

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Public Safety 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 Thursday, January 29, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairperson  
Legislator DuWayne Gregory - Vice Chair  
Legislator Thomas Barraga  
Legislator Kate Browning  
Legislator Daniel Losquadro

**Also in Attendance:**

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Robert Calarco - Aide to Legislator Eddington  
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Michael Cavanaugh - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Paul Perillie - Aide to Majority Caucus  
John Ortiz - Budget Review Office  
Maxvel Rose - Aide to Legislator Gregory  
Marcus Povinelli - Aide to Legislator Losquadro  
Ben Zwirn - Deputy County Executive  
Ed Hennessey - CE's Assistant  
Dennis Brown - County Attorney's Office  
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature  
Robert Anthony Moore - Chief, SC Police Department  
Salvatore Marino - Inspector/Suffolk County Police Department  
Ted Nieves - Captain/Suffolk County Police Department  
Joe Williams - Commissioner - Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services  
Tract Pollak - Suffolk County Police Department/Headquarters  
John Searing - Deputy Commissioner - Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services  
Robert Sheron - Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services  
Michael Sharkey - Chief-of-Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's office  
John Desmond - Director/Suffolk County Probation Department  
Gail D'Ambrosio - President/Suffolk County Probation Officer's Assoc.  
Gilda Avram - Vice-President/Suffolk County Probation Officer's Assoc.  
Peter DyKernan - SC Probation Officer's Association/PO Delegate  
Dan Buckley - SC Probation Officer's Association/PO Delegate  
Christine Acer - SC Probation Officer's Association/PO Delegate  
David Spreckels - Suffolk County Probation Officer  
Noel DeGerolamo - 2nd Vice-President/Police Benevolent Association  
Russ McCormick - Suffolk Detective's Association  
Debbie Alloncius - AME/Legislative Director  
Debbie McKee - SC Police Department, Emergency Unit  
James Wooten - Councilman/Town of Riverhead  
Hope Callazo - American Red Cross/Director-Community Service Program  
Laura Ahearn - Executive Director/Parents for Megan's Law  
Patrick Young - Central American Refugee Center of Brentwood

Lynn Weyant - Chairperson/Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board  
Arvind Vora - Executive Director/Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board  
Jim Barr - ABATE of Long Island/President-Long Island Chapter  
Manna Cali - ABATE of Long Island  
Maryann Slutsky - Campaign Director/Long Island Wins  
Dr. Luis Valenzuela - Long Island Immigrant Alliance  
Caroline Levy - Director/American Jewish Committee &  
Co-Chair of the Latino Jewish Council  
Stephen McGiff - Deputy Mayor/village of Patchogue  
Michael O'Neill - East Hampton Anti-Bias Task Force  
Andrea Callan - New York Civil Liberties Union/Director-SC Chapter  
Patrick Aube - President/Southampton Town PBA  
Nadia Marin-Molina - The Workplace Project  
Mike DuPauli - Resident of South Setauket/Vietnam Veterans  
Lucius Ware - President/Eastern Long Island NAACP  
Lillian Clayman -1199 SEIU  
Michele Lynch - 1199 SEIU  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken & Transcribed By:**  
Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

***(\*The meeting was called to order at 9:38 A.M. \*)***

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, if we can have everybody stand and Legislator Gregory lead us in the Pledge.

***Salutation***

If you would remain standing for a moment of silence for all those that put their life at risk for our country, both domestically and over seas.

***Moment of Silence Observed***

Okay, thank you very much. Okay, I'd like to start with the public portion. Each speaker can come forward when I call your name and you have three minutes to speak. Patrick young.

**MR. YOUNG:**

Thank you. My name is Patrick Young from the Central American Refugee Center, CARC in Brentwood, and I'm here to speak about IR 2227 which would establish a task force on hate crimes in Suffolk County.

The introduction of that bill marks a courageous step by Legislator Gregory in this Legislature to address a deadly problem in Suffolk County. Last week we heard the County Executive describe an agency which demanded a full examination of the County's treatment of hate crimes as "wacko". Over the last two months we've heard him defend the reliability of statistics which said there was only one hate crime against Latinos in 2008, prior to the murder of Marcelo Lucero. One wonders if he now considers District Attorney Spota wacko for charging seven young men who were involved in the killing of Marcelo Lucero with eight other racially-motivated attacks prior to November 8th and four additional attacks on Latinos on the very day that Marcelo was killed.

There is a trial for the seven accused of attacking and killing Marcello Lucero and we know that justice will be done in their cases, but their conviction alone will not halt these attacks. As district -- as the District Attorney noted, there are others who are involved in these attacks who are out there and we know that two weeks after Marcelo was murdered there was another attack by eight young people in Patchogue on Latinos. So these have not halted.

It's extremely important that we not simply allow this to be turned over to the Criminal Justice System, that the County itself set up a task force to investigate what led to the attacks, what led to the under reporting of hate crimes against Latinos and to comport new policies for Suffolk County that will bring everyone in the County together. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you.

*Applause*

Maryann Slutsky.

**MS. SLUTSKY:**

Good morning and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. My name is Maryann Slutsky, I live in Eaton's Neck and I am the Campaign Director for Long Island Wins. I am here to support the task force on hate crimes bill. I hope that the Legislature will support this bill. Suffolk County needs to take a good look at what's going on in terms of hate crimes. It is ridiculous to think that only one hate crime was committed in 2007, as it was reported; we know that this can't be true. I hope the task force is truly representative of the immigrant community, especially Latinos as they are the prime targets. Also, I hope that the County sets aside enough money for a thoughtful, thorough and transparent investigation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Arvind Vora.

**MR. VORA:**

Good morning. My name is Arvind Vora, I'm representing Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board as Executive Director. I am here to speak about IR 2191-08. There are a couple of points I would like to bring to the attention of the committee, particularly the Chairperson.

Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board is concerned that in its history of more than 35 years, the County has, to our knowledge, never rejected a grant funding. Second, Suffolk County has led way in being cleared to secure more funds from New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee than perhaps any other County in the State.

It is understandable for affected groups to raise concern, however complex safety issues demand complex solutions. It is Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board that was instrumental in having vehicle inspection stations starting with Suffolk County and then throughout New York State. The same thing for breathalyzer tests and nationally we have seat belts, air bags, all these things that is a lot of complex issues and a lot of resistance to improve the safety.

The last one. Each road users have unique needs and characteristics. For example, on our Interstate Highways we do not permit pedestrians, bicyclists or horses, and restrict trucks from driving in left lane for the safety of all users. Similarly for the safety of road users, including motorcyclists and other motorists, on enforcement front, we must do a special kind of enforcement to promote the safety of all users. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Lynn Weyant.

**MS. WEYANT:**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Lynn Weyant, I am the Chairperson for the Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board. I am here also to speak in reference to the Tabled Resolution IR 2191-08 which is a grant that was received from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for the Suffolk County Police Department in reference to

motorcycle safety enforcement.

The Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board, as all traffic safety engineers are aware, that there are three prime ingredients in traffic safety and they are the three E's that are often referred to; engineering, education and enforcement. We do support all of these endeavors and are aware that education is a very important factor in reference to all traffic safety, and that would include motorcycle safety.

I am under the understanding that recently there was a meeting with the Police Department, the motorcycle riding community and Legislator Jack Eddington, and there seems to have been some resolution to the way that this grant would be used for enforcement on motorcycle safety. I'm glad that has occurred and I'm hopeful that this resolution will move forward.

Just in finalizing and summarizing, the Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board does believe and support all these enforcement programs and looks forward to working on future grant programs with the County Legislature, the Suffolk County Police Department and the motorcycle community to move forward with additional funding for enforcement, as seen appropriate. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Jim Barr.

**MR. BARR:**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee. My name is Jim Barr, I'm the President of the Long Island Chapter of ABATE of New York, we represent 500 motorcyclists here on Long Island. I would like to thank this committee for tabling the resolution at the last meeting to give us the opportunity to sit down with representatives from the Suffolk County Police Department to discuss the way that these grants were utilized.

ABATE is American Bikers Aimed Toward Education. We're a motorcycle rights organization. We seek improved road conditions, we seek rider education, we seek public awareness. So we are not -- we do not object to you receiving grants for the education and safety improvements for motorcyclists, we objected to the way that the grants were utilized for the last four years where all motorcyclists were forced to exit the highway on Exit 66 regardless of the condition of your motorcycle, your safety equipment, where you were heading, who you were with, and that was the objection that we had.

So fortunately, I would like to commend the Suffolk County Police Commissioner for sending representative Chief Ponzio to sit down with us. We spoke about an hour-and-a-half with other representatives from the motorcycle community and I believe that the Suffolk County Police Department is willing to perform these safety inspections, but more equally and fairly as they would be performed with other automobiles. Our objection was to the singling of all motorcycles. So that being the case, ABATE of Long Island is not going to object to these grants being received. We just hope to -- we're glad we opened the door with this communication and we hope to continue it.

We would also like to put out on an open invitation to the Suffolk County Legislature and the Suffolk County Police Department and the Suffolk County Traffic Safety Board to perhaps work together to actually improve motorcycle safety for our Long Island riders. We are interested in producing a public service announcement. We have commitments from WBAB Radio Station and its local disc jockey, Fingers, that would help air this publication. We would like to work towards that. We hope that perhaps you would be willing to sit down with us in the future. You know, we'll expend funds on this, we'll do a fund-raiser to have the funds, if you could help us get it published and aired, you know, before the public. We want to increase motorist awareness of us on the road, and that's going to be a key thing for us. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Dr. Luis Valenzuela.

**DR. VALENZUELA:**

Good morning, distinguished gentlemen and distinguished gentle lady. First of all, I want to commend Legislator Gregory for the introduction of the hate crimes bill. I also want to commend Legislator Eddington who quickly supported the introduction of that task force, quoted in Newsday, so thank you, sir.

You know, we can't reach into the past and change it, but one of the things that we can do is not to be held prisoner to the past. And so with the introduction of this bill to create a special task force on hate crimes, we hope that it signals a new direction that Suffolk County has taken, so we urge you to support the bill. And we also urge you to make the improvements necessary so that the authority and means are made available to the task force to conduct a full and proper study, investigation, and to -- that result in actionable recommendations that propels our County, as I've said time and time before the full body, to the place where it is an example of what inclusion means.

The hate crimes that we've witnessed in the recent past are not isolated incidents. Hate crimes can only occur in a social context that facilitates the dehumanization of a targeted group. And actions and omission of actions -- big, small and especially indifference -- facilitates the sustenance of that context. And so people who look like me understand that there are places where we should not walk and understand that there are places in which we should not enter, and to the extent that we know that and we say nothing about it, we are complicit. But I'm here to share that with you because you sit in a place where you can demonstrate exactly the type of society that we want to live in. Time and time again we hear that we live in the most segregated region in the nation. Well, let's not say that anymore, let's say that we're working to make it the first most integrated region in the nation.

Again, I urge you to support this bill. Grant the authority and means to make this a task force that make everyone proud and makes folks who now are targets equal citizens under everyone's eyes. And thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Caroline Levy.

**MS. LEVY:**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I am a resident of Northport and I speak today as Director of the American Jewish Committee's Long Island Chapter and as Co-Chair of the Latino Jewish Council of Long Island.

The American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906 and a key component of its mission is to promote democratic, pluralistic societies where all people are protected under the law, because it is our belief that such societies are the best defense against bigotry and discrimination. The Latino Jewish Council was established in 2004 and it builds relationships that will help to advance human rights, erase stereotypes and fight inequality and bigotry.

I am here to express support for Resolution 2227 as a very important step in bringing our community together and in combatting bias and hate crimes. With the proposed task force in place, we can take a big step forward to ensure that all those who are mistreated or attacked in Suffolk County, whether it is because of the color of their skin, their religion or sexual preference, feel comfortable in reporting hate crimes and bias incidents to our governmental authority -- authorities.

We applaud this legislation and those Legislators who have supported it from the beginning. And we look forward to working together to improve the quality of life in Suffolk County for all those who call Suffolk their home. Thank you very much.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Steve McGiff, Deputy Mayor of Patchogue Village.

**DEPUTY MAYOR McGIFF:**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. My name is Steve McGiff, I'm the Deputy Mayor of Patchogue. The Mayor sends his regrets, he's presently attending his son's graduation from Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Benning.

We wholly support this measure. The one concern we have as a community is the timing. As a former prosecutor, I have a fear that this -- public hearings that would emanate from this measure could lead to a circus atmosphere which may compromise the prosecution of these criminals. There was just an article in Newsday today, a two-page spread, once again it's our concern about the timing.

We wholeheartedly are behind this measure. We would like to thank Mr. Eddington for his involvement with the State Human Rights Commission. He was down at the synagogue in Patchogue immediately after this with the Mayor. And also, I see members of the Police Department here, we want to commend the Suffolk County Police Department for putting foot patrol on Main Street now, which is really -- the presence, I believe, is going to combat this problem. But once again, timing, not the measure itself. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Andrea Callan.

**MS. CALLAN:**

Good morning. My name is Andrea Callan, I'm the Director of the Suffolk County Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union and I represent our nearly 5,000 members throughout Suffolk.

I absolutely applaud Mr. Gregory for his leadership with the introduction of IR 2227. This bill not only recognizes that it is in our best interest as a community to probe for the kind of information this proposed task force will be charged to uncover, but also demonstrates the willingness to move forward and make Suffolk County a place of celebrated diversity and send a message that our immigrant neighbors so desperately need to hear.

In that spirit, I would like to point out a few areas of concern with the current language of the bill. I would ask these things be addressed before putting this bill to a full vote before the Legislature. I am concerned that the appointees to the task force will largely be seen by the community as answerable to the County and not to the community. As it stands, there are really only two of the 13 positions that may be viewed without this kind of sentiment in the backs of the minds of those observing the work of the task force.

When attempting to send a message of accountability to the County, you know, it's really in the best interest to ensure that the findings of the task force are viewed as completely transparent and legitimate.

I'm also concerned that the \$5,000 is not really enough to support the work of the task force. I would urge that this committee and Mr. Gregory, you know, ensure that the task force is properly funded so that it will be able to execute its duties without undue limitation.

And finally, without presupposing a lack of any cooperation by County employees, it should be noted that there may be times that the task force will need help and will require the help of this committee to compel testimony from those who possess relevant information to the task force's mission. So I ask that the Legislature and its committees will give the task force all the tools necessary to do its job.

So I do urge you to consider these points to improve IR 2227 which is a very integral bill for the future of Suffolk County. Thank you.

## *Applause*

### **CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Patrick Aube.

### **MR. AUBE:**

Good morning. Patrick Aube, I'm the President for Southampton Town PBA. I come before you regarding Resolution 2207, the law to prevent double taxation for police services. This legislation is good; it's good for the taxpayers of the eastern part of the County and all the other residents within the County. The mere fact that the Legislators are looking at saving taxpayers funds show you're truly concerned about its residents. If the towns and villages have the ability to choose what services they truly need rather than paying for a predetermined list of services like the Finance Section, Receiving, Dispatch and Teletype Unit, Human Resources Bureau, Payroll Section, Investigative Bureau, Firearms Training Section and there's more. The savings for the taxpayers will be felt across the County as the need for services would diminish, as would your costs.

I do call for the Legislators to take it one step further, though. As most residents are unaware, there are police services being duplicated across the County, and particularly on the east end. When you take, for example, Gabreski Airport, which is located within the Town of Southampton, it's patrolled by the Town of Southampton Police Department. Calls for service are answered by the Police Officers of the Southampton Town, but the taxpayers throughout Suffolk County are paying for the Deputy Sheriff's Department to patrol this desolate parcel. They even are paying for a substation within the airport for the Sheriff's Department. Why would we allow this duplication of police services? It is a fact that the businesses within Gabreski Airport pay taxes to the Town of Southampton for the Police Department to patrol it.

Further proof of this duplication of service is with the signage located at the front entrance which says "Airport Patrolled by Suffolk County Sheriffs, For Assistance call 852-2287 or 852-2651." I can assure you, those numbers do not go to the Southampton Town Police Department's Communication Section. To further show the duplication of police services within the Sheriff's Department, you have a Sniper per Section, Emergency Response Team, ATV Unit, Mountain Bike Unit, Motorcycle Section; none of these services are required on the east end of Suffolk County and none of the Police Department are in demand of it or asking for it.

As you can see from my comments, I have outlined duplication of services from the Suffolk County Police Department and also the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. I'm well aware of the jurisdictions with all those agencies and I'm also well aware of the Suffolk County Charter which the residents chose back in 1960. In a time when taxpayers are looking for savings, this would be the opportunity for you, the Legislators, to control government spending on departments trying to expand their services when the demand is not there for such action and none one has even asked for it. Thank you. Unless you have any other questions.

### **CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Nadia Marin-Molina?

### **MS. MARIN-MOLINA:**

Good morning. I'm here speaking on behalf of The Workplace Project and on behalf of our members in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Our members have suffered and have been the victims of hate crimes in the past. So first we would just like to thank Legislator Gregory for his initiative in proposing this legislation, this bill to set up the task force on hate crimes. And we'd make -- would like to make a couple of points.

The first is that this -- that this task force and this issue is not just about the murder of Marcello Lucero, because hate crimes have occurred not only in Patchogue but certainly in Farmingville, as

you know, and in other places in Suffolk. And so it's important to remember that the scope is much broader than just about one crime.

The second is I think that those of us who have been on different sides of the issue on immigration in the past, I think we can all agree on one thing and that is that in this debate. We need facts; we need information, not assumptions, and that the ideas and solutions that we come up with can only benefit from information that is gathered. So this initiative is something that I think all of us can agree upon and I'm glad to see that there has been support from people that, again, we've been on different sides in the past on other pieces of legislation.

And the last point is we don't know what the product of the task force is going to be. We know that there will be some sort of a report. And as an organization, on behalf of an organization that support the rights of immigrant workers, we may or may not be in agreement with the end results of the task force or with their conclusions. But we do think that it's important that the investigation is done, we do think that it's important that the task force have representation from the immigrant community, and whatever comes from it we will certainly be involved in providing information. Thank you.

### *Applause*

#### **CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Is there anybody else who would like to address the committee?

#### **MR. O'NEILL:**

Dear Committee, my name is Michael O'Neill, I'm with the East Hampton Anti-Bias Task Force. And like every other speaker before me, I would like to commend this committee for undertaking this invest -- this study that will investigate reasons why there is such an under reporting of hate crime.

Last month in the Liverpool Newspaper -- population 500,000 in Liverpool with 60 languages spoken other than English, spoken daily there, the largest Chinese community in Europe of 5,000 families -- the Police Chief asked for people to come forward with reports of hate crime because they had been so under reported. There is only 75 hate crimes reported a month there and through studies from the universities around Liverpool and statistical data, they estimate there are at least 3,500. Other smaller towns in England have centers where people may go other than the police. One such center, and I'll send you all the article on it, a town of 75,000, has 29 centers with trained people there to intake complaints from people on hate crime.

Hate crime is terribly unreported in this nation, not just in Suffolk County. As we've heard or read in Newsday, our own Executives say that we have as many hate crimes as New York City. Well, it's true. We probably also have as many hate crimes as any city in the country because it is such an under reported problem. It is not just a matter of the culture of policing, it is -- it is all the institutions involved with reporting that have been negligent; schools, emergency rooms, etcetera.

I, too, urge you not to -- not to have just political appointees, I think that will somehow compromise whatever the investigation is. There are academic journals on just this topic of hate crime. There are institutes in various universities throughout the country, and abroad of course, that are devoted to just studying the problem of hate crime and I think it's very important that you have not just -- for instance, one I saw was you would appoint someone from the Human Rights Commission. Well, there are 15 Commissioners, I don't know if any of them have any expertise on hate crime. So, therefore, I think that you really should look very closely at this process of appointment.

And the \$5,000 that's allocated to do a satisfactory inquiry I think is woefully insufficient, that that would not pay for many things such as having experts come from around the country to talk about some of the reasons why there is such a terrible under reporting of hate crime. But I do

congratulate you for changing the whole tenor of the presentation of Suffolk County and thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much.

*Applause*

Okay, that closes the public portion.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Jack, you've got one more.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Just a minute, please?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Oh, okay. We have another person, okay. Is there anybody else that would like to sign up before we close? There's one more speaker. Anybody else? Two more speakers, okay.

**MR. WARE:**

Good morning, everyone. My name is Lucius Ware, President of the Eastern Long Island NAACP serving the five eastern towns. I traveled in this morning to say again, congratulations to opening up what is a very, very important piece so far as this County is concerned, and certainly the five eastern towns. By the way, we don't have any hate crimes out there. We haven't had any. There's none on the record, okay? But I do have great questions and would like to be involved in the discussion.

Here you have five branches in this County of the premiere, oldest Civil Rights Organization in the country that will next month celebrate 100 years in this business, and not once have you appointed anybody from those organizations, the NAACP branches. Okay? You have one person from the Spanish Advisory, one person. Okay? I think -- and I certainly would make myself available at any time to come in and sit down on this particular piece of legislation. Thank you very much.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you.

**MS. LYNCH:**

Good morning. Michele Lynch with 1199, SEIU. I would like to thank Legislator Gregory for initiating this task force on hate crimes bill, 2227. And I'm concerned about the funding that the bill has, that it might not have enough funding. I also have concerns about the diversity of the people that are on the task force, and I'm also concerned about the committee implementing policies that would bring people together. I mean that, to me, is what it should be, bringing people together. Suffolk County is my home and it's the home of anyone that lives in Suffolk County. Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, thank you very much. Let me try this again; is there anybody that would like to address the committee? Seeing none, okay, I'll close the public hearing -- public portion. And I would like to call Councilman James Wooten from Riverhead Town to make a few statements. If you'd like to sit, you're welcome to sit.

**COUNCILMAN WOOTEN:**

Oh, I think better standing, I think. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. Go right ahead.

**COUNCILMAN WOOTEN:**

Actually, it's more of a dissertation than a presentation. I appreciate the time to come before you.

Basically I came in to talk about Resolution 2207, but I know it's going through some draft changes now, so I really don't want to expound too much on that. It does deal with double taxation for the east end towns.

I'm a Councilman for Riverhead Town. I'm a retired Police Officer after 25 years, so I, like all of you who sit here, am very concerned about public safety. The catalyst for my being here is the removal of our Public Safety Dispatchers from our Police Department which will take effect the end of June, at which time the County will be asked to take over that function at no cost to the taxpayers other than be supplemented by the 01 Fund. That concerns me. Not that I don't believe that Suffolk County can handle that task, I'm sure they can; I had a brother that worked as a Public safety Dispatcher in the County for the 1st Precinct for many years. But coming from Riverhead, I felt that the public safety dispatching is better handled in-house, people that live in the community, that work in the community, shop in the community and have a vested interest in the community.

That double taxation where the 01 Fund provides that from the County to the town, I know -- I know if you just extrapolate just that one portion of that 01 Fund, it would come nowhere near to fund our public safety dispatching. But in any event, it should be revisited to have it at least rearranged so that the services that we do take advantage of the County for would be paid for and those that we don't should not be paid for.

Legislator Gregory, I had a chance to look at your web page, and I'm very impressed. And in it you say that you come from a diverse community, ethnically, geographically and economically and has a lot of diversity. Well, so is Riverhead. Riverhead is a great town, it has all those attributes. So we're looking to -- I'm here to try to save our Public Safety Dispatchers; I'll be very honest with you, that's the catalyst that brought me here. I think the bill 2207 will certainly help to alleviate some of the tax burden that we're paying the County for services that we really -- I won't say don't need, but we don't want.

Also, I have with me an opinion piece from George Nolan that was dated last year, in January of '08, which goes into his interpretation of the Suffolk County Charter, C4-6J. It's an excellent piece. That -- I know you're working on that and the methodology used to determine what the tax rate will be for the east end towns, I appreciate your diligence on that as well.

And I think that's basically it. I'm sure I'll be back after -- I'll do a formal presentation, but I really have a lot of facts and figures I have to get for you so that you can move on for that, too. But I appreciate the time and keep up the good work. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you, Councilman. Okay, at this time I'd like to call Ms. Gail D'Ambrosio, Suffolk County Probation Officer's President. And if we could have our Director, John Desmond, also come up because I would like you to respond to her discussion. Thank you. I also want to welcome the number of Probation Officers I see sitting there. So, welcome.

**MS. D'AMBROSIO:**

Thank you. I am also a Senior Probation Officer for the Suffolk County Probation Department. I am here with my colleagues to make a request of you concerning the possible loss of our Firearms Training Program.

The 2009 Executive Budget recommendations for the Probation Department indicates that our firearms instruction is to be provided by the Police Department or the Sheriff's Department. On December 23rd, 2008, the County Executive informally notified us that the Suffolk County Police Department would begin to perform Probation's firearms training. The problem with this recommendation is that it alludes to no extra cost to the County. We believe this is neither cost effective nor effective from a personal safety perspective.

Probation Officers have peace officer responsibilities, as do Police Officers. However, where the Police apprehend and arrest a perpetrator, we are unique in that we have a long-term relationship with those individuals sentenced to probation by the court. The Probation Officer may arrest probationers during their probation sentence, and at the same time must redirect their negative behaviors in order to reintegrate them into society as productive citizens. The Probation Officer is keeping the community safe and rehabilitating the offender at the same time.

The training we receive from our own firearms instructors is the result of their own real-time field experience as Probation Officers. Probation Officers must make regular visits to the homes of violent and nonviolent probationers. Our instructors know what it is like to go into extremely dangerous homes and environments to meet with their probationer because it is their job, whether they are with a partner or not. They understand the stress related to getting into and out of a probationer's home safely.

We are requesting that the Public Safety Committee look into the County Executive's proposed 2009 budget, inquire as to how it is more cost effective for the Police Department to perform our training and what benefit it would serve for any other law enforcement agency to train Probation Officers. We are certain that our own instructors are the only ones who can provide us with the safe and effective training we need. I would like to thank you for your time. Are there any questions?

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Jack?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Legislator Losquadro.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. I think you brought up a very good point. And I'm sure Mr. Desmond could comment on the fact that the Probation Department does fill a different roll within the law enforcement community. And based on what I have seen in the past and what I've been hearing, it seems like you do have fairly specific needs in terms of the type of training that your officers would receive, and I don't know that the training provided by those other departments would incorporate the specific aspects of your training based on that, as you put it, the real-world experience in those specific circumstances. Do we have any information, Mr. Desmond, that the components of the training that they are currently receiving would be incorporated if your department lost that ability to train its own officers in firearms?

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

Good morning, everyone. What we're basically dealing here with is a situation where budgetarily we're trying to most efficiently utilize all of our resources. Currently, the Police Department's academy is not geared up to run full-class. They have some of their full-time personnel available to provide instruction.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I hate to cut you off. I understand that. I asked specifically the --

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

Right, I'm just -- I'm going -- I'm trying to address that.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

We all understand what the Police Academy does and budgetarily we handle that. The specific components that go into firearms training for Probation Officers, will those components -- would those components be incorporated into training, or would we have to have the people who are currently doing that training train the instructors in the Police Academy prior to them being able to provide that training to the Probation Officers? It doesn't seem -- I know we're talking about efficiency in budget, but it doesn't seem very efficient to me.

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

We -- back in the fall, we had some preliminary discussions with the Police Academy personnel about the training. The vast majority of the training process for firearms is basically equivalent no matter whether it's done by the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department or the Probation Department; there's a standard curriculum that pretty much addresses. There are definitely subcomponents that differ from agency to agency and units within those agencies.

One of the discussions that was had was the idea of our -- some of our range individuals meeting with the academy personnel to provide additional information to them for training for there, for the Police Department's plain clothes officers. There's always a positive outcome when there's sharing of information. The Police Department has offered to have some of our personnel come in to provide some of that additional information during the transition. What we're looking at is, again, the most efficient use of resources.

I don't see a short-term, positive outcome by utilizing these 12 officers at this current time to provide firearms training for the Probation Department. The staff at the Police Academy is available to do this and it represents an efficient use of resources. As the Police Department goes back to a full training regime, I would be more than happy to revisit the situation.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

There's a couple of terms that I jotted down there; you said "vast majority", "pretty much", so obviously there are components of the training that are specific to the needs of individual departments.

Now, you said, if I was following you, that the individuals who are currently doing the firearms training would help the staff in the academy in giving them the specific information so they could provide that training? How exactly would that work, how do you foresee that working? Because "vast majority" and "pretty much", it's telling me that there is a component that -- of the training, of the basics of firearm training. Of course we know weapons handling, weapons safety, those are, of course, universal. But the specifics of dealing with, you know, a certain situation such as being in someone's home, close quarters perhaps, you have a concealed weapon, certain situations, I don't know. But when you're telling me "vast majority" and "pretty much", you're telling me that there's a gap there and I want to know how that's going to be addressed.

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

There's a small gap, it basically has to do with the more plain clothes component. And this is something that the Police Department is always concerned about, too, that they make sure that the training for the plain clothes officers recognizes their needs and situation. A lot of the training that we do about that occurs in our basic training component when the Probation Officers first come in, and this is not something that is covered normally in the routine requalifications.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Are we talking about requalifications, or we're also talking training for new hires?

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

We're talking also about the training for new hires. But the -- excuse me. Most of the discussions about officer safety and home visits and those types of situations in the community are done in the

training component, not in the range component, and that continues to be done by the Probation Department.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And you're confident that in that training component, without being able to do live fire exercises, that that training is adequate to provide that firearms safety?

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

Yes, I am. I've had training by the Sheriff's Department, by the Police Department, by the Probation Department, by the FBI and by the State Police, and I find that virtually almost all of the training is identical by the different appropriate authorities. There are small differences and I believe that can be handled as part of our routine other training.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Does Ms. D'Ambrosio have anything to add to that?

**MS. D'AMBROSIO:**

I do have a question. But how is it more cost effective for the Police to do our training when we make so much less than them?

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I think that's a valid -- it's a valid question.

**DIRECTOR DESMOND:**

My understanding is that there's staff at the Police Academy that are dedicated to that role and the firearms training full-time and that they are available to provide this for this year and next year, again, depending on the economic situation in the future. And it seems to me this is an efficient use of resources to take advantage of those availabilities

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I'll have to ask someone in the Police Department about that, because my understanding was we were releasing a lot of people who are under utilized in departments and that people weren't just sitting around doing nothing. You seem to be contradicting what we're hearing from that department which is that we have individuals now who are doing nothing, and that we could utilize them better in that regard. So it would be interesting to see what this department and the other department have to say and how those two things join together, because that's not what we've been hearing as a committee and how resources in our departments are best being utilized. Thank you, Mr. Desmond.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

I have a couple of things. You know, one of the things that really has bothered me in my tenure is that when I hear different groups come before us and say basically things are being done because we can, and I'm always concerned with not just what's happening but how it's happening and the process of it, and it seems like in the County process is a non-issue. But now we're talking about a group of people that their perspective is totally different. They don't come from a law enforcement perspective, they come from a social work perspective. And I respect both perspectives, because if our Police Officers acted like social workers their life would be in jeopardy, but the exact same thing stands for our Probation Officers.

And so I don't think that the training is the same and I also believe that there are nuances, little things that are done and said that change it, and maybe you can't put it on paper but it's there. And I know you being a social worker know what I'm saying, but as the Director of an agency, you're told to do things and you have to do things and I understand that, too. And that's why we're here today to deal with this

*Applause*

The other thing I heard is that the training is similar, so that if -- and please don't get crazy with me, PBA, but are you telling me that the probation can do the training for the PBA, for the Police Department and for the Sheriffs? Because they're qualified and they make less money. So, you know, I think you're going to upset a lot of people with that, or maybe whoever is suggesting this is probably a person that deals with numbers and not people.

So I am very concerned with this. And I haven't seen the numbers and I think like Legislator Losquadro, I would have to see how cost efficient this is and then why have people been standing around. And I think I could find a better job for our Police Officers than standing on -- doing firearms training, I'd rather have them out on the street. That's where I hear they want to be. That's what I hear the County Executive wants them to be, so that's where I'd rather see them.

Now, I see Mr. Zwirn standing, and you'd like to jump in on this?

**MR. ZWIRN:**

Well, I think I can give you some of the thinking if -- why we did this is because the Probation Officers that were doing the training can now go out and do -- attend to their caseload. We have, you know, trained Police Officers who can do firearms training on the range.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a hundred and some-odd million dollar deficit going forward. If we don't make better use of resources, you say numbers and people; well, the taxpayers are paying for all of this. And we have deficit, so we have to think a little bit outside the box, not the way things have always been done. But if we have trained Police Officers who can teach firearms training and the Sheriffs who -- why not use them and utilize them and let the Probation Officers go out and handle their caseloads. Because when they're at the firearms range, they're not doing the other part of their job.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Well, I'll let Legislator Losquadro respond.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Mr. Zwirn, I think this begs the same basic question that I -- well, really it was more of a statement to Mr. Desmond. But we have been told that every person in the department is being utilized. That if they're not performing a task, you know, if the academy is not in session, that those individuals are being released out to other duties. In fact, I've requested that information from the Commissioner as to where all these transfers have been taking place, are they temporary, are they permanent, are they three week assignments, what are they?

So it's really, I guess, a question of are we robbing from Peter to pay Paul? Sure. We have, you know, a heavy caseload that needs to be addressed on the part of the Probation Department, but if we're taking people in the Police Department to do that training and they would have been on release but now they're back in the academy, doesn't that just create a shortfall in the staffing in the department? Somewhere there's a finite number of bodies and somewhere the scale has to tip to one side or the other. So what we're trying to figure out is what is the most cost effective way to provide this training? Is it to continue to do it in-house and let those officers perform other functions within the Police Department, or is it more effective to have those Police Officers do that and put those Probation Officers back out handling the caseload? I don't think we really have a clear picture of what each side of that equation is to see which way the scale will tip.

**MR. ZWIRN:**

Then let's bring the -- now you're talking about numbers and not people, so let's bring the numbers people in and go over that, that's fine. You want to bring BRO and have the Budget Office come in here and crunch numbers --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Well, that's the way it's being --

**MR. ZWIRN:**

-- then that's fine.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

That's the way it's being presented to us, sir. So --

**MR. ZWIRN:**

That's correct.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

You know, I have --

**MR. ZWIRN:**

But there's no shortfall in the training.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Well, you're not an expert in public safety, nor am I, all right? We have not received this type of training. I do happen to think that there could be a deficiency. When I'm hearing words like "vast majority" and "pretty much", that tells me -- it's like Medicare Part D, there's a donut hole somewhere. We're missing something in that. And if we need to make sure -- if this does move forward, if budgetarily it does make sense for us, maybe we need to make sure that those Probation Officers that do the firearms training provide the training for the officers in the Police Academy, to make sure that they do have that component that they can specifically teach them; right now we haven't heard that's taking place. So I have a couple of concerns here; one budgetary, two programmatic, and those need to be addressed.

**MR. ZWIRN:**

Well, that's fine. I --

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Yeah, I'd ask one more question. Are they pulling officers off the street to do this training now, Police Officers?

**MR. ZWIRN:**

You can ask the Chief, that I don't know.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. Because, you know, I think that's a concern. Again, you certainly could get our support if you communicate with us and give us this information when other groups come to us so we have a better picture, otherwise we've got to tease it out here and this just delays the process. So I think we're going to need to have that presentation for us.

**MR. ZWIRN:**

That's fine. You ask Fred Pollert or the Budget Office to come in here, BRO is always here, we'll crunch those numbers.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Right, okay. And then I'm going to ask the Probation Officers to come and give me -- us a presentation on just the specialty that your training provides, so it will be clear what's the difference. If there is a difference, the onus will be on you to show us here, because money isn't the only consideration for me. It may be for the Executive and I understand that, but for me, as a clinical social worker, it's certainly never going to be.

**MR. ZWIRN:**

Well, it's not the County, it's the taxpayers, the people you represent and he represents that he's concerned about, people losing their jobs, losing their homes. If we can do -- if we can do it, we can do it as well or better and for less money out of their pocket, then everybody wins.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Right. As Maslow said, "After basic needs, safety and security," and that's this committee. So we're going to deal with both of those, so I appreciate it.

Any other questions, comments? Okay, thank you very much.

**MS. D'AMBROSIO:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Before we get into the agenda, I'm going to break my rule because I had a late person come, and when he said, "Please give me consideration because I'm a disabled Vietnam Veteran," it's very hard for me to say no. So come on up, mike.

**MR. DaPAULI:**

Hi. I thank this veteran for giving me the opportunity to speak. There's a major problem right now, a social problem --

**MS. MAHONEY:**

Can you state your name, please?

**MR. DaPAULI:**

Yeah. The name is Mike DaPauli, Vietnam Vet, South Setauket, New York. I want to bring to Public Safety an epidemic, a problem or lack of Police training, a lack or -- or a need for Police training in association to the crisis that we now face in responding to the residents of Suffolk County.

A lot of the members of the Police Department do not have the psychological background training and skills necessary to respond to an older population, or an older populous such as those that may be age 55 and above, those that are elder. I call it a form of elder abuse, sometimes gender abuse, sometimes handicap abuse, sometimes age abuse. A lot of the Police that may respond on today's emergency calls in crisis on the home front on 911 domestic violence issues, they arrive on the scene, I guess admirably so, suit, ready to skill, so to speak, as it should be, to protect themselves, protect the members of the household. But a lot of times the members that do respond are not skilled in dealing with older individuals and they have handicaps, they may be on medications, they may be suffering from dementia, they may have mental impairments that are using the 911 system sometimes for attention, sometimes to handle some domestic crisis or personal crisis in their own life. But it is a major epidemic that is now growing.

As a Vietnam Vet, I've seen it through PTS and associations that break up some families and homes. It's much more mundane, if you will, on economic periods of tight unemployment, people are losing their homes, it's hard to put food on the table. And when you have Police that are not totally trained, they can't even explain or indicate what is an elder, what age does an elder start out? What if some of them are mental impairments, what if some of them are dementia? So if there's any room in the Police Academy, it's not only for training there but it's ongoing training.

I'm a licensed instructor, I'm a licensed teacher in New York State in that particular realm. They require a certain amount of training every year, professional training, a certain amount of credits, college credits. So I'm just bringing this to the attention. I'm a Vietnam Vet also, I have multiple disabilities, I appreciate the opportunity just to enter into the record. But please, if you will, get some ongoing training through the Police Academy, some general understanding for elders, those

that are handicapped, those that have mental impairments. And I just wanted to bring to your attention that it is a crisis and it's going to be worsened with the economy.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you very much. Maybe we could get the social workers from Probation to go over and do some of that training, you know?

**MR. DaPAULI:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. I'd like to get to the agenda.

**Tabled Resolutions**

***Tabled Resolution IR 1865-08 - Establishing the Police Fund Review Committee to examine the impact of escalating Suffolk County Police Department Personnel costs on the fiscal stability of the Police Fund (County Executive).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Motion to table by Legislator Losquadro.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 1904-08 - Establishing community safeguards from registered sex offenders placed in emergency housing (Schneiderman).***

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Motion to table by Legislator Browning.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Motion to approve.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Well, I'll second the motion to table. I have a motion to approve by Legislator Losquadro.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Is there a second on the table?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, we have the tabling motion.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

That takes precedence anyway.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

So all those in favor of tabling? Opposed?

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

One opposed. Abstention? *Tabled (VOTE: 4-1-0-0 - Opposed: Legislator Losquadro).*

*IR 2093-08 - A Local Law to protect Suffolk residents by permitting the seizure and forfeiture of vehicles engaged in unlawful fleeing a Police Officer in a motor vehicle (County Executive).*

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Counsel, was this Public Hearing closed?

**MR. NOLAN:**

It was.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Did we ever come to a -- I'm sorry, through the chair. Did we come to some sort of a position on the Constitutional question we had on a first offense with no predicate for seizure of a personal asset?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Well, the first thing we wanted to determine is when this law was drafted, did they mistakenly leave out the predicate offense. And we were able to determine, with discussions with the Police Department and County Attorney's Office, that no, they wanted to make the seizure happen after the first offense. The theory being it's very unlikely you're going to have a predicate offense for somebody fleeing the Police. It's, you know, not something that's likely to be repeated.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And there's a particularly heinous crime that does put the public in extreme jeopardy. My concern, of course, always is liability exposure.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Right. I don't --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I know there has been extensive case law on seizure of assets, so I was just wondering where that was.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Well --

**MR. BROWN:**

Well, you did ask the question last time and we did talk about it and we did opine that we felt that there was a rationale basis, particularly as George has described, for not having a predicate offense.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And based on previous case law, we think that we would prevail in a challenge?

**MR. BROWN:**

Well, yes. And we think, you know, the test would be whether or not there's a rationale basis or a reasonable basis for this particular type of governmental legislation, and we do think that it is

rationale or reasonable.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I personally think it's a good idea. As I said, I think it's a particularly heinous crime and I think that given what we have seen over the past few years, especially in the video age and, you know, having the ability, unfortunately, sometimes to see these chases live and the damage that it caused during some of these high-speed pursuits, I certainly think it's a good idea. I just wouldn't want to see the County exposed unnecessarily. So I'll certainly be happy to support it and make the motion to approve.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. I have a motion to approve, I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?  
***Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Renee, cosponsor.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

***IR 2191-08 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$25,500 from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for the Suffolk County Police Department to fund a Motorcycle Safety Enforcement program with 85.3% support (County Executive).*** I make a motion to approve.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I'll second that. If you could just -- Mr. Chairman, if you could just put on the record some of the discussions and changes that are made. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Yeah, I was going to do that. Thank you. I have a motion and a second. Yeah, and on the motion, I just wanted to thank all the parties. This is a perfect example of where we needed some clarification, the Police Commissioner sent Chief Ponzo who met in my office with members from the riding community and I think we've come to a consensus that we want enforcement, we want safety and we want proactive and that we're going to work altogether. I think Lynn from the Traffic Safety and your partner there, you know, coming forward, and I think we're going to be able to make sure that the driving public knows that there are more than motor -- that motor vehicles also have two wheels and I appreciate that, and we're going to try to really make sure people know that this riding season. So I thank everybody. And we will be meeting again, I think with the Chief, to continue this on with ABATE and the other organizations. So I think this is good and I hope we can do more work together. Thank you.

So we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, ***approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 2207-08 - A Charter Law to prevent double taxation for Police services in certain towns and villages (Romaine).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Motion to approve.

**MR. NOLAN:**

It's a Charter Law.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Oh, it's a Charter Law, I'm sorry.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Yeah, it's being -- yeah, okay. It has to be tabled for a Public Hearing, and I believe there's some

revisions. So did you make that motion?

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I'll make the motion to table for a Public Hearing.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. Legislator Losquadro made the motion to table for Public Hearing. Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor?  
Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, *tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)*.

**Introductory Resolutions**

Okay, *IR 2227-08 - Establishing a Task Force on Hate Crimes in Suffolk County (Gregory)*.  
Legislator Gregory?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Did you want to say something?

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Oh. As a matter of fact, I do.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

All right, you got me all ready, General.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Do I have a motion?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I'm going to make a motion to discharge without recommendation.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

I did want to ask a question. I know that we had Mr. Ware from the NAACP and the ACLU were here making some suggestions for changes. I know that you were working on changes; are the changes that they're requesting the same?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes. Let me just start off by saying that this is a bill that I think is very much needed in Suffolk County. After the incident in Farmingville we didn't have this discussion, and I call it a discussion because I want to have public hearings throughout the County so that people who are reluctant in the past to come forward that may have been the victim of a hate crime can come forward. And if we send that message -- and I know, I've had discussions in private with people that there's a concern, and I'm sorry Mister -- the Deputy Mayor from the Village is not here. I was a little offended by some of his comments and when he called it a circus atmosphere; I don't think it's a circus atmosphere. And his concerns over timing; I don't think there's ever going to be a good time. We had a man who was killed in the streets of our County. What other time is going to be appropriate? We need to talk about it now.

***Applause***

It's not a white guilt bill where all white males should feel guilty for acts that other people have done. As you can see in the papers, one of the perpetrators was an Hispanic gentleman. There's issues within the Latino community; Puerto Ricans against Mexicans and Puerto Ricans against El

Salvadorians. So there's issues, there's interracial as well as intra racial issues that are -- that surround this issue and we need to talk about it. And hate crimes, as Mr. Ware has mentioned, is not just involving the Latino community. I'm a member of the NAACP, I'm a life term member, life long member in the NAACP. There are issues that have gone on in this County that need to be addressed.

And for us to table or to shy away from this discussion, what kind of message are we going to send? Are we sending the message that if you're a victim, we don't even want to listen to your potential complaints or gripes or any issue that you may have. We don't care if you are here legally or illegally or whatever, we don't even want to listen to you. And the point that I was trying to make with this bill is regardless of whatever else is going on, that we as a governing body has influence and policy making roles over our law enforcement officials that we send the message that hate crimes in Suffolk County will not be tolerated.

### *Applause*

That's all this really is. And that if you feel comfortable enough -- because there is a cultural barrier that exists. Many of these people come from countries where, you know, the governments are corrupt. They don't trust the government officials, their law enforcement officials, they're in a foreign land, they've been victimized; you know, there's a reluctance to come forward. We should send the message that we're here, if you're here, whatever your status is, we're going to diligently pursue and prosecute any perpetrator of a crime. And to say that we can't do it at this time, the timing is wrong, says that, "Well, you've been hurt and maimed, you've been laying dead on our streets, we don't want to listen to you," what other time is going to be appropriate? And to think that -- just one last point.

I know there's concerns about what's going on in the Village of Patchogue; this is not a Village of Patchogue issue. I had a discussion yesterday with Laura Ahearn, some of the work that she's done with the victim -- the Crime Victims Center. She's done work in Brentwood. I'm doing some work with the Town of Babylon, in Copiaigue. Copiaigue has a growing Latino and Polish immigrant population, and some of the things that I hear at some of the community meetings that we had scares me. It's a matter of time, it's a ticking time bomb. It's a matter of time before we have an incident in my community, and we've already had other incidents.

So I think we -- it's appropriate that we establish this task force. It's not a "gotcha" task force, but it's to send a message, If you're a victim, please come forward. We're your government, we want to prosecute and we do not tolerate these types of crimes." It's not an indictment against law enforcement. I don't think there's anyone else on this committee or in the Legislature that's in support of the efforts that they're doing, I don't think that they're not pursuing them in an appropriate way. I think Mr. O'Neil, I think his name was, he had alluded to statistics nationally and I've done the same research where, you know, hate crimes are under reported all over the nation, it's not just potentially here in Suffolk County, but it's definitely an issue that we need to discuss. Particularly -- none of them want to really go there. Particularly with the immigration issue, that's not going to go away. I don't want to talk about it; I mean, it's related but it's not solely the focus of this discussion. But people will still have animosities and bad feelings because of the whole immigration issue. Statistics show that during severe economic times, there are ethnic tensions and racial tensions, we're going to go through that, we're going to see that, and we need to get ahead of the game. Well, we're already behind, but we need to try to catch up as fast as we can. That's all I want to say.

### **CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Thank you. Legislator Barraga

### *Applause*

### **LEG. BARRAGA:**

Thank you. I certainly agree with the intent of the legislation and commend Mr. Gregory. What I have a problem with, and I've always had a problem with, is the whole concept, the methodology used here in terms of a task force or a commission.

When someone says we should be listening, I interpret that to mean as an elected official, I should be listening to you. My experience with task forces, they are diversions. You now go to a task force and maybe in six months they come forward with a report. A nameless, faceless task force; in this case, of 13 people, most of them I won't even know. They're not elected officials. We've already heard testimony this morning, people are concerned about the funding, they're concerned about who's on the task force, who isn't on the task force. There are endemic problems with tasks forces. In six months when their report comes forward, or whatever the timeframe is, the world can change dramatically.

This is a major issue in Suffolk County. Testimony should be relegated to the elected officials only. We have standing committees in the Suffolk County Legislature; this one is known as Public Safety. The intent or the objective of this bill can be done in public hearings by the Public Safety Committee where each one of you testify before us and present testimony and see each member in their offices. And then at some point in time, that standing committee of elected officials will summarize the findings, make recommendations and hopefully advocate for appropriate, if necessary, legislation.

That task force to me is a barrier between you and me as the elected official. The task force has never been elected. No Commissioner has ever been elected. I am the elected individual, I sit here on these standing committees. And on this issue, as well as any other issue, if we're that concerned about the issue, we can always have public hearings as a standing committee. That should be, as far as I'm concerned, an obligation we have. Stop with the task forces, stop with the commissions. Because all that's going to happen here, in the next six months an elected official is going to ask, "What are you doing on hate crimes?" He's going to say, "Well, we're sitting around, we have this task force and we're waiting for them to come in"; no good.

I am the elected official. I sit on this standing committee. If it's so important, and this is, we should have public hearings. And I'm not concerned about who comes up, who's yelling, who's screaming; that's what I get paid for. We'll summarize the findings, we'll make the report, we'll make suggestions to the Legislature, if necessary, to implement further legislation on this issue in Suffolk County.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**  
Legislator Gregory.

**LEG. GREGORY:**  
As usual, I like your vigor and your resolve. There's only one problem with that.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**  
Really?

**LEG. GREGORY:**  
That some of the elected officials that you talked about, they're reluctant to bring before us a task force. So if we don't have -- if we're reluctant to have a task force of community people, elected officials and representatives from different bodies throughout this County to come forward and to listen to complaints, what obligation are they going to have to themselves when they're already reluctant to put a task force forward?

**LEG. BARRAGA:**  
With all due respect to Mr. Gregory, the Chairman of this committee can authorize public hearings on this very subject. He can lay down parameters, have four or five hearings in different parts of the County. He is the Chairperson of this committee, he has that power to do that.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

And I understand that. And I think -- but I think it's important, and this is something that I didn't politicize, didn't want to politicize it, I didn't publicize it, because I think it's that important, where others might have and others have in the past. I think that the makeup of this committee, we have stakeholders from various sectors of the community that do this as a living, for the most part.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Mr. Gregory --

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Legislator, I really don't want to get just a dialogue or --

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

No, just one final comment.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

I don't think you're politicizing it when you're calling for public hearings in which elected officials are there receiving testimony; that's what we're supposed to do. I think when you have task forces with people I don't even know, that's when it gets very political.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, I just --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

And may I just -- because I failed to address Kate's -- part of Kate's question earlier.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay

**LEG. GREGORY:**

There were some concerns about the budget. I was assured by BRO that the budget would be sufficient. I did meet with some members and their concerns -- in their concerns about the makeup of the committee. I can assure you that in the final analysis and when the bill is put forward with the recommendations that we will have a diverse body comprising of the Latino and the immigrant community, the African American community, the gay/lesbian/transgender community, clergy, everyone who has a stake in this, and I think it would be a product that we can all be proud of.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay. Just to add that, you know, as chairman of this committee, I haven't been sitting still. And I have been doing meetings in my office. I am on the New York State Human Rights Commission, we've had three meetings with the Commissioner. And we have broken up into three groups, just to let people know what is happening; we have an education group, a group that's dealing with Legislators and community leaders, and another group on community -- integrating community relations. So we're working on that. I have been meeting, also, privately with Carolyn Levy who's been helping me put together some other groups. And then Saturday in my office I'm meeting with a Turkish and Latino group to talk about getting together a mutual soccer league tournament thing.

So I've been doing all of this and do have plans to have, when it starts to shake out, them make a report to this committee so we'll know what is going on, and maybe I should have let everybody know that this was happening beforehand. But there are a lot of things coming.

And I think what Legislator Barraga suggests is that we do have to stay very actively involved in our offices with this and not hide behind a committee, and I think that's what often happens. People

say, "Okay, thank God I don't have to deal with this, because the commission or the committee is doing it." And I think it was valid that the Legislator brought that up because we want it to be known that we are all doing our individual things right now in our offices to try to deal with this horrible situation and the commission could certainly be another avenue. So thank you. I want to turn it over to Legislator Browning who had a comment or a statement.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

You know, the Mayor of Patchogue did contact me also requesting that we maybe hold off on this because of some concerns. You know, a lot of people probably look at me and say, "What do you know about segregation and being discriminated against?" But try living in Belfast, an Irish Catholic, when I was growing up. Yes, we had segregation. Being an Irish Catholic, you were a victim, and it's still going on today. So I absolutely understand what's going on and it really bothers me here because when I moved to this country, you know, it's the melting pot. And I hate to say it, Suffolk County is not, it's by far the melting pot.

You know, I do wonder, task forces are not always a good thing. Sometimes it's a group of people that meet for the sake of meeting.

I'm hoping that this task force will come up with some good -- you know, good answers, good solutions. You know, because what are we doing wrong here in Suffolk County and why is Suffolk County so segregated? That has to stop, it really has to stop.

*Applause*

You know, and what bothered me was -- you know, I had someone call my office and complain about the neighbors that just moved in next door, they bought a home. "So what's wrong with them?" "Well, you know, they're brown-skinned people." So that really can -- you know, what am I going to say? My response was, "Bring them a cake, say hello." You know, what are you going to do? It just amazes me today. We just elected a black President. You know, somewhat the country has moved forward, but there's still a lot of work that needs to be done. So, you know, I'm happy to be a cosponsor on this bill.

*Applause*

I really feel that we need to change. I look forward to this task force doing some positive work, you know, coming back with some solutions for us and saying, "This is what we need to do." Maybe your recommendations will be the Federal government has to do something or the State has to do something to make it better. But we have to come up with an answer, we have to come up with a solution to the problem. And I congratulate you for doing it.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Legislator Losquadro.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. To me there's a fundamental point here in that we have people within our society that are a problem, but I refuse to accept that our society is the problem.

Yes, there are people within our society that are bigoted, they're hateful, they do terrible things, as we've seen outlined in the paper today. But to sit here and infer -- and I'm sorry, Legislator Gregory, but I was listening to what you said and you basically said we don't want to listen and hate crimes are tolerated right now.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

They are.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I disagree with that. We have criminal prosecution; when we catch people, we prosecute them. If people are afraid to come forward, that's something we as elected officials need to address; I agree with Legislator Barraga. But I refuse to see this as an indictment on our society. There are people --

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

It is.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Please.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

It is.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

You're entitled to your opinion.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Yeah, let's not interrupt a Legislator, please

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I think that there are -- I certainly agree that there are people within our society that are a problem. I do not want to see this become an indictment upon our society. And I think that we as elected officials and the Police Department has done a fantastic job --

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Whoa.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

-- and they -- if you disagree with that, that's your position, sir.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Thank you.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And I certainly think that there are things we can do to make the situation better, but I don't think that having a committee, as Legislator Barraga put it, not made up of elected officials, not made up of the people who are directly responsible to those constituents who get to pull the lever for them, I think is the wrong way to go with this. And contrary to what you may feel, and I know you are very passionate about this and I know you feel that we do need to make changes to protect the people of this County and I agree with you, I just disagree on the mechanism.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

I just want to add on a personal note that, you know, this is an issue that we all agree has to be dealt with, you know. I appreciate Legislator Browning sharing her experience as an Irish Catholic in Belfast, and I know that must have been a horrible thing. You know, unbeknownst to most of you, I grew up in a Queens Bridge Housing Project in the city for eleven years; nobody looked like me, there was nobody there with red hair and freckles. And I know what prejudice and beating and being in hospitals because of being beat, being stabbed, being shot; I've had some experiences. And it saddens me that we had an incident in my community, and I'm going to do everything I can. And I don't care if it's task force or personal visits or meetings, I'm going to work hard so this is eradicated in our area. If I could do it in our world I would do it. I don't ever want to be part of a problem, I want to be part of the solution. And sometimes you can't always see it because it's in your face, but when I hear that this has been an ongoing thing in my own community with students from my high school that I worked in 30 years, it saddens me tremendously.

You know, I've been criticized in the past and I would just say to those people you've never taken the time to know who I am. But I can tell you, I'm going to be part of the solution. And not matter what it takes, I'm going to work with it, and I can tell you so will this committee and so will this Legislature. This is going to be a County where people are going to know we're serious. I don't care where you came from, when you came or how you got here; when you're here, you're going to be treated with respect and dignity and that's what we're going to fight for. So Legislator.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Well, if I gave the impression to you, Mr. Losquadro, that we're doing things wrong or that I'm trying to make an indictment of our community as a whole, then I apologize, but that's definitely not my intent. I really -- I fully realize that there are certain segments, small segments of our community that --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Well, if I may interrupt you for a second. I just want you to be careful when you make a statement to say that we want people to know hate crimes will not be tolerated; if you extrapolate that logic, that means hate crimes are tolerated now.

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

They are.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

So -- I mean, you can see that it breathes that --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No, no, no. What I said was --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

It breathes that belief.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

-- we should send a message.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I understand your point. But I think it serves to perpetuate almost to a point and not actually serve to get to the cause of actual healing the problem.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

All right. It seems I have to go there; I didn't really want to go there. And Kate and I, we actually had a discussion, we had a similar discussion in caucus. I was a victim of a hate crime when I was ten years old. I never reported it, I never -- I have a twin brother, never told my twin brother, never told my parents, and it's going to shame me that they may read about it in the paper. I never told anybody, my friends. What I did was I modified my behavior. The gentleman was a retired Police Officer, knew he was a racist, it was well known. He used his dog to attack me when I was alone walking down the street. Was my life in danger? No, not at all. But I modified my behavior. You know what I did? I lived on a dead-end street and I had to go past his house every single day. What did I do? I cut through a yard, I rode my bike in case he sent the dog after me, this way I would outrun it, I carried a stick, a rock, I went with my friends.

If we don't send a message that hate crimes are not tolerated and that people feel that we don't care, even though that's the -- that's wrong, people are going to start modifying their behaviors. They're going to start carrying guns, knives, bats and sticks to defend themselves, and what they're going to do is instead of waiting to be attacked, they're going to be the aggressor if they feel that they're in danger and then you're going to start seeing Mike O'Malley's and Sal Bonaturo's laying on the streets. And then are we going to wake up and say, "Well, maybe we should have this discussion"?

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I don't want anyone to think for a second --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Because just like --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And I know --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No, just like --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

-- any elected official here, I don't want anyone to think for a second for someone to believe that we condone or in any way --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No, no, no. My point --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

-- turn a blind to what's going on.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

My point is that --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

The people believe that -- if you think there's a mechanism by which it will help people believe that they have more of a right to come forward than they already do now, which they already do, then --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

But there's a reluctance.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

-- then I think that that can help.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Just like I had a reluctance --

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

One person at a time.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

There's a reluctance, just like I had a reluctance. I don't know if it was embarrassment, I don't know if it was fear, whatever it was. I mean, I'm sure these people, they feel the same reluctance and their lives are in danger. My life wasn't in danger, I know that. We should send the message we don't accept it, that's all, and we're asking you to come forward.

I'm not making an indictment on the Police saying, "You guys aren't reporting crimes, that you're not investigating crimes that are being reported." My opinion is people aren't coming forward and reporting them, and that's -- statistically, that's something that's going across the country. We should make it -- we should build -- try to build a comfort level so when people feel comfortable enough to say, "Yes, I've been a victim. I'm coming out of the shadows now. Please investigate this."

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

And your feeling is that a task force is a better mechanism --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I believe that.

*Applause*

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

-- than doing it within our elected officials.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yeah, I believe that. I believe that it's a in the right direction. I'm doing other things with Legislator Horsley and Assemblyman Ramos, we're going to have a forum at Suffolk Community College to address other issues.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

I think that's fantastic working with other electeds.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

But as a governmental body, I think it's important that we send a message, if you're a victim, we're going to have public hearings, please come forward and we'll -- we're going to investigate those instances.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Just on your motion. Could you just explain the reason for making a motion to discharge without recommendation?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Well, there is reluctance to --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

It has nothing to do with making modifications to the bill?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No, not at all. We -- the concerns that were brought up were addressed.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Then why the motion to discharge without recommendation then?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Well, I'm more than happy to make a motion to approve. I didn't want to put anyone on the spot, if you will, to move it along.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

To get it before the full body of the Legislature.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, this would be the best mechanism.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, I think we had plenty of discussion. And I think that what I heard out of this was that we need to do our individual things and work together as Legislators, but this task force is like the New York State Task Force, another way, another vehicle, getting more people involved. And we have a motion and a second; right, I have a second?

**MR. ORTIZ:**

We don't have a second.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

I'll second.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay, motion by Legislator Gregory, second by Legislator Browning.

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, passed.

***Discharged without recommendation (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

That was to discharge it without recommendation, right?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Correct.

***2247-08 - Accepting and appropriating funding in the amount of \$1,147,710 in reimbursement funds from Sprint Nextel for Federally mandated rebanding of Suffolk County Public Safety Communications Network with 100% support (County Executive).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

So moved. I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved and placed on the Consent Calendar***

***(VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 1009-08- Approving the appointment of Jamie Atkinson to the Suffolk County Citizen Corps Council (County Executive).*** I'm going to make a motion to table, he couldn't be here, or she couldn't be here today.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

And second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***1022-08- Accepting and appropriating grant funds received from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, Highway Safety Program (County Executive).***

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

On the motion?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Yes.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Number one, is it a hundred percent funding so it can be on the Consent Calendar? And number two, we've learned to be a little bit weary of receiving Highway Safety Grant funds, so what exactly are these set aside for?

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

George, I believe it's a hundred percent, isn't it?

**MR. NOLAN:**

It is.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

Okay.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

What is the purpose of these grants, could someone speak to that?

**MR. NOLAN:**

The only backup is a letter from the District Attorney's Office saying that they will accept a grant from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. This grant will provide funding for the District Attorney's Highway Safety Program, but that's the only information I see in the backup.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Does the Police Department have any information on this?

**MR. NOLAN:**

It might be the DA.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Or the DA's Office? It's a relatively small grant, it's only \$44,000, but I'm just curious if you knew what it was.

**CHIEF MOORE:**

It's the safety teams, additional --

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Just put that on the record; for, what, the Motor Carrier Safety Units?

**COMMISSIONER MORGO:**

Robert Anthony Moore, Chief of Department, Suffolk County Police Department. I have with me Chief of Patrol, Robert Ponzo.

Yeah, these are for additional patrols, safety teams. Motor Carriers are a part of it?

**CHIEF PONZO:**

Yeah, I think so.

**LEG. LOSQUADRO:**

Okay. Very well. Thank you very much. I just wanted it on the record since we didn't have it in our backup. Motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar.

**CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:**

I'll second that. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved and placed on the Consent Calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

Okay. Okay, then, if there's no other business, we're adjourned. Thank you.

***(\*The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 A.M. \*)***