

**From:** [R&W Kochan](#)  
**To:** [Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]: Public Comment for May 23, 2023 Luzerne County Council Work Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 2:28:00 PM  
**Importance:** High

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The following public comment is to be read audibly and recorded in the minutes for tonight's Council meeting:

**Public Comment from Walter & Robyn Kochan – Dallas Twp.**

We'd like to remind Council that according to its own Home Rule Charter - *Section 1.04—Rights Reserved to the People* --- it expressly states, “No provision of this Charter *and no action by any Luzerne County elective official* or employee of Luzerne County acting under its authority shall *infringe upon the rights, privileges, and powers reserved or guaranteed to individual persons* or to the people by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”

This includes the right to vote under free *and equal* elections --- none of which have been held in Luzerne County the last several years.

Some of you first campaigned on election integrity. Yet when concerns were brought to you that some voters were turned away and their vote not counted, the flip response was, “What does it matter when the outcome didn't change?” That statement alone indicates you either have no idea or concern for the Home Rule Charter and Luzerne County voters.

Likewise, *Section 2.09 of the Charter on Powers and Duties* also indicates that Council can *require the attendance of any County employee, any elective County official or employee of his/her office, and/or any member or employee of any County authority, board, or commission at any meeting of County Council* and to *require* they provide such *reports and information* as County Council deems appropriate.

Exactly how should the public interpret Council's choice to do nothing to fix our bungled elections when you have had the power all along...and particularly if you honored the Home Rule Charter?

It's been over 6 months since the botched midterm elections last November, and we had yet another botched election last week. By passing the buck to an already overwhelmed and understaffed DA who has been ineffective in getting to the bottom of the election problems, you have ignored the Rights Reserved to the People under your responsibilities in the Home Rule Charter.

County employees work for us the taxpayers yet we are not getting the services we pay for. When will Council address these issues, and require the DA, Election Board and Bureau

personnel to attend this public meeting and respond to the people as to how the elections were and continue to be mismanaged? When will you hold them accountable instead of facilitating and continuing the courthouse clique cover-ups?

**“Elections shall be free and equal; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.”**

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