

Statement to the Sullivan County Legislature during public comment, May 21, 2026

Hello,

My name is Ken Wampler. I was the county coordinator for the No Kings 3 protest in Monticello organized by We Are One Sullivan just this past March 28th, where approximately 1,000 of your constituents stood in freezing temperatures to express their many feelings about the Trump administration, and its wholesale destruction of the US Constitution.

You were all informed and invited along with other elected leaders. I personally sent letters to some of you and to other elected's. And you were all invited by Martha Scoppa in public comment in this very room.

One of you came, and we are grateful for that. One's representative told me that it was "too political". I said to that individual, and I say to you all now, there is nothing political about the Constitution of the United States. All people elected to public office swear an oath to the same Constitution, so asking you to stand with us in its defense seems perfectly within reason.

But eight of you weren't there. Your absence however, though disappointing, is not the main reason that I am hear to speak to you.

I am here to say that while Martha was reading the statement during public comment, informing and inviting you, our legislature to this important citizen action, one of our legislators got up and walked out. I am led to believe that this totally unacceptable behavior has become an accepted norm among you. I would have hoped that such a body as this would be self-policing, but once again, I am disappointed. One of you is even running for higher office. Is this behavior alright with you? You are a legislative body, not a group of nine individuals. You make decisions that affect our lives, and you accept this kind of distain for the public demonstrated by someone who has sworn an oath to be a good public servant? No wonder there is little faith in government.

Members of the public do not show up, give their time and concern regarding issues that define our lives to be cast aside and ignored. This is behavior unsuited to any elected official.

I use this as an example of a much bigger problem, a group of legislators who do not have a code of ethic, do not hold each other responsible and are not self-governing. How can such a coreless group work for we the people?

This has recently affected us, the people, when the state offered Sullivan county 8 MILLION dollars of state, not county, tax dollars, you all could not agree and make it happen for our county, the second poorest county in the state after the Bronx. The perfect service partner was ready to step into place, well-regarded in Orange county as a service provider to people in need. But you all could not come together and make that happen for the people around us who need us to help them.

As a citizen, as a tax payer, as a social worker, as an artist, and as a Christian, this enrages me.

Thank you,

Kenneth Wampler
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