

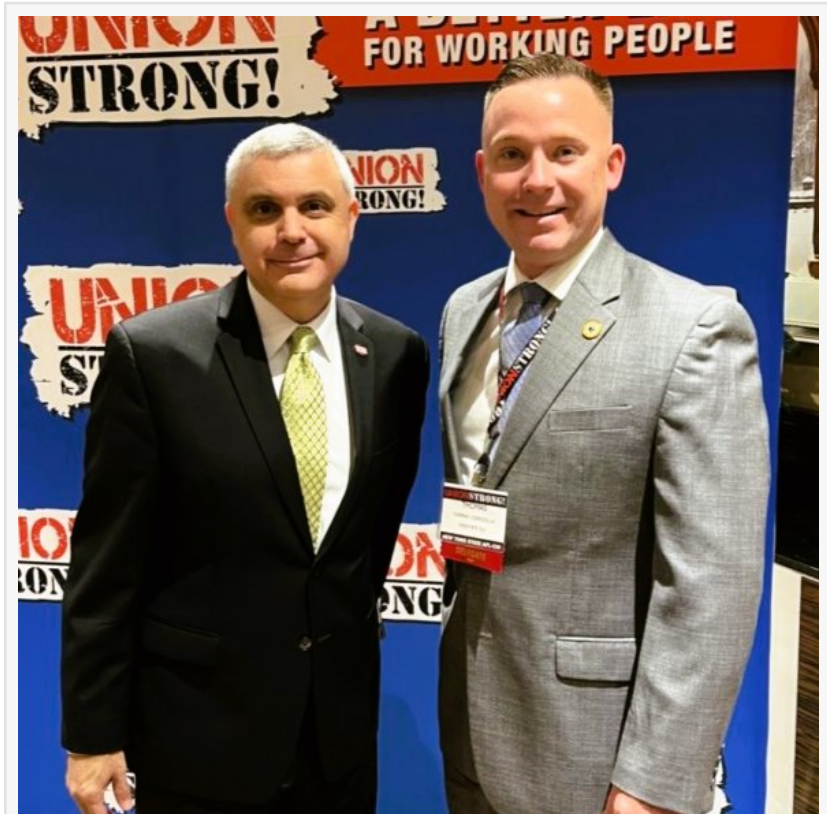
# Ithaca N.Y., home to Cornell University & Ithaca College, abandons plan to abolish police department.

*PBA President says, "The nightmare is finally over, we're working together, rebuilding, and hiring."*

ITHACA, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, May 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A community that once sought to abolish the police has now made it clear that their police department isn't going anywhere. Last month, the Ithaca Common Council voted unanimously to keep their local police agency, the Ithaca Police Department (IPD). This is the first public action that the has been taken to formally reverse the plan for abolishment that was laid out in 2021 by then Mayor Svante Myrick.

After several years of debate, working groups, special committees and the fate of the Department being uncertain, the Ithaca Common Council finally adopted a [report from their Public Safety Committee](#) on April 5, 2023 that stated, "The Ithaca Police Department (IPD) will continue to be named the Ithaca Police Department and will continue to be a City department led by a Chief of Police with full authority over the department. Ithaca Police Officers will continue to be called police officers and will not lose their jobs or their rank." Furthermore, the report stated, "It must be acknowledged that reimagining public safety in the City of Ithaca cannot succeed without an adequately staffed police department."

The President of the Ithaca PBA, Thomas Condzella, said, "The nightmare is finally over, we're working together, rebuilding, and hiring. The current City Administration has made it clear to the PBA, they're committed to working with us to obtain a successor labor agreement, they've



NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento (left) & IPBA President Thomas Condzella (right) at the 2022 COPE Convention.

recognized our rights as workers and for the first time ever are working with our union, not against us or around us. They're committed to supporting us and helping us recruit new officers by making IPD a stable and attractive place to work again. We're finally moving forward together and IPD is here to say." Much of City Hall's recent support was detailed in an [internal memo dated April 7, 2023](#) that was sent to the IPD from Mayor Laura Lewis.

In another positive step, Mayor Lewis also announced this past Tuesday that [Lieutenant Ted Schwartz was appointed to the role of Acting Police Chief](#). Condzella said, "Lieutenant Schwartz has a proven track record, he came up through the ranks and has been tested through some very

challenging times and situations, he can help us stabilize the Department. He has the full support of the PBA and the officers, we're looking forward to working with him."



Newly appointed Acting Ithaca Police Chief Ted Schwartz.

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This is a true testament to the power of union solidarity and all that can be accomplished when we stand up for what is right.”

*President Mario Cilento, New York State AFL-CIO*

Condzella attributes the changing tides in Ithaca to the hard work and dedication of the Ithaca Police Officers who have weathered the storm, remaining to protect and serve their community. He also said that the former Mayor's abrupt departure from local government and the City Attorney being excluded from participation in any labor related discussions has changed the PBA's relationship with City Hall immensely. Lastly, Condzella cited the findings of the Tompkins County Ethics Advisory Board investigation into the former Mayor's conduct during

police reforms as a significant reason that the public lost confidence in his plan to get rid of the IPD.

The Ithaca PBA has received an immense amount of support from organized labor in their fight to advocate for their community and their union. Organizations such as the New York State AFL-CIO, Police Conference of New York (PCNY), New York State Union of Police Associations (NYSUPA), Central New York Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO, Midstate Central Labor Council AFL-



CIO, among many other local and regional unions came out in force during the past few very controversial years. Condzella said, "The outpouring of support from our brothers and sisters in labor across the state and country has been truly humbling, we'll never forget it."

"On behalf of the 2.5 million members of the New York State AFL-CIO, I congratulate the Ithaca PBA on the tremendous progress they have made with the Ithaca community, and with the Ithaca Common Council which recently voted unanimously to support the continued operation of the city police department," said Mario Cilento, President of the New York State AFL-CIO. "It was heartening to see the entire union movement getting behind the PBA and city workers in their fight.

This is a true testament to the power of union solidarity and all that can be accomplished when we stand up for what is right," Cilento said.



IPBA President Tom Condzella (left) & UAW Local 2300 President Levon Brewer (right).

The President of the PCNY, Richard Wells, said, "The Police Conference of New York wishes to congratulate Ithaca PBA President Tom Condzella and the members of his organization on their success in reaching an agreement with the Ithaca City Council to retain the police department. For the last several years, President Condzella has led an uphill battle against an ill-conceived, dangerous and illogical attempt to dismantle a professional, dedicated police force. The perseverance and courage of the PBA members against those who prefer anarchy over public safety has resulted in an agreement where the residents of Ithaca will continue to be protected by professionals willing to risk their lives for the community they serve."

Levon Brewer, President of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Local 2300, said, "I am overwhelmed with joy, that Mayor Lewis has put the citizens of Ithaca and visitors first, offering a path for a safe community by supporting the Ithaca PBA. The decision has impeccable timing considering the challenges around the Country that even small townships are facing, including fentanyl drugs and mass shootings."

Condzella said that public safety is of the utmost importance to the Ithaca PBA. With the City of Ithaca being recently identified as a hotspot for gun violence in New York State through the New York State DCJS Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Grant Program, Condzella said he

hopes that his members can start to get guns off the street and address violent offenders with increased staffing levels. Condzella also said, "We want to be able to give back to our community again. We want to empower our youth, help implement the remaining recommendations of reimagining public safety that make sense, and provide the public services that our community wants and deserves. It's time we stop looking back, and start moving forward."

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