

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Statement on City Budget Crisis - Ridley, Gilmore, Lavarro, Griffin, and Zuppa**

When we campaigned on a ticket promoting affordability, transparency, and putting residents first, it was because we believed the top of that ticket shared our love of Jersey City. Less than seven months into the new term, campaign promises shouldn't be fading. It's time to deliver on them.

At Wednesday's meeting with City union leadership, the Administration told union members that Council's opposition to a 15% third quarter tax increase — opposed by Councilmembers Ridley, Gilmore, Lavarro, Griffin, and Zuppa — would result in layoffs. That's not accurate, and union members deserve better than being misled about what's actually on the table. They were also encouraged to show up at the next Council meeting and demand a vote on the increase, even though no such item is on the agenda. Written talking points circulated to union heads placed the blame on Councilmembers for asking basic budget questions. This Administration should be embarrassed by that.

Now the Administration appears to be moving toward layoffs before the public or the Council has seen the proposed budget, the terms of the State loan, the results of a PILOT audit, or the list of new hires since January 15, 2026 that Council requested. Pinning a potential layoff on the Council doesn't hold up, either — the Council has no authority over hiring or firing within the Administration.

So here's where we stand: Do better. This Council doesn't scare easily. We're willing to work with an Administration that keeps its campaign promises and shows up for residents. If a 15% tax increase is necessary, show us the budget that justifies it. All we're asking for is the information needed to make a responsible decision on residents' behalf.

Council President Denise Ridley, Ward A  
Council President Pro Tempore Frank Gilmore, Ward F  
Councilman At-Large Rolando Lavarro  
Councilman At-Large Michael Griffin  
Councilman Tom Zuppa, Ward C