

LABOR, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
VERBATIM MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Labor, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on January 27, 2011.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Jon Cooper, Chairman
Leg. Kate M. Browning, Vice Chair
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. Jack Eddington
Leg. DuWayne Gregory

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel for the Legislature
Gail Vizzini, Director of Budget Review Office
Joe Muncey, BRO
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk
Ben Zwirn, County Executive's Office
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Eric A. Kopp, Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Department
Dot Kerrigan, AME Aide
Jack Caffey, Aide to Presiding Officer
Brian Lahiff, Child Care Council of Suffolk County
Kara Hahn, Communications Director/Presiding Officer
Ed Hennessy, Aide to County Executive
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:15 PM

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Okay, folks, we're going to start in about a minute so if everyone can take their seats.

Good afternoon everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the January 27th meeting of the recently reconstituted Labor, Housing and Consumer Protection Committee. I'd like to ask Legislator Cilmi to lead us in the Pledge, please.

SALUTATION

Okay, thank you very much. And good afternoon everyone.

PUBLIC PORTION

Okay. We have no correspondence, but we do have one speaker that would like to address us during the public portion. If Brian Lahiff can come up; he's representing the Child Care Council of Suffolk. And he'd like to speak regarding the Living Wage Hardship Fund. Hello, Brian.

MR. LAHIFF:

Thank you. I did not bring copies. I'm filling in for my Executive Director today. So I can get copies of the testimony. She e-mailed it to me. I'll read it off the BlackBerry.

Good afternoon. My name is Brain Lahiff. I'm the Assistant Director of the Child Care Council of Suffolk. We are a not-for-profit planning and coordinating agency dedicated to making child care work for all of Suffolk County's diverse communities. Through advocacy, education and resource and referral, we take a leadership role in supporting children, families, childcare providers, employers and the public to ensure that quality childcare takes its place as an integral part of society.

In 2002 Suffolk County passed the Living Wage Law, which set guide lines for non-profits contracting with Suffolk County. Any organization that contracts with Suffolk County must a pay its workers the Living Wage rate. In order to help organizations pay for the mandated wage increase, Suffolk County created the Living Wage Hardship Fund, which was intended to help offset the increased cost to these agencies. From 2002 to 2006 childcare providers were exempt from the Living Wage Law, but this exemption was removed in 2006. Childcare providers who contract with the Suffolk County Department of Social Services must now pay their employees the mandated Living Wage.

Regulations from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services requires childcare providers to follow age appropriate child staff ratios making it very difficult for them to meet their payroll needs. These regulations are in place to ensure the health and safety of the children in care. They were not intended to stifle the growth of childcare programs because of the associated costs of hiring and retaining qualified staff. The Suffolk County Living Wage Law does just that. The law creates a scenario where childcare providers may not be able to enroll more children due to the high cost of hiring the required number of new staff to stay in compliance with state regulations.

If regulated childcare providers go out of business, parents will be forced to make difficult choices about where to leave their children when they go to work. This may mean leaving children in unsafe, illegal, unregulated care. It may mean leaving children with barely older siblings. It may even mean parents losing their jobs as their patchwork care falls apart.

The Suffolk County Living Wage Hardship Fund helps to reduce these risks. It allows regulated childcare providers to continue to offer qualify childcare options to the hardworking families of Suffolk County. Therefore, the Child Care Council of Suffolk believes that the Living Wage Hardship Fund is an essential instrument that allows childcare providers to meet their mandated requirements

and enthusiastically supports the continuation of the Living Wage Hardship Fund. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you very much, Brian. Do any Committee members have any questions or comments? Okay. Thank you very much.

There are no scheduled presentations so we can move right to the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Starting with tabled resolutions, first we have **IR 1947-2010 Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law to sunset living wage subsidies. (Cilmi)**. Legislator Cilmi?

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

I'll second that motion. All in favor? Opposed? **IR 1947 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Next up **IR 2218-2010 Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law requiring the posting of "Cash Only" signs at restaurants. (Co. Exec.)** Do we have a motion?

LEG. GREGORY:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

I'll second that motion. Any discussion? Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? **IR 2218 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Next **IR 2219-2010 Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law requiring store closure on Thanksgiving Day. (Co. Exec.)** I will make a motion to table.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

No discussion. All those in favor? Opposed? **IR 2219 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Moving on now to Introductory Resolutions, **IR 2261-2010, Approving the appointment of a relative of a County legislator in the Suffolk County Board of Elections. (Lindsay)** I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

We have a motion to approve and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? **IR 2261 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

And last but not least, **IR 2279-2010 Adopting Local Law No. 2011, A Local Law to Enhance Article XXXVI of the Suffolk County Administrative Code to add a local preference to benefit victims of natural disasters. (Romaine)** This has to be tabled for a public hearing so I make a motion to table.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

I have a second. All those in favor? Opposed? **IR 2279 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Legislator Browning? We are done.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. I just want to make a quick comment. I went out of the room when Brian was talking about Legislator -- excuse me -- Legislator Cilmi's bill. I did send a letter to the Presiding Officer about the Living Wage Advisory Committee that was formed during the time that that Living Wage Law was put into place. I don't believe they meet or have ever met. So he has contacted the Labor Department. I don't know if he's had a response yet, but, you know, we are going to look to reconvene this Committee to address this issue with the Living Wage Law.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Very good.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you, Legislator Browning. Before we close, does anyone else have any questions or comments? There being none, make a motion to close this Committee meeting.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Second. Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:23 PM