

Anita Halasz

Executive Director, Long Island Jobs with Justice

Testimony at February 10th Budget Hearing on Economic Development

February 10, 2014

Good afternoon. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Anita Halasz and I am the Executive Director of Long Island Jobs with a Justice, an organization that advocates for workers' rights and social and economic justice in coalition with community, labor, faith, and student allies across Long Island. Long Island Jobs with Justice is a partner in the Getting Our Money's Worth Coalition, a coalition that works to reform New York's economic development system to create good jobs, revitalize our economy, and give those directly impacted by development a voice in decision-making.

New York's economic develop programs award \$7 billion a year in tax subsidies to corporations that are failing our communities. Many of these projects are approved with the promise of job creation; however, our communities continue to wait for these jobs to manifest. With a new year ahead of us, now is the time to grasp the opportunity to reform our state's economic development system and create one that works for local communities through strong corporate accountability and transparency.

In January of 2012, the Islip Industrial Development Agency of Long Island approved \$2.3 million in tax breaks for a Marriott Hotel project in Central Islip. Workers doing construction on this project were not only paid poverty wages, but they were also non-union and non-local labor. This is just one example of how Long Island taxpayer money has been used to solely benefit corporate interests and leave local communities struggling.

Our state needs a budget that works for everyone, not just wealthy corporations. At a time when government services are being slashed and working people are struggling to make ends meet, New York's economic development system needs to prioritize smart projects that lift up local communities through the promise and delivery of good jobs.

The use of public monies for economic development projects should always produce a return for local communities that strengthen the infrastructure of our schools, jobs, and necessary public services. The *Just and Open Business Subsidies Act (JOBS Act)*, recently introduced by Assemblyman Sean Ryan, would build an economic development system of efficiency, accountability, and public transparency in order to ensure the optimal benefit of approved projects.

Now is the time to renew our commitment to New York's hard working people by supporting solutions that advance the success and livelihood of our communities, not just the pockets of wealthy corporations.

Thank you very much for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anita Halasz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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