

**County Admin courtstaskforce - Fw: Task Force**

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**From:** "Thomas A. Schlee" <tschlee@nycourts.gov>  
**To:** "courtstaskforce@tompkins-co.org" <courtstaskforce@tompkins-co.org>  
**Date:** 9/14/2015 5:58 PM  
**Subject:** Fw: Task Force

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**From:** Thomas A. Schlee  
**Sent:** Monday, September 14, 2015 5:48 PM  
**To:** courtstaskforce@tompkins-co.gov  
**Subject:** Task Force

I am planning to attend the meeting on 9/16/15 and 9/30/15. I would like to speak at the meeting on the 30th.

I realize it is a little late to respond to the request for opinions in the August 13, 2015 letter. I will provide them at this time for consideration, if determined appropriate.

Local Justices strongly protect the due process rights of the defendants. I have worked in the criminal justice system since 1986 and have been in many county, village, and town courts. I have witnessed violation of due process in all of these courts; there are checks and balances to assure this with the primary one being the citizens in the jurisdiction of the courts.

I have seen many attorney's in court, some are impressive, others are not. It is the same with Judges, regardless of the status of being an attorney or not, there is are those who do a better job and those who do not. Again, those who do not appropriately serve the position should not be Judges, either attorneys or not, or local or county or state. When you look at the Commission on Judicial Conduct reports and press releases, there are all types of judges, attorneys, non-attorneys, State, County and Village, who face action by the commission.

Again, it seems as if the quality, or lack there of, of Court and its ability function independently, publicly and transparently, does not depend on the nature of the court or the attorney status of the Judge. We all know the expectations, those who do not follow them make a choice. My experience is that the Local courts tend to be the most independent and respectful courts.

Do not change the current court system; it has been perfected over a long period of time, it is the court that is closest to the people, it is accessible in each community. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it".

Village courts should be a decision of the residents of the village, not a commission or task force.

Two justices allow for differing styles, traits and strengths within the required framework. Again, "if it

ain't broke, don't fix it". It also allows for not only easier coverage in off hours, but also the ability to better meet the needs of the community regarding ancillary duties such as performing weddings.

Keep the criminal cases as they are, we handle them well.

When you weigh the information, take a look at the position of the person providing the opinion. In the past, there was a faulty report created by a State commission/taskforce that included primarily attorneys; of course they thought there was a need to have attorney judges. I am a License Clinical Social Worker, I think all judges should be trained and licensed Social Workers. Furthermore, opinions can be tweak to be self serving. For example, think about the desire for persecutors or defense to not have to travel to our town and to only appear in front of a limited number of judges, which would lend itself to creating alliances/relationships, which may not be beneficial to the provision of judicial services.