

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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, Thursday, September 13, 2010, 10:00 a.m.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairman
Legislator DuWayne Gregory - Vice-Chair
Legislator Kate Browning
Legislator Tom Cilmi
Legislator John Kennedy

Also In Attendance:

Presiding Officer Lindsay - Legislative District No. 8
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Sara Simpson - Office of Counsel to the Legislature
Alicia Howard - Legislative Assistant/SC Legislature-Clerk's Office
Sara Hartmann - Aide to Legislator Eddington
Terry Pearsall - Chief-of-Staff/Presiding Officer Lindsay's Office
Kara Hahn - Director of Communications/P.O. Lindsay's Office
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Cavanagh - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Linda Bay - Aide to Minority Caucus
Paul Perillie - Aide to Majority Caucus
Jason Richberg - Aide to Legislator Gregory
John Ortiz - Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn - County Executive's Office
Ed Hennessey - County Executive's Assistant
Brendan Chamberlain - County Executive Assistant
Dennis Brown - Bureau Chief/County Attorney's Office
Ted Nieves - Deputy Inspector/SC Police Department-Headquarters
Tracy Pollak - Headquarters/Suffolk County Police Department
Joe Williams - Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Louis Molinari - Treasurer/Police Benevolent Association
Russ McCormick - Sergeant-at-Arms/Suffolk County Detective's Assoc.
John A. Goldbach - SC Deputy Sheriff Police Benevolent Association
Gail D'Ambrosio - President/Suffolk County Probation Officer's Assoc.
Dot Kerrigan - 4th Vice-President/Association of Municipal Employees
Hope Collazzo - ARC - Community Service Program
Gail D'Ambrosio - President - SC Probation Officer's Association
Laura Ahearn - Executive Director/Parents For Megan's Law
Crime Victim's Center
Irma Orozco - Parents For Megan's Law/Crime Victim's Center
Paula Ryder - Parents For Megan's Law/Crime Victim's Center
Myrta Lebron - Parents For Megan's Law/Crime Victim's Center
Debbie Epple - Director/Public Information Office
Rick Brand - Newsday
All Other Interested Parties

Verbatim Minutes Taken By:
Alison Mahoney - Court Reporter

Verbatim Transcript Prepared By:
Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

(The meeting was called to order at 10:04 A.M.)

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, I'm going to be starting the Public Safety Committee meeting. I'm a little -- I don't see -- this is the Public Safety Committee meeting and as I look around I see no representative from the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department or Probation. Thank you, Joe Williams, for coming representing FRES, but I don't see the people that I believe need to be here. So we're going to continue anyway and go with the meeting. Kate Browning, Legislator, will lead us in the Pledge.

Salutation

If you could remain standing for a moment of silence for all those that serve overseas and at home.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you. Okay, I'm going to start with the public portion and I have one speaker, Gary Rogers.

MR. ROGERS:

Good morning. My name is Gary Rogers. I'm with the Suffolk County SPCA. I'm here just to ask for your support for the animal registry resolution. Animal cruelty is a precursor to other violent crimes. I don't know if anybody is aware of it, but most of our serial killers started with animals and we feel that it's very, very important that a registry get started. They tried to pass this in the Legislature up in Albany and it just never gets any legs to get going. Suffolk County has always led the way with bills like this, so hopefully you'll get it out of committee and let it go before the full Legislature. I'm here if you have any questions about it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No. Thank you very much.

MR. ROGERS:

Okay, thank you. Have a good day.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Then next on our agenda -- unless there's anybody else who would like to come forward and speak to us? Then next on our agenda is Laura Ahearn, Director of Parents for Megan's Law and her staff. Take it away, Laura.

MS. AHEARN:

Thank you, Chairman Eddington. My name is Laura Ahearn. I'm the Executive Director of Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center. I'm here today to provide you an overview of the Hate Crimes Advocacy and Outreach Program. There are 68 slides; somebody noted that already. We're not going to go through the entire presentation. Typically the presentation out in the community will take between an hour, an hour-and-a-half, possibly longer if there are any victims who come forward or if there are any community members that have more extensive questions.

Before I begin, though, I would like to introduce three of the agency advocates that are involved with hate crimes. First is senior advocate, Paula Ryder. And before I go on to the next two crime victim advocates, I would like to say that our advocates are soldiers. They are out in the community when there's a violent crime or there's a crime committed against somebody elderly, minor, or disabled and it is not a violent crime but a property crime. Our advocates are there 24/7. Homicide cases, survivors of homicide victims call, hate crime victims, robbery, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, menacing, confrontational burglary, stalking, human trafficking.

Here are the three ladies in my staff that are there for victims of crime in Suffolk County. And I'd

like to commend them, they are never out front, they are always with families. I would like to commend them for their incredible work to help support people who have been victims of crime and to help change people's lives. Thank you very much. Senior advocate Paula Ryder, advocate Irma Orozco, and senior advocate Myrta Lebron.

Both -- all of our advocates -- we have fully staffed five advocates, unfortunately they're not all available right now, but our agency advocates go into court with victims, go on medical appointments, collaborate closely with law enforcement and also provide extensive, comprehensive services to victims of crime and also their family members. Both Irma -- Irma Orozco is the individual advocate hired specifically under the grant that was given to the agency by the Legislature and by the County Executive. However, Irma is backed up -- Irma is bilingual, as is Myrta. Myrta Lebron backs up Irma and actually does hate crimes as well, and Paula and our other advocates are also supporting the Crime Victims Center Hate Crimes Program because not all hate crime victims speak another language.

And now that we're just sort of touching on other languages, thanks to the Suffolk County Police Department, the agency now is capable of translating up to 170 languages. Prior to that we were pretty much bilingual with English and Spanish. Now we have the technology needed to be able to interact in 170 different languages. That is at a very minimal cost to the organization thanks to, again as I said, Suffolk County Police Department and the relationship that they have with the service called Language Line.

The agency, very quickly, to give you an overview of the agency, the agency is basically two major programs under one umbrella of Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victim Center. The Rape Crisis Center, which most of you are familiar with our work when it comes to sexual assault, child sexual assault, adult rape, and the advocacy and victims services we provide for victims of sex crime. Also, the sexual assault prevention education that we do and our rape crisis hotline. And, of course, because this is usually what is causing so much unrest in the community, issues related to Megan's Law, sex offender management and also our new program, Sex Offender Registration Tips Program.

On the other side we have our Crime Victims Center, which started in 2007. In that program we provide services to all victims of violent crime. Under that program the Hate Crimes Prevention Program and the 24 four hotline exist. The Crime Victims Center has, along with the Rape Crisis Center, has provided services to over 9,800 victims of violent crime and other crimes here in Suffolk County. On, again, the rape crisis side, because we've been -- the Rape Crisis Center has been in existence and those services have been provided for pretty close to 15 years now, and in 2007 we started the Crime Victims Center. So that includes the sexual assault and also survivors of homicide, hate crime. Again, since 2007 we have been collaborating with law enforcement to provide services for hate crime victims as well. And there's the list, you will have all of this in literature that I'll ask actually, Irma and Myrta, if you could pass that out.

They're going to be handing you a literature pack. The literature is being -- right now for the Hate Crimes Program the literature is in the center, not in a pocket. This is what will be distributed for each of the hate crime Power Point presentations that are done in the community. The rest on the left is the Rape Crisis Center; on the right, the Crime Victims Center.

All of the hate crime literature is being translated actually by a volunteer named Fannie {Cheng}. She is volunteering her time, and believe me, that's a costly and time consuming process to translate legal terms, so we thank her for that.

The agency provides counseling generally on the higher level for Parents for Megan's Law in the Crime Victims Center. We provide counseling, we have licensed mental health providers that work in the agency in both Stony Brook, in our Stony Brook and Patchogue locations. We have educated

over 83,000 children and adults, in groups usually no larger than 40, in public/private schools, community organizations. Many of you have had our educators in your community, if not, give us a call and we'll be there for you. We also do professional education as well for teachers and those working with children and mandated reporter classes, that's those that are State licensed that are required to have child abuse and maltreatment training. We also do four children's programs and, again, those are done in the schools right here in Suffolk County.

On the Megan's Law side you probably are all familiar with our help line because we actually have helped process over 90,000 contacts on the National Megan's Law Help Line, which is local as well. That's where tips come in from the community or complains come in from the community about sex offenders. We go into that community, provide prevention education and also work closely with law enforcement or if there are any situations where a sex offender may be out of compliance.

Our Sex Offender E-Mail Alert Program is fully operational. Here on Long Island we have level one's, two's and three's, which the State registry only has two's and three's. We have all of them. All of the law enforcement agencies on Long Island give us their notifications so we e-mail alert. We're nearly complete with all 50 states to do E-Mail Alert Program. That's a program funded under the U.S. Justice Department. The agency has been working for a number of years on that technology.

On the Registration Tips Program we have plenty of examples of cases that -- actually one case, Legislator Browning's district, where there was a convicted sex offender that was knocked off of Match. We also now have very strong collaborations with both Facebook and My Space. One of my staff, who's a retired NYPD lieutenant, actually is funded, this is a Justice Department program. We actually go on to social networking web sites and compare and contrast the registries with those individuals that are registered in social networking sites, and we have knocked off now about 15 registered sex offenders who should not have been on Facebook or My Space.

We also have had about 106 residency restriction complaints, and in the end 54 of them were viable and corrected. So about half of the residency restriction tips that come into the agency are viable and law enforcement works collaboratively with the agency. They take that information and they correct the situation. So if an offender is in violation, Probation or Parole would correct it or law enforcement would correct it.

The Suffolk County Crime Victims Center. All victims of violent crime experience tremendous trauma, have mental, physical and emotional ramifications and consequences that could be lifelong. Unfortunately, many victims of crime don't know where to go, and that's up to us. The Crime Victims Center does a tremendous amount of outreach. We want to ensure that any victim of violent crime or elderly, minor or disabled victim of a crime is provided the services they are entitled to under the law and also that they exercise their rights under the law.

I'm going to start you out with a public service announcement that we did back in 2007. The Crime Victims Center was put into place working collaboratively with law enforcement. We identified large populations of victims who were not being provided support services. Well, how could that be? All of us know that crime victims have services available, but the problem is that information has to get to all victims of crime.

Traditionally throughout the country, this is not unique to Suffolk County, traditionally crime victim services have evolved. They started with providing specialized services to domestic violence victims, then that evolved to sexual assault victims and also services for children. But what was missing nationally was all other victims of violent crime. What about victims of assault? What about survivors of homicide? What about victims of robbery? What about victims of menacing? What about victims of confrontational burglary? They're entitled to services under the law and can be compensated for what losses they incurred as a result of the crime. The challenge was to try to

get that connection made. How do you get services to victims?

So in Suffolk County, back in 2007, we actually expanded our mission and opened the Crime Victims Center. So that means any victim of a violent crime here in Suffolk County will be, through Police Department protocols, informed that there are crime victim services available to them. If they would like those services we receive a fax and our advocates reach out and make connections with those victims or surviving family members. It seems simple, right? Very simple. It took about two years to put that program into place. Now it is working flawlessly. Of course we always want to see improvements to every program and things evolve, but we now have seen a tremendous amount of support services being provided to victims of crime. This was a State funded public service announcement. I'm showing this to you so you can get a ground or a feeling for what that means to come to the Crime Victims Center.

(Public Service Announcement Video Presentation)

So the establishment of the Crime Victims Center and Police Department protocols really did make Suffolk County the most responsive victims services county in New York State back in 2007. That's a little known fact that seamlessly here in Suffolk County victims receive services.

The provision of the Specialized Victims Services evolved from sexual assault and domestic violence to all victims of violent crime. Now the County has taken another very proactive step, a step that we've not seen a crime victims center in all of New York State yet, and now we have a specialized program for victims of hate crime. Hate crime can have damaging effects not only on victims, but on their families and their communities. A sense of anger is one of the most common responses to being the victim of a hate crime. But so, too, is a very deep sense of betrayal and hurt. Victims often feel powerless, sadness, suspicion, fear for their safety, fear for their family's safety. Changes in life-style, such as where they walk, how they react to strangers, how they answer the phone.

Sadly, the most common reaction is a sense of injustice and a corresponding loss of faith in our whole criminal justice system. That's really a problem, because hate crimes are very unique and in certain situations we have barriers for individuals to report crimes, such as cultural barriers, such as language barriers, such as barriers that might be related to countries of origin that are not common to the United States. For example, somebody's coming from a country where the Police Department is very corrupt. Their reaction to law enforcement is not going to be very positive. So we're already dealing with the fact that somebody has been a victim of a violent crime, and then on top of it we have the effect that that hate crime has on the individual, their community, and then also they're bringing their own perception and beliefs about how this criminal justice system will respond to them.

Hey, in some countries if you call the police you become a victim of a crime, and that's a reality. We have due process in the United States. In other countries, in some other countries there is no due process. Everything is done on paper, you are not heard, you don't have an opportunity to be heard. So this is something that we have to change through our outreach through certain protected classes.

So I would like to thank the Suffolk County Police Department, specifically Chief Moore and Detective Sergeant Robert Reecks, for their work in helping to make sure the Hate Crime Program was implemented, and Commissioner Dormer, the Suffolk County Executive and the Legislature, and especially members here of Public Safety, because it was you who I went to asking for assistance to help fund this program. I thank you very much for making it happen.

Here are our goals for the program: To prevent hate crime through community education and outreach; to encourage victims to come forward to access services they're entitled to and exercise their rights under the law; to educate the community and community organizations about hate crime

and the criminal justice process.

As I said before, there's a lot of confusion about what the criminal justice process is here in the United States. If there's a perception, even from individuals that have experience, the slight experience might only be limited to CSI or Law and Order. So you can imagine all victims of crime have an expectation of what the outcome is going to be, and I can assure you that expectation is always greater than what the outcome is, always, in every situation that there is a crime. So we're dealing with that expectation on top of the trauma associated with the crime, then add to that the fact that it's a hate crime. So we have a lot of obstacles to overcome and that has to be done through making connections with those organizations that are representing those protected classes, and that's what we are doing.

We have right now about 400 individual organizations that represent protected classes in our database. We have already started doing outreach. They've received letters. Irma Orozco is scheduled to do -- actually this week she's starting to do the outreach presentations in the community. We have made connections with those community organizations such as Our Voice, that are collaborations and coalitions, with BRAVE in Brentwood, who are now calling us when there are victims of crime. They are letting us know so that we can provide those services. Even before law enforcement provides the referral they're coming to us. That's what it's about. It's about building trust and those organizations being aware that these services are available.

The program starts out with this message.

(Video Presentation)

So our real strength is in our diversity and we start the program out in a very positive way, and we want to keep the message positive. This is the first public screening of this presentation. Like I said, it starts with that message from the Director, a message from me. The program was screened privately by law enforcement and got glowing recommendations and also, of course, our advocates have worked very diligently to ensure that all of the messages that we wanted to send are there. But also, I thought it was very important for a member of the Lucero family to screen the Power Point as well. Joselo Lucero did screen it and he was very pleased to see that this program is being implemented and is very supportive. And, in fact, has helped us to make connections with individuals in the community to help provide services. So we're very happy this is the first public screening but also to say that we have Joselo Lucero's support for the implementation of the program.

The next step in the program is to inform the community what services are available to them, and I'm not going to go through all this because we really have to start fast forwarding now.

We talk about what is a hate crime, what causes it, and what rights do victims have. We start out with Hate and Hope, a message from the Southern Poverty Law Center, who has free resources available to public and private schools. I screened each and every one of them, they are very appropriate and send the right message.

(Hate and Hope Video Presentation)

There is no other country quite like our nation. We are created by different people from different lands, different languages and different cultures. We're a nation of differences and this is the source of our greatest strength. But the reality is it's also the root of our most divisive troubles.

Hate is carefully taught. Do you really believe these two girls on their list of what they hate? Do you believe that it's each other on their list at their age? It's not.

Historically the changing demographics of diversity has challenged communities across the United States to find ways to effectively live and work together. Our schools present the perfect opportunity to prepare children, our future adults, to work productively and harmoniously alongside others who represent various racial and cultural groups, backgrounds, abilities and sexual orientations. But one of the greatest obstacles we face realistically is prejudice. Fifty years after nine African-American high school students from Little Rock, Arkansas put an end to unlawful educational segregation in the deep south, research suggests, and we know that, we don't need research to suggest it, that racial prejudice in the United States is still a national problem cutting across social class and culture.

This is a 12 minute video which I am not going to show the entire video. I'm just going to show you the very beginning. This is something that I found. It's a half century old, 51 years old, and it's discussing the topic of prejudice. In this video you don't see who the target is, but the concepts are still the same. After all these years we're not dealing with anything unique; this has been going on a long time.

(Video Presentation)

Okay, so you get the point. The point there was that -- and again, it's a great 12 minute video, but we don't have the time to go through it here. The point is that 51 years ago they were targeting or individuals were targeting a particular group because of a perception. Bruce Jones, they never tell you who Bruce Jones really is. Bruce Jones is that population that is currently feeling as though they're discriminated against or being targeted. Bruce is responsible for taking everybody's pens, taking sweaters, for starting a fight, and the reality is in the end Bruce ends up rescuing two of his fellow classmates from a burning car at his own risk and burns nearly half of his body.

In the end we ask people in the community to challenge their perceptions and their beliefs. Do they -- quietly, we're not asking for a public discussion about this, do they perpetuate prejudice or do they discriminate or do they stereotype, and then we define what that means.

And actually before we do that, we also want them to understand how that behavior and what actions and words they put out there, how that affects another person. This is from BiasHELP.

(Video Presentation)

(Legislator Kennedy entered the meeting at 10:36 A.M.)

So as you can see, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination does hurt and it has an effect on individuals. But in some extreme cases that can lead to very serious hate crimes. So let's look; what is a hate crime, compliments of Nassau County Police Department.

(Video Presentation)

So we know what a hate crime is, but how do we stop this from happening? And it starts in our classrooms. It starts with kindergarten classes, pre-k classes, because all of us growing up in the United States or any other country in this world, we're exposed to discrimination. That's a reality. It's not unique to Suffolk County. It happens across the world. But we're adults, we can teach people to be tolerant as adults, but in order to embrace diversity it has to start in the classroom.

(Video Presentation)

That seems pretty simple right, sharing and cooperating. Hate will stop when children and adults make friends, share and cooperate, when we all embrace our differences and recognize we're so similar in so many ways.

(Video Presentation)

They can really teach us a lot. I love the crunches, some people have crunches and wheeling chairs. Now it gets a little more serious in the presentation because not all people are good; that's a reality. Some commit hate crimes. So now we move the community into a discussion about what specifically is a hate crime, a violation of law committed against individual property, individuals or property based upon a belief or perception regarding their -- as you can see it is race, color, national origin. I don't have to read the list to you. And the crimes can include acts of physical assault, assaults with weapons, harassments, robbery, rape, all the way up through homicide.

So how do you know if a hate crime was committed against you or a group? This is specifics about the law that we're not going to get into here, but if somebody does have a question we can answer that. Normally if the questions get very detailed our presenter will refer them to Detective Sergeant Robert Reecks.

The bottom line is this. In order for there to be a hate crime there has to be a specified criminal offense, that's an offense specified in the law plus a bias motive. If you don't have the two of them together you won't have a hate crime. So here it is pretty simply put with help from Detective Sergeant Reecks on his Power Point. It's a criminal offense plus a bias motive equals a hate crime.

So then we go through various scenarios with the community to interact, to ask them if they feel a certain situation would be a hate crime or not, and then to give individuals an understanding that -- a hate crime is not a chargeable offense. It's not in the Penal Code it says hate crime. There has to be an underlying offense. So, for example, on the first one, robbery second degree is a C violent felony. If it's charged as a hate crime, it bumps it up a felony level. So it's no longer a C felony as you can see up there, it rises it up to a B violent felony. The minimum sentence changes from a two and a quarter to eight years. And the second one, a manslaughter from -- it changes simply the sentencing because it won't go higher than a B felony. So manslaughter first degree as a hate crime enhances the minimum sentence to eight years, when the minimum sentence before was three. And a criminal mischief is a -- second degree criminal mis is a D felony. Minimum is one to three; max, two and a third to seven. So now you can see the maximum as a hate crime increases from two and a third to seven, to five to 15. So if individuals have questions specifically that our advocates may not be able to answer we refer them to Detective Sergeant Robert Reecks in the Hate Crimes Unit.

At this point we bring the community through a very detailed description of the criminal justice process to encourage those individuals to contact 911 if there's a crime. It has to start with them reaching out to the police. And then we bring them through the process of what happens after you call the police. So at the call center now they also speak 170 languages. There are bilingual individuals that are there; they've always been there but now they have Language Line. Then after they call we'll take an initial report -- that was to wake you up -- to take an initial report. If statements -- if elements which constitute a hate crime are present, the Hate Crimes Unit is notified. And keep in mind, the Suffolk County Police Department does not inquire as to the immigration status of a victim, witness or person requesting or receiving police assistance.

This is the process. Once the Hate Crime Detective arrives what would happen, and I'm not going to get into the details because we're really running out of time, we then bring the community through the process of a felony from arrest all the way through sentencing. The reason why we're doing that with misdemeanors and felonies is because one of our victims that presented initially as a hate crimes victim wanted an individual on probation, but didn't understand that that individual had to go through this lengthy process, which started with an arrest. So that process has to be followed, and when somebody doesn't have the experience with our criminal justice system they have expectations that unfortunately are higher than we can possibly meet. What always happens

is there's -- of course they're going to be disappointed and sometimes that disappointment confusion might lead to blaming law enforcement or blaming the criminal justice process. As we saw earlier in the presentation, when you are a victim of a hate crime you already are losing faith in the whole process.

Then we go through what felonies are from A all the way down to E and misdemeanors, A and B misdemeanors with violations not being crimes, but violations. Plea agreements, what can happen in a plea agreement, and then crime victims rights, the rights that a crime victim has under the law. Under Executive Law in New York State crime victims do have rights that are written into the law and we help them exercise those rights. So the rights run from being informed of judicial proceedings, what happens during those proceedings, but also victims and witnesses have to be aware they have to give up-to-date information to prosecutors and to law enforcement if they want to be informed of what those dates are. So if they change their cell phone number or if they have moved, they have to make the DA and the police aware of those changes otherwise they can't be notified. And even Parole and Corrections can't notify if there's going to be a parole hearing if they're incarcerated. So we're there to ensure that not only are they -- not only do they have an understanding of their rights and the process, but always they're participating in the process effectively.

They have general rights that are related to free police reports, not having to pay for license plates if they're stolen. They have a right in sex crimes for an HIV test to be completed on an individual. There are crime victim compensation rights. We participate and help them in filling out their Crime Victims Board applications for reimbursement on crimes that are related or on expenses that are related to the crime. Innocent victims of crime are entitled to be reimbursed for expenses related to the crime as long as there is no contributory behavior.

Here's a list, and I will just keep it up a second, of those different type of expenses. In homicide cases our advocates get emergency awards for funeral expenses up to \$6,000. That's usually FedExed to the agency or directly to the victim. There are crime scene clean up expenses that are reimbursed. Lost wages up to \$30,000. And the agency, we talked to CVB a couple of months ago, the agency has gotten reimbursed to crime victims in Suffolk County over a million dollars for their expenses related to the crime. So they directly were reimbursed. That money comes from fines that are levied on individuals who are convicted of crimes. In court when they pay a fine it goes to the Crime Victims Fund, or a portion of it. The Federal Government also takes funding they get from white color crime and they divvy it out to the 50 states and that goes to crime victims in the Crime Victims Fund. These are all the services we provide, and the Human Rights Commission is a referral we give.

Prevention starts with empathy and our goal is to ensure that the community has an understanding of the actions and words that they use and the effect that that has on individuals. We have prevention education programs that we provide referrals for. Southern Poverty Law Center has free resources that are available to teachers, books at no cost. Every school district, every teacher in all of New York State can have free copies of these resources. We also have Anti-Defamation League who does presentations for schools as well. BiasHELP right here in Suffolk County, Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth.

Be part of the solution. We will do this Power Point program in any community and if there are prevention program referrals that anybody has, please let us know. This was what Martin Luther King wrote while he was incarcerated in Birmingham, Alabama, and we think it's a really good way to leave the community with hope, that "the clouds of racial prejudice will pass away and the fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities and in some not too distance tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all of their beauty".

And I apologize for going over our time and I hope that you have enjoyed this program, and if you have any suggestions for improvement we would be happy to take them.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Questions from anybody?

LEG. GREGORY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Excuse me. Thank you, Laura, and for your advocates for coming here today and showing us what you do on a daily basis. And it's really a wonderful program that you have together and the organization and staff. I'm a little bit more familiar than others probably on the committee because I have seen some of this in the past.

I want to go back to some of your initial comments in the presentation about -- and I guess some of your work with the sex offenders and the registry and things like that. You had come before us, I guess, a few months ago. I had some concerns that the Probation Department were releasing sex offenders. They released I believe in the neighborhood of maybe five, four or five sex offenders. Well, you didn't come before us, but the issue came up and you happened to be here. And you -- and I know you had stated some questions or someone from the panel had stated some -- from the committee had stated questions. I don't know if we ever got those answers, but from my recollection there were five level three sex offenders that were released in March. Do you recall that meeting at all?

MS. AHEARN:

Yeah. We're done with hate crimes now, right?

LEG. GREGORY:

Yes, yes.

MS. AHEARN:

We're transitioning. Yeah, what had happened is it was brought to our attention that there were up to 15 sex offenders that were released early at the recommendation of the Department of Probation. And as I remember it, when Commissioner Desmond was here they had said that they believed that there were five registered sex offenders that were released early at the recommendation of the Department of Probation. I believe maybe the discrepancy between the five and 15 may be that there are sex offenders who allocute, who admit in court to committing the sex crime, but they plea bargain down to a non-sex crime, non-registrable offense. So I believe the five may be five registered sex offenders, and the others may be guys that have sex offender conditions on Probation but aren't registered.

We were supposed to -- it was my understanding from that discussion that was had on the record that the Department of Probation was going to report back to the Public Safety Committee what specifically were the numbers and what actions were taken to remedy it. Because I know we had made a recommendation to the County Executive and the County Executive was in agreement with us that they were -- that wasn't going to happen again. As I understood it as well, the County Executive did not know that this was happening and when he became aware he put an end to it. So what we were told is that it wasn't going to happen again, that Probation was not going to make that recommendation, and also we had requested that any time Probation had any contact with victims, because they have contact when they do presentence investigations, they have to provide the same

referral sheet that the Police Department provides to every victim they have contact with. That way there's no question about if certain actions are being taken, because my guess is if victims knew that that was happening it would have come to our attention as well, and to your attention. And the third element was that they were going to inform victims who those sex offenders were released early, those five, allegedly five. If there are 15 I don't know, but whoever was released early at the recommendation of Probation, that Probation was going to inform the victims or parents in cases of minors, and I have not heard back on the status.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. Now, for your work and efforts, I'm sure you work with a lot of counties and organizations or municipalities throughout the state. I remember the gentleman who was here, I want to say he was the coordinator or the supervisor of that section of the Probation Department, he said that had never happened under his watch. I believe he said he was there maybe 10 or 12 years.

MS. AHEARN:

Joe Abramo, the Supervisor, yeah. Yeah, it's come to our attention through information, and I'm sorry, I wasn't prepared for this, but this is all from what my experience was previously. Joe Abramo has been with Probation for a number of years and has been the Supervisor of that unit. It was he and a female named June Kenny, who is his superior, the two of them who actually wanted this release of sex offenders, the recommendation to the court. They wanted -- they pushed for that program to be done as far as I know.

Now, Commissioner or Director Desmond, he told me that yes, he was aware, and when the County Executive became aware the County Executive put a stop to it. So it was Supervisor Joe Abramo and also June Kenny. And it also came to our attention as well, through very good sources in County government that victims who do need referrals are not being provided specifically referrals to our organization. And that's problematic for us because that makes -- obviously makes it feel as though you're punishing victims who need support services because we might stir it up a little.

(Presiding Officer Lindsay entered the meeting at 11:01 A.M.)

And the reality is we are not stirring anything up. We want to make sure that victims are provided the services they need. We collaborate very closely with the Police Department and they provide referrals because they know we're part of the support services for victims. So that's why the third element of what was agreed upon was supposed to happen, that victims were going to receive sheets of all the agencies in the County that were in the Suffolk Police Department referral sheet, so that they would never be in a situation where they wouldn't have resources immediately.

LEG. GREGORY:

Now you are saying of victims of sex offenses?

MS. AHEARN:

Yes.

LEG. GREGORY:

Specifically sexual predators, quote unquote, sexual predators?

MS. AHEARN:

Yes.

LEG. GREGORY:

Really.

MS. AHEARN:

Yeah, that victims of sex crimes in the Probation Department in the Sex Offense Unit have been discouraged by administration in the Sex Offender Unit, in Joe Abramo's unit. They have been discouraged from contacting our organization. And discouraged is putting it lightly, but not encouraged, of course, because they're never referred.

LEG. GREGORY:

How many people are in this specific unit, the Sex Offense Unit.

MS. AHEARN:

I'm really not sure. I think it ranges between five and seven.

LEG. GREGORY:

Five and seven. We have --

MS. AHEARN:

Probation Officers. And the last Probation Officer, Donna Vigilante, who has a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge, I believe she was there for ten years, she was transferred out after this came to light, because I believe that there's a sense on the part of Joe Abramo and Director Desmond that she released information regarding the sex offenders being recommended to be released early by the Probation Department. And think that -- I believe that she is being retaliated against.

LEG. GREGORY:

Really.

MS. AHEARN:

Yes.

LEG. GREGORY:

And she's a longstanding --

MS. AHEARN:

Ten years. She is their -- probably one of their -- there was Lara Watrous who was transferred. Lara was very proactive, a Master's level educated female who was dedicated to the job. She was transferred out when she started talking to individuals about difficulties that she was having implementing proactive approaches, at least that was her perception, and she was transferred out. Donna Vigilante was transferred out. Another individual transferred out, Steve Larsen, is no longer -- he's working in IT. He's another proactive -- he was a forensic psychology background, so phenomenal institutional knowledge leaving. And I understand the need to have diversity in people's background, in their work background, but I really feel that Donna Vigilante was retaliated against and I wouldn't say that unless I felt it.

LEG. GREGORY:

Now, you said anywhere between five or seven in your estimation of what you think may work in that unit, Probation Officers not including the Supervisor or just Probation Officers?

MS. AHEARN:

I don't think it's the Supervisor, but I think they recently got more or were going to get more help in that unit.

LEG. GREGORY:

That's interesting. Last year when we were going through the budget crisis the County Executive put forward a bill to layoff 600 people, whatever it was. It's my recollection that there were two or

three people from this very same unit that were on that list. Now, if there's five and you layoff three, you know, that's more than 50% of a unit and they're sole responsibility is to monitor sex offenders on probation. Now from what you are saying they're transferring people out who have a sense of experience. That's a concern for me, that -- it's always been my understanding that we don't have enough people there and now we're going to, you know, transfer 50% of the people that, you know, are monitoring these people on a daily basis. You know, I think that's something that we should certainly look at.

But now to bring that full circle, with your work in hate crimes and other things, understanding that offense against a sexual predator is not delineated or a protected group, but have you come across a situation with all the notifications and things where a sex offender may move into a neighborhood or community and them getting retaliated against, you know, people coming to their homes and, you know, assaulting them or whatever the case may be. Is that something that you've experienced?

MS. AHEARN:

There's nearly 700,000 registered sex offenders in the nation and registration started in California as early as 1947, but generally across the nation it started in the 90's. Considering the vast amount of notifications that have gone out I would say there's relatively few serious acts of vigilantism. However, it does exist. In those cases where there are very extreme acts of vigilantism I believe that person had a propensity for violence and was just looking for an excuse for that violence. In one situation a number of years ago a particular individual went on to the registry in one of the north -- I think it was in Maine, and murdered, gunned down two registered sex offenders. But that is, again, it's rare. But there is -- there are situations where members of the community instead of taking the time to educate themselves about prevention, you know, they will gather and make attempts to try to run offenders out of the community. I can understand that, our organization is the voice for the community when it comes to sex offender management issues. However, there are 700,000 registrants in this country, and if the community starts to go down a path that starts to get in any way looking like vigilantism, Megan's Law notifications won't happen anymore. So our goal is to balance that need for the community to have as much information as possible under the law, but also to use it responsibly.

LEG. GREGORY:

All right. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much for that presentation. I just wanted to say to you that --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, yes?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Can I -- it's just one quick question following up on what --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

One quick question, go right ahead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Have we, through the Chair, have you received anything from Director Desmond as to the issue that we're talking about regarding the release of the sex crimes -- the probationers, the probationers convicted of sex crimes. What, in fact, was involved with that early release if, in fact, there's been any movement amongst the Probation Officers in the unit, or have we had anything substantive at

all beyond what Ms. Ahearn is sharing with us.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You're obviously new on the committee. Us get information in advance? No, that hasn't happened. It continued to not happen and I mentioned in the beginning of the committee as you noticed there was nobody from Probation, from the Deputy Sheriffs or until Deputy Inspector Nieves got his phone call, there was nobody here from the Police Department, so, can't get those answers.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, can't is always a challenge for all of us, isn't it? Through your Chair, and I would be happy to do the draft, I would like to ask if we can either have Director Desmond here in person, and if there's some kind of an impediment that prevents him from getting to Hauppauge, I would be happy to go ahead and take a writing that comes from him that gives any kind of explanation whatsoever.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'll make that request.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And -- okay, Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Friday night I did a ride-along with the Gang Unit in my district, which was interesting. However, I did make a request to the Director of Probation to do a ride-along with Probation also. I also sent him a letter pertaining to the sex offenders who were released early. I have heard nothing, no response, and I have yet to hear a response about doing the ride-along. So I'm going to continue to pursue it, but I think maybe if we put it on the record, like we have to do to get a response.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, then maybe what we'll do is we'll make a request of both departments, the Police and Probation, and maybe even the Sheriff's, that everybody on this committee be contacted and offered the opportunity to do a ride around with all three units so maybe we'll get a firsthand knowledge. I know some people have already done some ride arounds, but we'll put that on the record and we'll see how long it takes to get back to us.

I was just going to end by saying -- for you, Laura, that obviously you haven't gotten the news -- the press releases from Mark Smith, I saw him here, for the County Executive because crime is down in Suffolk County.

(Laughter)

So I just wanted to make sure, you know, you must be very bored with hate crimes then because crime is down. Thank you very much for your presentations.

MS. AHEARN:

Thank you. I heard rumblings about the potential of a contract agency cut. That would be devastating, I have to say that on the record. It would be devastating to our organization being that we do serve crime victims and also the community on sex offender management.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It's easy to cut programs when you say there's no crime. That's why I'm putting it on the record, Laura. We know, you know, I know and the citizens of Suffolk County know.

MS. AHEARN:

Chairman Eddington, I would always like to say that it's a very difficult position that we're in in that we advocated to the fullest -- I advocated to the fullest of my ability to try to take action to prevent Donna Vigilante from being transferred. Donna Vigilante did not want to be transferred, and I have not spoken to her in quite a long while, so I am going by what she and I had spoken about when it was going to happen. It appears to be retaliatory, it's not what she wanted. They released sex offenders, they made recommendations to release sex offenders early from probation against what State guidelines say, against what any service provider would say. You never release sex offenders early. Sex offenders under supervision have lower recidivism rates, period. That's it. We know that for sure. Nobody has a magic pill to prevent sex offenses. Residency restriction, all these employment restrictions, all these things, the monitoring, all of the funding that goes into monitoring sex offenders to prevent sex crimes, for them to be released early is blasphemy. It makes no sense whatsoever and Director Desmond approved that. It's contrary to public safety. It's the opposite.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know what, I think we'll continue that part of the discussion when we can get everybody here. Okay?

MS. AHEARN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you ladies. Before we get to the agenda I want to go over some statistics from my committee because we seem to not get all the facts. I'm sure you got a press release in June that says Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy labels as highly reprehensible comments made by Legislative Public Safety Chair Jack Eddington, "People are afraid to come out of their homes in Bellport and North Bellport". I said that after having a meeting with the community leaders of North Bellport. They said oh, nobody ever really says what we say. I said I will say it verbatim; that was the response. However, I don't know, was anybody invited to the County Executive's committee -- his meeting with the North Bellport people?

LEG. BROWNING:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

There was a secret meeting, I guess, that took place with the very people that I had met with, and at that time Catherine Donnelly, one of the activists, stated and actually read a letter with all the things that she had told me. The County Executive said basically that it was atrocious what was going on and that he'd try to develop a plan. This is what I heard from the community people. I've never been contacted from the County Executive's Office.

Of course in the press release we get crime stats saying that, you know, that I'm trying to make it look like a mass crime wave, and I guess statistics saying that Bellport crime, North Bellport, is down 19.3%. Well, yesterday or the other day I got from the 5th Precinct, and I thought there were 17 cars, and you might want to check with the other precincts too, there aren't 17 cars anymore. There are 16 during the day and 14 at night. So we don't have a full compliment, all of the cars are not being used, and I guess crime goes down at night so we have less cars.

I have statistics from six of those 16 cars, only six of them, in the North Bellport area. And I just asked -- people seem to complain most to me. Now, I'm not saying they're not complaining about the five murders that took place the other day in Bay Shore or the two that were around the Patchogue area Friday. They're concerned about murders, but they keep talking to me about home burglaries. I guess that's because that's like such -- as a social worker that's such a violation,

somebody in your home. And in the North Bellport area last summer there were five. This summer there were 32. That's a 540% increase when we're told crime is down.

Overall, in the five precinct -- in the 6th Precinct cars there were 40 burglaries and 130 in the whole area, which is 153. So the North Bellport area is way above with 540%. So I don't think I'm trying to get panic, I am trying to voice what I'm hearing, and I want the rest of the committee to continue to voice it. This is not about getting press coverage; it's about getting help for our citizens.

Right now what I'm being told is that the police in the -- in our areas are responding to calls, to 911 calls, and they're doing very little proactive riding around. I think that this is not dealing with the public safety of the citizens of Suffolk County. I think we have to stop playing with statistics and I think we have to get down to the fact that there is crime, and here are just from the Suffolk County Police Department news releases for the last month and a half. I've got about 70 pages here. This is what they send our offices telling us about crime. So let's stop playing games that crime is down, crime is up. Let's say this; there's crime in Suffolk County and there's too much crime in Suffolk County, and we need more law enforcement officers. We need more police on the street. We need more Correct Officers in the jail. We need more Deputy Sheriffs to make sure that the Orders of Protection are not being put aside. We need more people.

Now, I'm very happy to hear that the County Executive now agrees that we need 150 more, but we've had 112 retirements last year and a projected 80 this year. We're still behind. In fact, you know, we're just falling further and further behind. I am concerned for the citizens of Suffolk County. And if this committee thinks that I'm wrong then I want you to verbalize it, but I'm telling you what I'm hearing in my area and I'm not going to blow smoke at anybody. There's crime out there, there's too much crime, we need more help. Anybody else? Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, the Bellport meeting that occurred, no, we were not invited. I invited myself and I did go to that meeting. I really haven't seen a whole lot happen other than the County Executive go to Bellport at 10:30 in the morning and go talk to the local businesses and ask them, you know, are you feeling safe. Well, if I was a business owner I don't think I would say, "No I don't feel safe" because I'm going to hurt my business if I tell people I'm not safe in my business.

So, you know, the meeting that we had at the Hagerman Fire Department the County Executive passed out a letter about crime is down in North Bellport. There were people who got up at that meeting and held that letter up and they said this is not correct; crime is up and they are afraid. And again, statistics are statistics. You know, the people are basically saying that they hear gunshots, they're not calling 911 anymore; it's become a way of life for them.

I spoke with a Police Officer in the 7th Precinct and, you know, he's telling me that, you know, crime control is no longer an aggressive enforcement. There's no longer aggressive enforcement, which results in more guns on the street. And they said that the criminals now when they have their drug deals going on they carry, you know, they'll carry a gun when they have a heavy amount of drugs he says, but now they're just carrying them all the time which is they believe is resulting in a lot of these shoot outs.

Cope and Crime Control. I know we -- I think we had somebody -- oh, okay. I would like to know because Cope and Crime Control are covering for sector cars. The sector cars respond to 911 calls. Now, what is the function of Crime Control and I know -- I believe Cope is community policing and their job is they get assignments -- I know from my office we've contacted them about various incidents in the community and Cope are the ones who kind of do the legwork and try and resolve the issue. But if we don't have enough Cope cars and enough Cope officers doing that work and they're just filling sector cars, then there's no, to me, proactive policing going on anymore. I'd like to know what Crime Control does, because based on the name, if they're not doing their job and just

filling sector cars for 911 calls, who's doing their job? So if you can explain Crime Control I would appreciate it.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Good morning. Deputy Inspector Ted Nieves. I'm the Executive Officer of the Office of the Chief of Department. The Crime Control Section in each precinct are Police Officers. They usually wear plain clothes. Their main function is to follow-up on misdemeanor offenses and other offenses that have been forwarded to them by the Patrol Section. And if you want to look at them kind of as an easy way to understand it, as Detectives for offenses that are below felony grade. That's the Crime Control officers main function in the department.

LEG. BROWNING:

So if I get a call that there's drug activity going on at a home, Crime Control would pretty much do the work on that home and find out what's going on.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Well, that depends on the information. If it's -- if it involves narcotics it may be the NESOT Detectives in the precinct or the Narcotics Section that deals with those offenses specifically. So in the event of a narcotics complaint it would probably more be, as I said, NESOT Detectives or Narcotics Detectives that would deal with that.

LEG. BROWNING:

And say Crime Control, they're investigating something that's possibly a misdemeanor and they find out it's more. I mean, is that kind of one of the things they would do is they would say okay, we're investigating this, and then they find out it's more than what it actually is. They pass it on to another unit?

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

That would be correct. If a Crime Control Officer is investigating an offense and it appears that the offense would now fall maybe under a felony grade offense, then it would most likely be passed on to the detective squad in the precinct.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And, you know, again like you said, they are usually plain clothes so you have Police Officers who are working in plain clothes and the next thing you know is they're riding a sector car in a uniform. Doesn't that kind of hurt what they're doing, because now I know who that plain clothes -- who that guy is? The criminals know who the cops are. I'm just thinking does that help them to easily identify the ones that are in plain clothes now.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Well, they're not necessarily undercover officers, okay, they work in plain clothes because it makes it a little easier for them when they're doing interviews and things of that nature. They're not necessarily undercover officers. They are Police Officers, and the Precinct Commanders and the Squad Commanders do occasionally have the leeway to utilize them to occupy sector cars if the need arises. The main -- it's important that the sector cars obviously are up and running. The main function is to answer those 911 calls so the Precinct Commanders have the leeway to utilize them on occasion to fill the sector cars if necessary.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. So I guess I'll leave it that. It's just, you know, when I was with the Gang Unit there was, I guess, narcotics guys showed up. There was an incident that happened and the patrol car did show up, but obviously it seemed like it was a bit of a difficult situation. So we showed up with the Gang Unit, but we also -- I know there was narcotics officers that showed up also. So I'm a little concerned that there just wasn't enough sector cars to show up at that call at that time and that the

only backup was the Gang Unit.

And I have to tell you, I was amazed at how much area they have to cover. I mean, we were in Bellport and we shot back to Mastic because that's where the call was. We also went up to Gordon Heights. So we have three cars covering, you know, for that night they really just stayed within my district, but truthfully I looked at the area that three cars were covering, it's amazing. So if they get -- they're in Gordon Heights and something happens in Mastic they have to shoot down to Mastic. I'm concerned about the coverage. And, I mean, Friday night they said was a quiet night. Thursday night was not so quiet, somebody got stabbed in Gordon Heights on Saturday night. I wonder if we're actually even giving the Gang Unit the opportunity to do what they need to do.

I read the article in Newsday that the County Executive is now looking at moving them back to their precincts, which when he changed it to Police Headquarters back then I know the numbers were cut, and I didn't agree with putting them in Police Headquarters. I think it's necessary to keep them in their precincts where they know who the players are and the gangs and whatnot. It seems that there's a possibility that it's going to change again. I said if it's not broke, don't fix it. So let's do the right thing by the communities and, you know, enhance the Gang Unit and allow them to do the job they're doing. Because I'm looking at the wall in their office and there's a whole wall covered with gang members. I even recognize some of them that I drove when I was a school bus driver, and that's scary. That's scary. There was about a half dozen of them that I recognized. I just -- I'm looking at that wall full of Bloods, Latin Kings, and I'm thinking, you know, these guys are winning. They are truly winning the war on the crime. They're taking over and they know we don't have the resources and they're just getting very brazen.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I just wanted to add on to that that I want to compliment the County Executive. I want to let that sink in for a minute.

MR. ZWIRN:

Stop right there.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Because if he took against our better wishes the gang members out of the precincts and put them in headquarters and it didn't work, which obviously I think that's what we're saying, and he's putting them back, I think that's -- I think that's great. I think that trying things and if they don't succeed, then going back to try something -- I think that's the way we should go and I would always support that. I think most of the committee members would support that. We don't want to stifle creativity. I know it's often like an adversarial relationship, but I want to make it clear that I as the Chair will certainly support initiatives, just be honest and straight with us. Give us the information and hey, I'm willing to say if I support it and it doesn't work, I'll stand right there and say it didn't work, we tried something, we're going to try something else. So I want to go on the record saying I compliment the County Executive for trying something even though we weren't for it, and now going back to try something maybe a little different. I just want to make sure that goes on the record. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

I don't know if I would compliment him, his motives seem to be political rather than public safety. I did a ride-along in my district on Thursday and it was a quiet night, but what was interesting was the shortage that we had of patrol cars, of people to staff the cars and the quest to go out to staff vehicles for the next shift. I did the 3 to 11. It just reiterates the point that we don't have enough people.

You know, I talked to one of the -- you know, one of the, I don't want to say old timers, but seasoned people who had been on the force for over 20 years. He says back in the day we were

lucky if we got 50 hours of overtime. There are people, at least in the 1st Precinct, over 500 hours of overtime, 800 hours of overtime. That's what's offensive to me, is that when the County Executive attempts to take credit for, you know, funding the police class and putting 200 Police Officers on the -- recruiting 200 Police Officers. He vetoed it saying we're doing all this civilianization and all this other, you know, all these other talking points that he uses to justify his position, which in my opinion has put our public, at risk. Now he wants to say that, you know, he's been for it all along and he's going to add to it. And in his veto message he wanted to -- one of the main things he says is well, these guys make too much salary anyway. They make average \$180,000, blah, blah, blah, but yet he doesn't say the majority of their \$180,000 comes from overtime, which is not the officer's fault, it's his fault because they don't have enough people. I mean, there are people making over \$100,000 in overtime. That's ridiculous. If we just hire the staff you wouldn't have officers working hundreds of hours in overtime.

I mean, you know, when are we going to call a spade a spade. Call this guy out on what he's doing and stop him from taking credit for stuff that don't belong to him. And then when I do that, I get a press release saying that I'm paranoid, you know, which I refuse to accept because from a guy who hires a lawyer to defend himself and then {inaudible} that he is not a part of, I find that kind of laughable to call me paranoid.

But, you know, I think as a committee we do our function, as a body we do our function. You know, it would be great if we had a County Executive that supported us in our efforts to protect the public and not politicize this issue, which it should not be a political issue, it's public safety. We should do the best that we can do to ensure that all communities, particularly those communities that have incidents of high crime, should be protected and not badger the people that we're putting in harm's way to protect us. And we're not giving them the support staff to help them complete the job that will make all of us feel better. That's all I want to say.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Before you go, Legislator Kennedy, I just wanted to let you know, I should give you warning. There's going to be a new game in the Legislature called who's in the doghouse, who's in the County Executive's doghouse, and I've got pictures of everybody. So before you speak I just wanted to give you fair warning. I know it's a tie right now I'd say.

LEG. GREGORY:

Tie.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, but I'll consider that been there, done that.

(Laughter)

I applaud you for bringing the statistics and I think each and every one of us is experiencing significant concern when we go about talking with our civics, street fairs, wherever it is that we come in contact with constituents. I had the opportunity, as a matter of fact, to have contact with our Smithtown Town Council in the early part of August. There was a piece of correspondence that was forwarded and I was cc'd on it and I contacted the Commissioner's Office about it, and as a matter of fact I had a conversation with Chief Moore. We had a situation, and Deputy Inspector, this is directed directly to you.

We had a situation in the 4th Precinct, I believe it was over the July 31st/August 1st weekend where at one point we had five sector cars that were idle due to lack of personnel. As you know firsthand, we have only 17 sector cars in all of the 4th Precinct. That means that we had basically one-third of our sector cars idle. That means that the citizens and constituents in the 4th Precinct had basically thirty-three and a third percent less police protection based on the inability to go ahead and staff

those vehicles. I'm a laymen, I have never been a sworn Police Officer, Peace Officer or anything else. But what I think I know is, is one of the most basic things that a policing agency does is put personnel in sector cars in neighborhoods. We didn't do it. We couldn't do it or we chose not to do it or we just didn't do it.

In the Town of Smithtown in this past year my constituents paid \$46 million for policing, 46 million. They're not getting a one-third reduction. They're not getting a tax holiday. They're not getting a pass. In simple terms, that's what you call a breach of contract. We represented we would provide a service and we didn't. Now, they're not getting compensated, they're not getting made whole. They're just getting let hung out there without the police protection they're supposed to have.

So I'm really concerned that here it is September 13th, there's no letter that came back from the Commissioner or from Chief Moore that explained what went on. I heard about holidays, I heard about vacations, I heard about sick time, and as I sat there and thought about it I said to myself good God Almighty, policing is supposed to be able to project and not leave us subject to the guy that calls in, the guy that's not available, or the guy that goes sick. It defies logic that we have one Detective from the Crime Section that you spoke about. One Detective out of six of them that are supposed to be there that covered for that weekend. I have no way to explain to any constituent why it is or how it is that we don't provide them with the policing and the protection that they pay for. It's very, very, very simple. What I'd ask is that the Commissioner or the Chief or whomever is tasked with this, please provide some kind of response. Please provide some kind of explanation.

But I'm going to give you one other comment. Before one of my colleagues spoke about NESOT. You gave the explanation about NESOT. I have to tell you, I have not nothing but praise for the NESOT Unit in the 4th Precinct here, and I'm sure the other six precincts function as well as that one does, but they can only function when the personnel are there. As we continue to lose people, lead Detectives in these various units are getting bounced all over the place. It reminds me of that game you see in the called city called Three Card Monte. We can't have effective NESOT, we can't have effective Crime Control, we can't have effective any other speciality unit when the people are perpetually in flux and movement. That defies good policing.

My request is, is that we get the personnel into these precincts to do the job that my constituents and all our constituents have paid for last year. And now I'm going to ask BRO. John, what did we raise in special district levy?

MR. ORTIZ:

There was a three percent increase in the Police District.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. What was the total that that raised?

MR. ORTIZ:

I believe it was 13 million.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thirteen million in the increase. Overall the levy was what, 470 million, 480 million?

MR. ORTIZ:

I'd have to look that up; I'm not sure.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Somewhere in that neighborhood.

MR. ORTIZ:

Correct.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So the public pays, we don't provide. That's not good policing, planning or protection. I'm going to ask if we can get those things addressed shortly. Thank you.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

If I may, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure. Go right ahead.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Just to respond to a couple of your points, Mr. Legislator. First of all, the letters in question. The response was sent out recently and should be received recently by the Councilman in Smithtown who put forward the original letter.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Chief Moore said that he would cc the letter; I haven't seen it in my office yet.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Yes, Sir, you will receive your cc.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good. Thank you.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

If I could just quickly address some of what the letter will state. You mentioned a particular evening in the 4th Precinct where a number of sector cars were apparently out of service. About 20 years ago it was decided that the department would redeploy personnel in order to have the most personnel working during times of the highest call volume, and which seemed logical. So as a result of this what happened was on the -- what was called at the time the midnight shift, which was the 12 to 8 and now is 11 to 7, three -- up to three sector units were put on a standby status because the personnel from those squads were redeployed to the higher call volume times.

LEG. KENNEDY:

That's the old way, yes. I know the old way. We do have three that go down, but then we had an additional two that were not out there as well.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Yes, Sir. What happened that evening was -- there were -- there was two additional cars that we did not have overtime available for. Those cars were not down the entire tour, they were up and running by -- both cars were up and running by 4 a.m. with overtime brought in from the following day shift. The precinct -- the Squad Commander, if there was an extraordinary need could -- and is empowered to call for assistance from other precincts or other commands within the Police Department. So it appeared to the Squad Commander that there was extraordinary volume or a problem had arisen that would require an extraordinary response. The Squad Commander is empowered to acquire the necessary personnel.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, I appreciate the explanation. And certainly our supervisory folks, be they Sergeants, Lieutenants, use their best judgment with the resources that they have available. And although we look at policing based on a precinct type of model, I guess when you get into a crisis or some other

kind of situation, those lines of demarcation fold and you go out of line. But what I would say to you is, it seems that we are continuing to race to the bottom. Why do we have a precinct model for delivery of public service if the remedy is going to be that we come from adjoining areas to provide that protection.

You know, we talked a little bit before, some of my colleagues talked about hot spots. All of Suffolk County has become a hot spot. I've got rivers of drugs running through my district. Heroin, Opiates, prescription drugs, folks that are dealing with them on a constant basis. We have the incidents of home invasions, another crime that's being called in and my constituents are begging for follow-up and they're begging for the bad guys being caught, and you folks just don't have the people to do it.

So, you know, we tried to look at this -- actually, it was almost a year ago I believe when we just started on the budget, and we as a body agreed to put that 3% increase in. But unfortunately, here we sit today in September and you don't have one more person in your line shift, do you, to go ahead and deploy and put out there to address the issues that we saw over a year ago.

I see some of what the County Executive has put out there. I hear that we have personnel that's going to be made available if we sell the nursing home. Quite honestly, once again I'll go back to my analogy with the Three Card Monte. Taking care of sick folks and locking up bad guys have nothing to do with each other. I will welcome seeing that letter and maybe we can have a follow-up conversation after that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

As you were talking, Legislator Kennedy, something came to my mind that I wanted to share with the committee that I failed to. When there was this repeated call for personnel to staff the overnight shift, I found it quite funny that we ran into an officer that I know who is from the 1st Precinct who's actually been assigned to the 2nd Precinct, is patrolling Huntington Station because of what's going on there, but yet the 1st Precinct is calling for their officers because they don't have enough staff. That's what we're in. That's the Three Card Monte that you referred to.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Presiding Officer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Maybe to the Deputy Inspector. And, you know, it was raised as an issue here. Do we have any idea where we are overtime-wise thus far in the year?

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

I don't have that information at my fingertips, Sir, but I can acquire that for you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

If you could that would be very, very helpful to us as we enter into the budget process to know just where we are with overtime, with some of the statements that were made here about officers working a great deal of overtime, you know, it would really help if we could bring that into the equation.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

Yes, Sir. I'll pass that inquiry on.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I imagine, Mr. Zwirn, you are ready to say something.

MR. ZWIRN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I might, there are a few things I have -- would like to respond to and I have been very respectful as I always try to be in the Legislature. This is your house and we're guests here. But in defense of the County Executive, I know one of the things that the Legislature did in 2010 was to raise Police District taxes. They wanted to hire 200 Police Officers during this course of this fiscal year. There are 70 Police Officers -- you wanted a hundred in the first class, the County Executive put in 70 because of cash flow issues, so there was a difference of about 30 Police Officers. The second class of a hundred was to start very late in the year and was pretty much funded just for a week in the academy. So when we talk about the nursing home, when we talk about that, you can take it as confrontational, or you can take it as what the County Executive, I believe, means to intend is that we're going to need \$20 million next year to fund 200 Police Officers for a full year.

Now, we can do it for part of the year while they're in academy and they come out with a lower salary, but when they quickly move up in the ranks and they move up in salary, it's estimated it will cost \$20 million dollars. Now, we can do it through the sale of the nursing home or we can do it through other ways. The County Executive has proposed one way, he may propose it in the budget through cutting expenses elsewhere to come up with the money and the Legislature will have the final word on that.

Back in April, on April 22nd, there was a debate in the Public Safety Committee about how much money was in the budget for 2010 for Police Officers with the raising of the Police District tax. I think at that time Robert Lipp from BRO indicated that because of the arbitration award being higher that there was not a full amount of money to hire all the Police Officers that were anticipated by the Legislature. That was borne out by the Budget Review Office.

You know, the County Executive has -- I know Legislator Gregory has criticized the County Executive for vetoing the additional Police Officers and then he has criticized again when he puts the Police Officers in the academy. You know back, was it two years ago, when the Sheriffs were put on the highways. We took 55 highly trained Suffolk County Police Officers away from writing tickets and patrolling the roadways and put them into precincts. So 55 guys not coming out of the academy, but veteran Police Officers to help in community policing. There have also been efforts for civilianization to get Police Officers who once sat behind desks out back out on the street where they could be productive in fighting crime.

With respect to some of the comments that Legislator Kennedy made, is the Police Commissioner manages the Police Department not just on a precinct level but on a County-wide level and he has to apply, you know, resources to hot spots. That's just the nature of the beast I think, and I think that's what he's done. He's doing, I think, a good job.

When you talk about how much money the people in the Town of Smithtown pay in the Police District Taxes, you know, it's a tricky way to go. Are they supposed to get the exact amount of money that they put in to get that kind of police protection, or do you have the ability to move that around. So that means that communities that are poorer and don't have a larger tax base, they can't pay into it, should deserve less police protection than a community that is more wealthy and has more taxes. I don't think that's what Legislator Kennedy was indicating, but that's what it can be interpreted as and I think that would be -- that would be a mistake.

Just one thing that I would like to just comment on what the Chairman said at the beginning about the secret meeting that the County Executive had in North Bellport. I think the characterization of a secret meeting is sort of misleading and it's not fair. The County Executive can meet with community people in this County anywhere he wants. I'm sure that the Legislators have meetings with constituents that are County -- also constituents of the County Executive without telling him in advance and I wouldn't characterize those as secret meetings, and I don't think the County Executive would either.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Ben. Stop.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I think I did.

LEG. BROWNING:

Stop right now because yes, he has meetings in the office. However, he had civic leaders, he had the Police Commissioner. I mean, this was no willy nilly meeting. This was a lot of people, community leaders within North Bellport, pastors, the whole nine yards. He did not invite me as the Legislator who represents that community, did not invite me to come. I found out about it and I will tell you in the past they've had meetings up there before. He's called meetings with my constituents from North Bellport and when they mentioned they wanted me there he cancelled the meeting. So I don't want to hear that he can have meetings. Courtesy -- have the meeting, and let the local Legislator know. And I know that he -- he picks and chooses his Legislators.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, does that mean that every meeting that you have with constituents you are going to extend an invitation to the County Executive to be there?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Listen, you know, I don't really think we have to debate it. I think -- I made the statement, I'm standing by it. And you know what? It's almost like again, I could go back to that big lie theory. You know, if you just keep saying it you think we're all going to buy it. We're not buying it in this committee, at least the people that I know, and Suffolk County is not buying the message. I'm trying to be here as clear as possible. I'm telling you that at least Legislator Browning and I perceived it as a secret meeting because he criticized me about my statements, and then called all the people that I was representing when I spoke. So that, you know, you can spin it, and you have great people to put words together, that's great. I'm saying it like it is. I felt it was a secret meeting because it was done around me, especially when I was a major person in that committee as well as Legislator Browning. And if you want to get away from a Machiavellian style of leadership and more of an open style, then you got to start doing it. Show me, don't tell me, show me openness. I'm willing to be open.

I've supported the County Executive probably 90% of the time, but everybody in this room knows what we hear. If you criticize or disagree with 10%, you get 100% of the pain and the agony and the press releases. Well, you know what? I'm not going to be intimidated, I'm not going to be bribed and I'm not going to be dissuaded. There's crime in this County, it's too much, we don't have enough people and we're paying for it and we need to do it. I'm hoping the County Executive will come to light and get more Police Officers, more Sheriffs, more Correction Officers before we close down business here.

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, I don't disagree with a lot of what you said, but the County Executive will come back to the Legislature and say look, no matter how many Police Officers you want to put in, the money has to be there to pay for it, and I think that's been part of the problem.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Ben, I'll tell you what the fallacy is, and it's over and over and over again. These aren't new additional Police Officers, they're replacement Police Officers for people that are retiring. I mean, we're funding, you know, we started out the year, somebody said there's 80. I think there's probably going to be more like 110 Police Officers that will retire this year. They're funded in the budget. If we don't replace them, what happens to the money? I mean, the money is there. We heard what the County Executive said last year. We need more money to hire replacement Police Officers that are already in the budget. We did that. He vetoed it, we never got the Police Officers. That's what's rubbing everybody. I mean, that's the source of everything.

You know, this whole issue that they talked about overtime. That overtime number is huge, it's huge. If we had the Police Officers that we put in the budget would we have to spend all this money on overtime? I mean, that's a question. I don't know what the answer is. I don't certainly manage the Police budget, but these are factors that come into it.

MR. ZWIRN:

There's no question that overtime is a source of -- you know, it has to be balanced against personnel, no question about it. It is part of the budget. There's overtime because there are going to be times when you are going to need Police Officers to come in when people are sick or in an emergency situation. There's no question, it's part of the budget every year. I think that, you know, in fairness the County Executive asked for 200 Police Officers, a hundred in the first class in 2010, the County Executive had 70. So we're talking about in the first class a difference of 30 Police Officers, so that's not a great deal.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I guess that's from your perspective. If we all agree on a hundred and we get 70, I don't think that's good. Maybe that's because of my education background, a hundred is great, 70 is not so great.

(Laughter)

So you know what I mean?

MR. ZWIRN:

I think what happens, Mr. Chairman --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Who gets to decide? It's always the County Executive.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, that's the County Executive's role.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, see, you know what, I thought it was the people. When the people voted for the 3% increase for 200 cops I thought they spoke through us. I get this fact that there are two parts to the government here, in fact three, but there's two here. And when we represent the people and they say what they want and they say they're willing to pay it and we don't get it, and we're supposed to be happy because we get 70? Where are you coming from when you think -- how do you think we would be happy if you give us 70 when we have asked and been told by the people they want a hundred? How do you get that in your head?

MR. ZWIRN:

Because not all the money that -- all the revenue that is projected comes in. A lot of the County revenue comes in from sales tax revenue. When you are in a recession and sales tax revenue comes in under budget, you don't have all the money. We take money from the General Fund sales tax revenue and put it in the Police District to help offset the Police District taxes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I think Legislator Lindsay dealt with that issue, that's why we raised the tax, to supplement the money that was in there for the officers that were retiring. So, you know what it is, we got circular reasoning going here and it may make good press releases, but the people see -- they are starting to see more and more that they just are not getting what Legislator Kennedy said. They're not getting their bang for their buck. We can't do more with less anymore. We just can't.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Can I raise an issue?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Just to change the subject, and it's really a request that I'm going to make to you, Ben, that you move to the County Executive and I would hope that the committee would follow-up on this. There was a discussion in the committee back a little ways ago about the Sheriff buying an EMS vehicle, emergency services vehicle, with forfeiture money, which I wish the Sheriff was here that we could talk about it. At the time it was explained to us that it's going to be used primarily as a tow truck to tow Sheriff vehicles and everybody was happy with that. I keep hearing that it's going to be outfitted to duplicate emergency services from the Police Department and there's a threat of a grievance being filed against the \$12 million that the PBA gave back and the Detectives and the Superior Officers.

I don't know what we have to do to get everybody on the same page with this. I know one thing; we can't afford to lose \$12 million in an arbitration. So if you folks could look into that it would be a wonderful thing because I think we all can agree we can't afford to lose \$12 million. We worked too hard to get all of our employees to come up with givebacks last year. I don't want to see us take a step backwards.

MR. ZWIRN:

I'm sure that there would be absolute agreement on the other side of the street and I will find out.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

One last thing. If you could just bring back the message that I did feel personally slighted when there was nobody here representing the Sheriff, Probation or the Police initially. I'm -- I don't want to look at the glass half empty, but if you could pass the word that I'd like to have a representative -- I know the Commissioner said if I ever want him just call him, but it doesn't have to be the Commissioner. I thought I would always have a representative, and if you can just pass that so that would become a policy maybe?

MR. ZWIRN:

If you want the Director of Probation here we'll have him here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Don't -- let me be clear. I want a representative. I know his job is busy. I'm happy with, you know, our representative from the Police Department, but I don't want him to be getting a call at ten o'clock saying you better get over there. I want somebody here in the beginning for the meeting.

MR. ZWIRN:

Just with the Sheriff I would reach out directly because he's an independently elected official, so the County Executive doesn't have the ability to order him to come.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I forgot that, year.

MR. ZWIRN:

That's all right.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thanks.

DEPUTY INSPECTOR NIEVES:

If I may apologize, Mr. Chairman. I was informed of the meeting. I was detained on the way here, so the fault was mine for being late and my personal apology for that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm sorry to hear that, you'll have to pay the price, I guess, for being late then, huh? Unless you have a note from the Commissioner, I'm sorry. Okay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Being that we do have the FRES Commissioner here, could we talk to him?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure. I'm sorry. Commissioner, would you come forward and just give us a quick overview of what's happening? And I want to compliment you on your preparedness for the non-event of the hurricane. You guys were ready.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I thank you for that comment. Just speaking about that event, we used, the Long Island event, a brand new program called CodeRED. We got this program under a grant, so thankfully it didn't cost the County a dime. What we're able to do now is actually communicate internally with our own departments and our residents from anywhere from a hurricane, a bad fire, to even if we want to spray mosquitoes we're allowed to use this. The events that happened with almost hurricane, as you commented, people are calling it now, is that the -- prior to the event we had approximately 500 people signed up for that. To date we have about 10,000. So we are going to be encouraging people to sign up for it. The program works very well.

What it actually will send out when the people sign up, you can go on our website and sign up for it, it will send you a text message if you have a cell phone, it will call your home if you want to use the hard line phone, or an e-mail message. It will be sent out that way and we got nothing but compliments back on it. Just as a backup to that system, which we always need duplication in emergency management, we still have a reverse 911 system that's in place. What that is, that is the database of all the hard line phones in the County. If we wanted to target the whole County or if we wanted to target certain areas in a block, we can do that with the reverse 911 and the CodeRED. The difference between the 911, it usually takes us about nine hours to get through everything; we did the 10,000 calls in four and a half minutes through the system.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Wow.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

It worked out well. What this will continue to do is actually call your phone three times. If it

doesn't answer the first time, we'll keep on coming back, coming back to it, and we'll get a complete report after that. What we did, we've had FEMA in our office last week to see if there's any type of damage. So far what they're telling us is that our beach erosion, our beaches have not been in good shape, but the majority of it, and it does happen sometimes, we have gotten more sand back on some of our beaches because of that storm last week, the way the wind was blowing and the way the tides were. It did actually help us out. We are going through our County department finding out about how much it cost them for overtime. I know we had overtime at FRES, and we were to looking to go see if we can help out, get some type of reimbursement back from the Federal government.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Joe, what does the message say that goes to someone's house?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

We can make it up and say what we want. It can either be a voice message or the texting. Each individual -- we don't have canned messages.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. But, like, for example, if we had a hurricane hitting the south shore, would it identify potential flood areas and tell people to evacuate?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

It can do that. We can identify a certain area and go back to those. We have it broken down by township, we broke it down by street number, everything. The only thing we don't know is when we have a cell phone number and the person didn't put their address down, all they filed was a cell phone number. What it would tell people is what shelters were open if we needed them. We advise that we are being hit with a storm, we're going to get a major snowstorm. Any other message going out, and I know we have been spoken to by the Health Department, they came to us and asked us, they are looking for a message going out there when they do the mosquito spraying.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay --

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

We can use this system very easily.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. How about handicapped? Do we have a list of handicapped people that would need like a respirator or something like that?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Yes, we do. We have what we call our Joint Emergency Evacuation Program, JEE Program. We approximately have about a thousand people signed up for that. What we do, not only for this event, we do it for a snowstorm. Any type of event comes in we actually bring our CERT people in, community emergency response teams in, two days before the event and they go down that list and they actually call every single person on the phone asking them do they know the storm is coming, do they need any assistance, give them some non-emergency numbers to call, let them know we'll be checking up on them. It works very well for us.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Just to get back to the message again. It's not an electronic message, it's an actual voice message that's on the system or left on the answering machine?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

That is correct. The message goes out on your cell phone or your e-mail has got you a written message. An identical message that will be spoken to by, it's generally somebody in my office who does it, and we send it. It would be a voice message going to your home phone.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. So it's someone from your office that does the message?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Yes. They offered us -- they have some canned messages, but it kind of -- we went the other way because we kind of felt it doesn't sound personal enough. So the gentlemen we have doing it has a good speaking voice and he does send the message out. We can even tell up to -- we have a report back how many people answer the phone, even how many people hung up before the end of the conversation, and how many no answer do we get.

LEG. GREGORY:

All right, thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Just very quickly, Mr. Chairman. And, Legislator Gregory, I'm happy to say that immediately when I got the press release about this CodeRED system I signed up myself. I also sort of disseminated that information to a bunch of folks through e-mails that I know. I'm happy to say that it worked remarkably well for me, and I heard from other folks that had signed up as a result of my communication and it worked very well for them as well, so great job. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Actually, when they talked about CodeRED I did sign up. I have CodeRED on my cell phone. I received two phone calls. Yes, he does have a nice voice and it was a very, good clear message. And it works, I received two calls as things were progressing.

Going back to JEEP applications. Bill mentioned the, you know, the handicapped and people with special needs. The JEEP application, I was at the Crab Festival in Mastic Beach, and a last minute decision to bring a number of applications down. I can't tell you how many people actually took them and were glad that we had them. I would like to see if there's a way that you could follow-up and let me know if you received any new applications from the Shirley/Mastic/Mastic Beach area. But again, I think you are saying you only have a thousand people have signed up. I don't know how we're going to get the message out, but I think it's really important that we do get that message out that the JEEP applications are available and that service is available. I mean, have you had any ideas of what you'd like to do?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

We have worked on this program for four years. We have left them at the senior citizens centers, we've left them at the library. We realized -- and we do have them on our website and realize a lot of elderly people do not go on the web or anything like that. We have tried every avenue we can to

get it out, and any help we can get from any one of the Legislators sending it out. It's really -- we know there's a lot more out there. We've checked with LIPA. LIPA has a list of over 6,000 people. They told us they're not allowed to release it to us because of the HIPAA laws because there is some medical history on there. So what they've also done is that they've mailed out with their bills to people letting them know this program is here. It's a great program, and we just can't push it enough. I don't think people are taking advantage of it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, I think we need get the message out more.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you very much, Commissioner. You guys did a great job. Please pass the word along.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, let's start with the agenda.

Tabled Resolutions

1782, A Local Law to register prepaid cell phones purchased in Suffolk County. (Browning)

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to table. Public hearing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Motion to table for a public hearing. I'll second that. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

Introductory Resolutions

1858, Accepting and appropriating 100% Federal pass-through grant funds from the NYS Office of Homeland Security in the amount of \$1,227,720 for the "State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) FY2009" administered by the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services and to execute grant related agreements. (Co. Exec.)

I'll make a motion to approve and put on the consent calendar.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved and placed on consent calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

1860, Accepting and appropriating 100% Federal pass-through grant funds from the NYS Office of Homeland Security in the amount of \$65,000 for the 2008 HazMat Grant Program administered by the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services and to execute grant related agreements. (Co. Exec.)

I'll make a motion to approve and put on the consent calendar.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved and placed on consent calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

1863, A Local Law to reduce minors' access to spray paint. (Browning)

LEG. BROWNING:

I'd like to make a motion to table. I've met with some people who have now decided that they want to work with us to prevent the minors from receiving the spray -- being able to get access to the spray paint. I'm continuing to meet with them and hopefully we won't have to make it a law.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. We'll make a motion to table. I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

1879, A Local Law establishing a County Registry for animal abuse offenders. (Cooper)

I'll make a motion to table for public hearing.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

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

Okay, seeing no more business, I'll adjourn the meeting. Thank you.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 P.M.)

{ } Denotes spelled phonetically