

**BARBARA LIFTON**  
**for STATE ASSEMBLY**

Dear Tompkins County Friends and Neighbors,

When I assumed this Assembly seat, I knew there would be times when I would have to take a difficult stand on an important issue or political race where close friends or allies at the local level might disagree with me. This is one of those times. Many of you have asked me where I stand on the race for Tompkins County Sheriff and I want to share my views with you.

We have three candidates in the race for County Sheriff – our Democratic candidate and current Sheriff Peter Meskill, Tim Little, running as an independent, and Brian Robison, the Republican candidate. **I am writing to urge you to join me in voting for Peter Meskill on November 7<sup>th</sup>.** Let me explain why I believe Peter is the right choice

I'm sure I don't have to tell you that being sheriff is a tough job. Few of us would want the great responsibilities and pressures that come with that job, but when Peter was elected in 1998 he put all his efforts into reshaping the Sheriff's Office. The result is a progressive and professional organization that delivers excellent public safety services throughout the county. Again and again, he has demonstrated that he has the management and leadership skills needed in this important office. When we have brought concerns to him he has listened and responded.

Everyone who knows me well knows that I am deeply committed to equal opportunity and diversity in our public life. I have given my support to local minority candidates over the years, and recently gave substantial financial support to GIAC. When Carl McCall ran for Governor, I supported him strongly over Andrew Cuomo, because he is a bright, experienced, hard-working, caring, and dignified person. I was certain he would have been an excellent Governor, and our first black Governor. It would have been a proud moment for all New Yorkers, and I was terribly disappointed when he lost. I had a reception for him in my home and remember how proud I was to introduce my son to him. Tim Little is also bright and caring and dignified, but he has neither the work or life experience yet to be ready to handle the pressures or responsibilities of the county's top cop.

Peter Meskill has also demonstrated his personal commitment to diversity. Since taking office eight years ago, he has had the opportunity to hire approximately 40 people. Of those, 7 were people of color – 5 Black and 2 Latino. Additionally, he has hired 2 white women for road patrol. Translated to statistics, 17.5 percent of his hires have been people of color and 38 percent have been people from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Another important diversity issue is retention – are people of color supported in their jobs so that they stay and become permanent members of the department workforce? Peter's record is good in that regard also, as only one of the individuals mentioned above has since left the Sheriff's department. Clearly, Peter is working hard to hire and support a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

The danger in this race is that a vote for Tim Little – which some may consider as a way to show their commitment to equal opportunity and diversity – will split the Democratic and progressive vote, resulting in the election of the Republican candidate Brian Robison. I don't think this is the result any of us want to see; therefore I **urge you to support Peter Meskill in his bid for re-election**

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have been and continue to be supportive of me in my job as Assemblywoman, and I ask for your understanding of my position in this very important election.

