its size, powers, duties, structure and function – answering the community’s call for changes to the county government’s legislative branch, in view of static and shifting population, fiscal times and service to its citizens.

MISSION

The Commission will address all government reform issues specific to the Erie County Legislature, including but not limited to:

- Number of legislators
- Length of terms and potential for staggered or limited terms
- Scope of responsibility (powers and duties as defined in the Erie County Charter, as well as practices of constituent services and fiscal responsibilities with reflection on budget margins of non-mandated versus mandated programs).
- Consideration of district versus at-large seats (with contemplation of departmental cost-benefit analysis, costs of office seeking, and, in district-based seats, achieving a balance of voice given to Erie County’s urban, suburban and rural communities. Avoiding disproportionate, weighted voting).
- Minority representation in conformance with federal law

APPOINTMENTS

A nine-member Commission, six persons to be appointed by the Chair of the Legislature: two non-categorical, the other four individuals will represent the following stakeholder groups: 1) a non-partisan academic or civic engagement organization; 2) local business community; 3) a public sector union; and 4) a community-based not-for-profit. And, one appointment each by the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader and the Chair of the Government Affairs Committee of the Erie County Legislature. The Commission Chair is to be designated by the Chair of the County Legislature. Terms of Commission members are one year, after which the Commission sunsets.

SUGGESTED TIMETABLE, REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION

- Organizational work & research – 4th Q 2008
- Public comment period & scheduled hearings
- Draft report due – 2009
- Final report which allows for any dissenting opinions to be published – 2009
- Any subsequent legislation introduced
- Public referendum - 2010
- Implementation in 2011 (in concert with election cycle and reapportionment laws)