

RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE OFFICE OF THE MINORITY

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Appalled by Behavior and Remarks of GOP Legislator

I was appalled by the attitude of intolerance revealed in the comments made by Legislator Martin Reid at the July meeting of the Rensselaer County Legislature. During the discussion of the lease renewal of the Raddock Building, which serves our Social Service clients, Mr. Reid stood on the floor of the legislature and stated that many property owners would not want to lease to “those people,” referring to social service clients as undesirables and second class citizens.

Both as an elected official and as a licensed realtor Legislator Reid owes the public an apology for his derogatory remarks. For Mr. Reid to make this callous statement as an elected official on the floor of the Legislature was a shock; for him to make this remark as a licensed real estate agent showed his ethical and legal disregard for the responsibility pursuant to his license not to discriminate in the housing industry. He should realize that few of the people who find themselves desperate enough to seek public assistance choose to be in that situation.

In fact, if Legislator Reid had bothered to visit the Social Service Department in the Raddock Building, he might have learned that more and more of the people applying for assistance held well paid jobs a short time ago. They’re in trouble now due to the state of our economy: a record level of home foreclosures, a rise in unemployment, and out of control fuel and food prices. Mr. Reid should do a reality check—nobody is immune to the economic downturn. He should be careful what he says because he might just find that he’s one of “those people” seeking public assistance in the future.

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