

March 3, 2026

Hon. John Safford, Mayor, and
City Council of Saratoga Springs
City Hall
474 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Dear Mayor Safford and City Council members,

I write to ask you to reject the Charter Review Commission's recommendation that the City reduce the number of County Supervisors from two to one.

Besides recommending to you that the City cut in half its representation in county government, the proposal also includes language that would make the City Charter subservient to County Law, at least for this provision, which is also contrary to the best interests of the City.

I believe this recommendation is undemocratic, and effectuates a policy of "taxation without representation."

The City Charter has for more than 50 years provided for two Supervisors to be elected to the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors. When seated on the County Board, our two Supervisors are assigned to be members of Standing Committees, where all legislation and budget resources originate, as well as oversight and accountability of the county's administrative offices.

Today, our two Supervisors hold a total of six positions on the Standing Committees. Reducing the Supervisors to just one would reduce our representation on the Committees probably by half. As a policy preference by the Charter Commission, that recommendation to the City Council compromises the interests of the City of Saratoga Springs.

Why would a city that supplies more than one-fifth of the County's total tax revenue want to have only one twenty-third of the representation? If anything, the City should consider raising the number of Supervisors to four, five, six or a dozen.

I believe it is up to the City, not the County, how many Supervisors we should have. Such an outcome is already the case in other cities in counties that have Boards of Supervisors. Glens Falls sends five Supervisors to the Warren County Board. In Ontario County, Canandaigua sends two and Geneva sends three. Those cities' Charters provide for the number of Supervisors. The respective county Boards seat them, assign them to committees and divide their city's population-weighted vote proportionately among them.

So why in the world would Saratoga Springs want to reduce the number of Supervisors? The reason has to do with the Supervisor of the Town of Halfmoon, Mr. Tollison, who does not want to divide his 25,662 weighted votes with a second Supervisor, after the next census.

Former Supervisor Matt Veitch and Commission member Lew Benton made this mission quite obvious last week in their conversation after members of the public and I raised this issue. If Halfmoon's population after the 2030 census matches or exceeds that of Saratoga Springs, they will have two Supervisors instead of just one, and Supervisor Kevin Tollison will have fewer weighted votes on the Board. This whole matter has to do with Republican politics, not fair and democratic representation.

I want to thank former Supervisor Veitch and Lew Benton for bringing this background to light and putting it on the public record at last week's Charter Commission meeting.

With due respect, I hope that this City Council will set aside Republican Party considerations and maintain the number of Supervisors in our Charter at two, if not increasing them to a higher number.

The city needs more say-so, not less, at the County level, where so much of our money goes, and where so little of it is sent back in the form of services.

Thank you, again, for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Gordon M. Boyd