

Full disclosure, I am a friend of Dustin Czarny, the Democratic Commissioner to the Board of Elections in Onondaga County. His devotion to the citizens of our country and his dedication to his job are well known. Additionally, his Republican counterpart, Michelle Sardo, has his full support and they are both well known for their ability to work together for the benefit of all voters and candidates. It is for this reason that I wish to offer testimony to this committee.

Mr. Czarny and Ms. Sardo earn their paychecks, putting in long hours and countless days spent educating our community members, tallying votes and preparing for elections, among a myriad of other duties. The misguided political ploy that was perpetrated against them in attempting to reduce their salaries as retaliation for some imagined affront was both stressful and childish and should be made impossible in the future. To demean and attempt to humiliate public servants who work hard for all of us is simply unacceptable. This was clearly an attempt to “rein in” Mr. Czarny’s efforts to encourage early voting, an initiative that most voters want and which Republicans appear to be terrified of.

Which brings me to early voting and increased number of polling places. There is an argument that low turnout is an indication that more voting stations and earlier dates are unnecessary. I would argue that perhaps low numbers are actually an argument to INCREASE opportunities for voters to be heard. Difficulties in finding transportation or time around work and family schedules make it difficult to impossible for some to vote and we should be making it as convenient as possible for as many people as possible.

I am pleased that these hearings are taking place and hope that the voices of many voters and activists will be heard, along with my own. Thank you for this opportunity.