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 on Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present:
Legislator Kate Browning - Chair
Legislator Robert Calarco - Vice-Chair
Legislator Kara Hahn
Legislator Kevin McCaffrey
Legislator William Spencer
Legislator Monica Martinez

Also In Attendance:
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Jason Richberg - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
John Ortiz - Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Gregory
Josh Slaughter - Aide to Legislator Browning
Bill Shilling - Aide to Legislator Calarco
Liz Alexander - Aide to Legislator Spencer
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn
Greg Atherton - Aide to Legislator McCaffrey
Katie Horst - County Executive Assistant
Kerri Suoto - County Executive's Office
Vincent DeMarco - Suffolk County Sheriff
Michael Sharkey - Chief Deputy Sheriff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Christopher Brockmeyer - Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Bill Doherty - Lieutenant/Chief of Department's Office/SCPD
Robert Waring - Captain/Chief of Department's Office/SCPD
Patrice Dlhopolsky, Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Arthur Sanchez - Secretary/SC Deputy Sheriffs Police Benevolent Assoc.
Russ McCormick - Superior Officer's Association/Sergeant at Arms
Lou Tuttone - PBA/1st Vice President
Laura Ahearn - Parents for Megan's Law/The Crime Victims Center
Anthony LaFerrera - Chairman/Suffolk County FRES Commission
Jay Egan - Former Chair/Suffolk County FRES Commission
Jerry Owenburg - Suffolk County Volunteer Firefighters Burn Center
Peter Cincotta - President/SC Volunteer Firefighters Association
Debra Pure - Brighter Tomorrows
Dawn Brown - Brighter Tomorrows
Stephanie Frisz-Gioia - Brighter Tomorrows
All Other Interested Parties

Taken By:
Lucia Braaten - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m.*)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Good morning. I believe we do have a quorum, so we can start the meeting. If everyone could please rise, we'll start with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Legislator Hahn.

(*Salutation*)

And a moment of silence also for those who defend our country at home and abroad. And especially keep in our prayers Detective Mark Collins from the Suffolk County Police Department, who was recently shot. I know he's doing well, but I want to make sure that he knows we're all thinking about him.

(*Moment of Silence*)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you. Okay. We will start with the cards. We have a few today. And after that, we will have a presentation, Sheriff DeMarco and the Youth Re-Entry Task Force. So before, we will have our first speaker, is Anthony LaFerrera, and Jay Egan will be after him.

MR. LAFERRERA:
Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Good morning.

MR. LAFERRERA:
Anthony LaFerrera, Chairman, Suffolk County FRES. Here we go. Sorry about that. I'm here today to talk about I.R. 1152, against I.R. 52, the sale and use of safe sparkling devices. If someone can show me what a safe sparkling device is, I'd like to know.

As everybody knows, the Governor signed into law Chapter 477 of the 2014 laws, which places new restrictions on dangerous fireworks, but also authorizes local governments to enact legislation to permit the sale and use of safe sparkling devices. This legislation concludes that the access of safe sparkling devices will allow -- this is the bill, I'm sorry -- County residents to enhance their enjoyment of certain important holidays and also benefit Suffolk County businesses. I don't know how this benefits.

The sale of these safe sparkling devices is only through June 1st of each year through July 5th, December 26th, one day, January 2nd of each calendar year. How does that benefit the County? How does that benefit the 1.5 million people of Suffolk County?

I'd also like to know if the County Executive's been advised of this bill, Town Supervisors, and Fire Marshals, because if this was to go through, I'm sure they are the ones that have to issue the permits. And I'll let you know right now, it would be pretty hard in the Town of Southold, because they don't have a Fire Marshal, so I don't know how that's going to happen.

The nearest place I could find to purchase fireworks, if it becomes legal, is eastern Pennsylvania. How is that going to be transported here? How are we going to know about it? If that comes about, how does the storage take place? Where does it get stored? How does it get stored? Is it safe? How do we know that? Who's going to monitor that?

Storage: Okay, so we put it in our sheds, our basements. Say Home Depot or a local 7-Eleven, where are they going to store it? That becomes a potential hazard to us as firefighters, as well as the public. If there is storage, how do we dispose of it, of these fireworks? And I know through some of my research, some of the disposal techniques have to come through ATF rules and regulations. I don't know if we're aware of that.

There's also a company looking to come into Suffolk County, if this is to come about, and sell these sparkling devices. When we say sparkling devices, fountains, that could go as sparkling devices nine foot high. They're advertising to people here in Suffolk County and businesses that whatever you sell, you can make a 20% profit of whatever you sell. So let's say on a Mother's Day weekend next to a little flower stand someone's selling these sparkling devices. So now on Saturday night we've got to pack up, put the fireworks in a U-Haul truck. Now, on a Saturday night, the Fire Company responds to a truck smoking behind someone's house. How do we know what's in there? How are we going to mark this? How is it safe? How does it benefit anybody? I haven't even gotten to the Burn Center yet. We only have eight burn beds. I'm sure that's going to enhance injuries and burns. I know there's someone here from the Burn Center that may even talk about that.

I just don't understand how this is going to benefit the people and businesses in Suffolk County with the danger to the firefighters of Suffolk County. If someone could tell me that, then maybe I'll think differently.

I wish I was able to blow up this picture. I mean, I'm sorry, it's just on my phone. It's definitely going to be hard to see, but that's from safe sparkling devices. Yeah, there was an aerial device that went to the garage, but guess what was in there? Safe sparkling devices, and that was under parental supervision.

So I don't know what else to say, but this is not worthwhile in my book. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you, Anthony. The next speaker is Jay Egan.

MR. EGAN:
Good morning. My name is Jay Egan. I've changed hats. I'm First Vice President now for the Suffolk County Fire Districts Association. I also sit on various committees throughout the State of New York between the Districts and the Chiefs.

Not to reiterate too much what Anthony has already talked about, I just want to let everyone know that all three State major organizations, as well as all the three County organizations for fire, are adamantly against this bill moving forward. We have had conversations in the past. Whenever a bill involves public safety, it usually involves the fire service, or the EMS response service, and we always ask that whoever does that bill to please come and speak with us and maybe we can kind of walk through it together and look at it.

No one's perfect. No one can look at all sides of how it's going to affect everybody, we understand that. The problem is when lobbyists get involved, they're looking at it one way. The this bill, from what I understand, was dropped and given by a lobbyist. All right? That is not the way bills should go forward in this County, especially when they directly affect public safety.

Again, we're against it. I'm sure if it does go to a full hearing, there'll be more than enough people to speak, so I'm going to try -- I know you have a large agenda today. I just want to try to keep it as low key as possible, but let you know everybody is fully against it.

The Burn Center, like Anthony said, has eight beds. To just go through -- we don't have enough beds in that Burn Center for child injuries and child burns that's going to happen. There's documented proof throughout the country of injuries that happened to children from other children. There's one little girl that had her foot burnt and now has to walk on a club foot, because her sister threw the sparkler when it got too hot and it went on the baby's shoe, burnt up her shoe, and now she's deformed for life. That's only one case of many that are documented throughout this country.

People who are going to sell them are going to promise you the world, they're going to tell you how great they are. Listen, we all want to enjoy the festivities of the 4th of July. I've heard, "Well, sometimes firemen have fireworks and they're shooting them off." That doesn't make it right, because that's not the majority of the firemen, right? And just like the majority of law enforcement follows their rules, are there still people that still drink and drive? There certainly are. That doesn't make it right either. So just because something is happening isn't -- should not become the standard for it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you, Jay. Next is Jerry Owenburg.

MR. OWENBURG:
Thank you for having us today to speak on this topic that's so dear to us. I represent the -- I'm from the Volunteer Firefighters Burn Center at Stony Brook. Some of you have been out there. I urge you to go out and visit those people that treat these kids and people that get burnt on these things. Tireless, two, three times a day, changing bandage, I don't think any one of them or their parents will say that any sparkler is safe. So I urge you to go out there and talk to these people. It's a beautiful place. They'll tell you the stories. We could give you a lot of numbers.

Twelve hundred degrees is nothing to put into some kids hands. I wear full bunker gear when I go into buildings that are 1200 degrees. We're giving these kids this stuff in their hands. It doesn't belong there. If you've seen any kid that these things burnt, and if you've seen these things, what do they do when it burns down to the end? They throw it on the ground. Other kids step on this stuff. They burn their feet. We see it all the time. There's enough burns on a regular basis of other things that -- scald burns. We don't need something additional that we have to worry about. They tell our nurses and doctors that they can't take off those -- they can't have vacation then, they know this stuff is coming in. So I urge you to kill this bill now and don't put it forward. There's nothing safe about sparklers. They should not be in the same sentence. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you, Jerry. Next is Peter Cincotta.

MR. CINCOTTA:
Good morning, everyone. My name is Peter Cincotta. I represent and am President of the Suffolk County Volunteer Firemen's Association. I'm also a 33-year member of the Selden Fire Department.

The words "safe" and "sane" fireworks sparkling device is an oxymoron. There is no safe device. Everything can explode, everything has sparks, and everything can go wrong. Like the picture that Anthony showed, myself was involved in a fire, a house fire. Fireworks were stored in a bedroom upstairs. We had no knowledge of it. One of my colleagues fell off a ladder because of the explosion, broke a leg of the gentleman that was holding the ladder for him. Something, obviously, went radically wrong. Burns to the foot, burns to the hands, blinding of the eyes are everything that you could read. And we can all Google "sparkling devices", states that even have legal fireworks have reports from hospitals, from Fire Marshals' offices of the dangers and the accidents that are caused by these devices.

I could only imagine, there's nothing legal in Suffolk County right now on any of this level. The Police Department do an outstanding job of confiscating pounds of this material that has to be properly destroyed, and, yes, the ATF does get involved with that demolition. That says something to how it has to be handled on the other side.

Yes, we can go to Pennsylvania. Yes, we can go to states. In the trunk of my car, in the back seat I can put a box. But can you imagine the tractor trailer loads of material that's going to be delivered to all of these large stores? Hundreds of them. Why not? If it's legal, they're not doing anything wrong. But do we know that that tractor trailer is loaded with these -- with this material when it slides off the Expressway, when it gets into an accident, or a roll-over on a main street in our communities? No, we don't. It talks -- there's no talk about placarding, there's no talk about enforcement, there's no talk about inspection and safe storage, nothing.

The Governor signed a bill, put it into your hands, passed the buck. He vetoed this for two years in a row, and I guess he realized he could play Pontius Pilate and move it on and it's in our hands. I urge you not to support this, and let's keep all of us safe and enjoy a happy and safe fireworks display by proper professionals. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you. And next one, next speaker is Debra -- I'm not sure if I can read this. Pure? I'm not sure. Is there a Debra in the room?

MS. MACKAY:
They're with us.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
She's not here yet? Is it Pue. I'm not sure. From Brighter Tomorrows. Oh, is she not speaking?

MS. MACKAY:
They'll be with us.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. And what about Dawn, is she doing the -- okay. And Stephanie also?

MS. MACKAY:
(Nodded yes).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. So then we are done with cards, so okay. Before we do the presentation, I think there are a couple of issues. I know the -- sorry, something I did forget to mention. I just got word about Catherine Stark. She's a County employee. She works in Legislator Krupski's District. Her father passed away. So we would like to send our condolences to her.

I'm trying to think where I should start. I did -- I did see a Newsday article about overtime. John, I know that I asked you to get us some information. Maybe we should wait until after the presentation. But I can share, if anyone would like to see. I know Mr. Waring is here, Captain Waring is here for the Police Department. I don't know if you've seen it. I could certainly give you a copy of it, so you can look over it before we get to the agenda, but an $8 million over our overtime, we have gone over.

So, again, concerns is about staff shortages, and the failure to have an adequate number of Police Officers is definitely alarming, plus the fact that we have some -- I just noticed we had some Arson Squad numbers, one a Police Officer, and one a Detective. The other one, I believe, a Detective

Investigator, both retired. Just like to know how we're doing on that, how we're filling in those positions.

The other one is I heard John Busweiler, who is definitely someone else that, a very valuable member of the Police Department, is going to be retiring. That's an issue as who's coming in to replace him, and at what point are we going to replace him and fill his spot.

And sad, too, is we have Chief White is leaving us. I -- there's enough I can say about Chief White, and I think everybody in the Suffolk County Police Department. He's a man of integrity, and I have a lot of respect for him. So, again, we are losing some of the best people in the Suffolk County Police Department. So we will have some questions about what we're doing to adequately staff our Police Department.

I know that Commissioner Williams, he had a personal issue, was not able to attend. Patrice, have you anything to report?

MS. DLHOPOLSKY:
No, I do not.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. So maybe when we get to the agenda. What we'll do is we'll go ahead, start. Sheriff DeMarco, if you'd like to come forward and --

LEG. HAHN:
We're going to address those issues you just asked about, correct?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Yes.

LEG. HAHN:
Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Yes. I did ask John if he could provide us with some information, so we'll get that. We'll give him some time to work on that.

Okay. And we are going to get a presentation on the Youth Re-Entry Task Force, and an update on what's been going on over the last three years. And it's always my pleasure to be able to go and attend a lot of those meetings and see what has been going on. You know, I always say, jails don't rehabilitate people, programs do. And I think that, Sheriff, you've done a phenomenal job in the jail with our youth. So with that, you have the floor.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
Well, thank you. And thank you for allowing me and the Youth Re-Entry Task Force to come here today and present on our Youth Tier Initiative and the Reentry Task Force in general.

Before I start, because I'll probably forget at the end, I just wanted to acknowledge the people who contributed to this presentation. Here to my left, Kristin MacKay from my office coordinated this with Brighter Tomorrows, the Brookhaven, Riverhead and Babylon Town Youth Bureaus, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Herstory Writer Workshop, the Long Island Council on Drugs and Alcoholism, New Hour for Women and Children Long Island, the Timothy Hill Ranch, and Family Residences and Essential Enterprises.

So, basically, over the last several years, there have been a distinct shift in Suffolk County towards collaborative criminal justice policy-making, and the implementation of correctional and community-based organizations designed to reduce inmate recidivism, and ultimately drive down crime and the jail population. These efforts are ongoing in the County jails, and are already demonstrating significant savings.

And, you know, when we started this, this Task Force, the purpose of this is to increase public safety and to bring crime down. That is a major component of this. And when we do that, we save money. We save money by having less crime, having less inmates, and having less inmates return to the system. And there is also a human services component of this, too. We're dealing with, for all intents and purposes, kids. The majority of crimes committed across the country, and especially here in Suffolk County, are committed by people between probably the ages of 20 and 35. And, you know, if you ask -- you know, you ask the Police Department, you know, who they're seeing in the street, who they're arresting, who they're rolling around with, who are the problems, it's not the 50, 60, 70 year-olds, it's not 10 and 12 and 13-year-olds, it is the population that we are trying to get to that comes into the facility, commits, you know, hopefully their first crime, and then we never see them again, and that is the goal here. And, you know, for me, the goal is public safety and saving money, and changing people's lives, and making them productive citizens.

You know, we saw from the last sentence that -- census, that the -- New York State is really -- you know, the average age is rising. Here in Suffolk County, it's rising even quicker, we're losing our young people. So, when we lose our young people to prison, it exacerbates the problem. We have people now that are coming out of our facility, they are now -- these children or these kids, they are now productive people. They're back in school, they're in college, they have jobs, and they're contributing to society, and that's our goal here.

And, you know, another goal of this presentation today is to further impress upon you, the Legislature, that the County's nonprofit community has proven a willingness to work in concert with government to forge a social safety net for individuals transitioning from jail and the specialty courts into the community. And we started this in 2011 and we have a pretty good track record now, and we have some really good data that shows that this works, and it works and its inexpensive.

In this presentation, we'll present some of our current projects and then offer some recommendations that could help further reduce costly incarceration, bring down chronic recidivism, improve access to grants, and discuss ways to improve outcomes for the children of incarcerated adults in Suffolk County.

So, at this point, I am going to -- I'm going to have Colleen Ansanelli come up to the podium and do a quick --

MS. ANSANELLI:
Good morning, Madam Chair, and Members of the Public Safety Committee. I work with the Re-Entry Task Force, and it is a pleasure to work with them and do whatever I can to help out, knowing the Criminal Justice System a little bit. So I'm going to talk about the life circumstances that substantially influence the chances --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Colleen, would it be easier for you just to sit at the table? I mean, you're more than welcome to. It might be easier for you.

MS. ANSANELLI:
It doesn't matter.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
You're call.

MS. ANSANELLI:
Thank you. Okay. So there is an overlap between child welfare and juvenile justice youth. Social scientists have long recognized that the histories of youth offenders often parallel the histories of children and the child protection and foster care systems. Both juvenile offenders and foster care youth enter out-of-home placement due to histories involving family dysfunction, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and chronic neglect. Juveniles often engage in delinquent behavior as a response to family problems, such as abuse, neglect poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and mental health disorders. One study found that neglect and child abuse increased the risk of being arrested by 55%, and the risk of being arrested for violent crime by 96%. Furthermore, juvenile delinquency is a common precursor to persistent and serious criminal behavior in adulthood.

Some of the other factors that contribute to youthful contact with the Criminal Justice System: According to the National Mental Health Association, the prevalence of mental health disorders for all youth in the United States is approximately 22%. For youth who are incarcerated, that number is close to 60%.

Research also shows that many delinquent youth are developmentally behind their peers, and are more likely to have learning disabilities. Upwards of 70% reportedly have learning disabilities.

Many youth in custody at the Suffolk County Correctional Facility report histories of family abuse and neglect, chemical dependency issues, gang involvement, and report that one or both parents have a history of incarceration. Many of the youth also report that they are homeless or come from families that moved around frequently. Many also come from low income families or from neighborhoods with high crime and poverty rates.

In a recent report issued by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 70% of youth in custody reported that they had had something very bad or terrifying happen to them in their lives. Sixty-five percent reported having seen someone seriously injured or killed. Twenty-six percent of those surveyed said that they felt as if life was not worth living, and 22% reported having tried to commit suicide at some point in their lives. Eighty-four percent of the youth surveyed said that they had used marijuana, compared to a rate of 30% among their peers in the general population.

And now I pass it along to the next speaker. Thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Good morning, everyone. Thank you again for having us here. My name is Kristin Mackay, and I help coordinate the Sheriff's Youth Tier Initiative.

Today we're going to have various speakers come up. They're members of the Task Force that have contributed to this project, have been working for the Task Force, working with the inmates in the jail, and with those who are transitioning to our community. So we're going to be coming up to the podium one by one, and that's how we set it up.

I wanted to just give you a brief rundown here on the Youth Tier Initiative. A lot of you have already been involved with the program. Just quickly, our program, the Youth Tier Initiative began in 2011. All youth attend academic, career and technician education provided by Eastern Suffolk BOCES. The majority of special programs are provided by community and nonprofit volunteers. Stony Brook University provides student interns to perform discharge planning and case management from September to May.

Post-release housing was developed with Timothy Hill Ranch and Hope House Ministries. And, as we'll hear soon, Brighter Tomorrows has recently stepped in to provide that as well.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES host monthly dinner meetings for the parents of the youth. And the Youth Re-Entry Task Force meets regularly to provide support to the initiative.

Finally, we have been collaborative, working very collaboratively with the Youth Felony Part on discharge planning, and jointly advocating for community-based support systems for justice-involved youth. So it's been a very active effort.

I'm just going to ask Barbara Egloff to come up and just do a briefing on our Jail Education Program.

MS. EGLOFF:
Good morning. I'm Barbara Egloff from Eastern Suffolk BOCES. I'm the Divisional Administrator who oversees career tech and adult education programs, as well as alternative to incarceration programs and the jail education program.

I'd like to talk to you a little bit about what education looks like in the jail. Traditionally, the model is the focus on high school equivalency. In the last three years, Eastern Suffolk BOCES has come up with an innovative model that utilizes small and individual learning, career and technical exploration, contextualized curriculum, and work readiness skills. We do this with a small diverse staff, and we meet the needs of virtually all students that we work with inside the jail.

Individualized and small group learning is through academic support. Each teacher works with the students based on their individual needs and where they are in their high school programs. Career and technical education is infused into all of our classes. We're able to introduce students to careers in health occupations, business and marketing, graphic arts and building trades. We also introduce them to appearance enhancement courses, such as cosmetology, barbering and skin care, which also reflects on their personal grooming styles.

Within the contextualized curriculum, the students can start to see real world applications through academics. And work readiness skills are a set of skills and behaviors necessary for any job that are transferable. That, again, is integrated into all of their curriculum.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES provides two different models for students, depending on where they are academically. Students that are looking or able to achieve their high school regents diploma is the model in which they will follow, and I have that on the chart to the left there. They're working with -- in the academic arena in English, Social Studies, Science, Math, and then they are also infused with career and financial management. They receive physical education, as well as health. And, as I said a few minutes earlier, they also are introduced to business marketing and communication, career and technical exploration, including graphic art and design, appearance enhancement, construction trades, as well as health occupations.

Students that are mathematically not able to achieve their high school regents diploma because they've been out of school for so long, and we are in fear that they will age out, they receive curriculum focused on the high school equivalency preparation, but we still include all of the wrap-around components, such as career and financial management, health, physical education, and the career and technical opportunities.

The statistics show that I have up there is during the last three years, and it's based on the students that have entered into the Youth Tier. Eighty-three percent of our students have earned regents level credits while they are with us. Now, keep in mind, they're only with us for a very short time in the jail, and that is a tremendous increase over the years, because this is a group that is mandated

to attend school on a daily basis.

Students that are not mathematically eligible to receive a high school -- a high school regents diploma, 78% of them have earned their high school equivalency. And keep in mind that this rate -- this percentage is in -- has maybe been altered a little bit due to the GED TASC transition. GED was the former high school equivalency diploma, and now we are on the TASC track in New York State. TASC is a little bit more difficult than GED, but still, 78% is quite a large percentage when you've given -- when you've taken that into consideration.

Nine of our students participated in college preparation classes. Nine is an extremely high number, because, again, they're only with us for a very, very short time. So, if they receive their high school regents diploma, or if they receive their high school equivalency diploma and they are ready to pursue college courses, those are the students that have had that opportunity to do that.

Five students have actually graduated high school while they were incarcerated with us. A hundred percent of the students enrolled in the Youth Tier participate in career exploration or training programs, and this curriculum, we deliver it in module format, so it can stand alone, each module, and not act as building blocks. So students who come in today will not have -- will not have to worry about repeating the same curriculum if they were there a month from today. That foundation is -- offers them an opportunity to enroll in any other career and technical programs that are offered in Suffolk County, either by Eastern Suffolk BOCES or by Western Suffolk BOCES. It also gives them a foundation that they can articulate one of the post secondary programs that we work with.

Thirty-two of the students enrolled in the program have also earned industry-recognized certifications. This includes OSHA certificate, CPR/first aid, and even a couple of them receive their food handlers certification. This is an area where we are continually looking to enhance and provide students with even more opportunities that can be transferable to them when they leave us.

And 85% of the students enrolled in the Youth Tier -- in the Youth Tier have received transitional counseling with our transitional counselor. This is one-on-one counseling services. Virtually, 100% of them receive small group transitional support. And it's important to note that these transitional services are available to students that we work with for a lifetime. So, if they need more assistance later on, they can certainly reach out to us and do that at any given time. Thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you, Barbara. We've really improved our partnerships over the last three years. Barbara really has worked so closely with us at the jail to improve the Incarcerated Education Program, so we're really pleased with the progress, and with all of the programs that are being afforded the students.

At the inception of the Youth Tier Initiative in September 2011, the jail had an average of 65 youth under the age of 18 incarcerated in the facility on any given day, and an average of 171 youth between the ages of 18 and 21. So that was 236 youth on any given day. Today, that number has been drastically reduced. There are typically 120 to 130 youth in the jail. Recently, we had 18, 16 and 17-year-olds, and 106 18 to 21-year-olds. That's only 124 youth under the age of 21. We want to cut that number down further, of course, but we've really cut that number in half over the last three years.

We're also saving the taxpayer significant money with these efforts. The jail population, the savings over the last three years, we estimate about $30,000 a day is being saved through these reductions, and approximately $10.5 million a year, so that's very significant.

In 2013, Suffolk County opened a new State-mandated jail, and that's what's costing $185 million for the -- for the jail. We are now facing the prospect of having to spend another 110 million to build more jail cells. And the fiscal impact of building, repairing and maintaining Suffolk's two correctional facilities is really a driving force behind Sheriff DeMarco's interest in rehabilitation, as he stated before. The Youth Re-Entry Task Force has served as a vehicle to enhance community relations between government and the County's human service providers. And, along with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, it has helped to intensify the County's focus on driving down the local jail population through alternatives to incarceration.

And while savings is certainly important, the human services factor is vitally important. Early studies indicate that youth who receive correctional rehabilitation and appropriate discharge planning are less likely to commit future crimes, and this translates into safer communities throughout Suffolk County. Many former Youth Tier Initiative participants have gone on to college and vocational schools and are now productive citizens. And, in fact, we have one young man here today, he's going to share his story. Many of the youth report that after a period of several months in therapeutic programming at the jail, they begin to think differently and show remorse for past behavior. And this initiative is also providing health and support for the families of the youth who are typically troubled. And by helping the parents of incarcerated youth prepare for their release and gain access to appropriate services, we believe that whole families are benefitting.

We're going to now go over to the Right Path Program. Cheryl and Kyle from Timothy Hill Children's Ranch are here. Would you like to come up with some of the guys?

MR. THOMPSON:
Good morning. I'm Kyle Thompson with Timothy Hill Children's Ranch. One example that Kristen has been talking about as an alternative to incarceration involved with the Youth Tier Initiative is our Right Path Program at Timothy Hill Children's Ranch. When Sheriff DeMarco first took office in 2006, he had a vision, and it's a vision to create a transitional rehabilitative program for young people living in the jail. The vision came to reality in 2013 with the launch of the Right Path Program at Timothy Hill Children's Ranch in Riverhead.

MS FRANCO:
Good morning. Cheryl Franco from Timothy Hill Children's Ranch. The Right Path Program is an example of what could be achieved when the government works in close collaboration with the nonprofit community to identify and address unmet human service needs. Many of the officers from the Youth Tier visit with the youth at Timothy Hill Children's Ranch and keep in touch with them after they have left the facility to help keep them on track.

MS. MACKAY:
And we just have a short video presentation. And the young man surprised us today and actually came. So the young guy that's in this video is here with us today.

(*Video Presentation*)

The last sentence got cut off, so I apologize. So Darnell is actually with us here today and I think he'll come up in a little while.

We launched a new initiative recently for the young females in the jail, and that's a new initiative that we've put in conjunction with our DWI unit, and these are the list of the not-for-profits that are providing programs to the young females in the jail, and we have some of them here with us today.

And I'd just like to invite Serena Liguori to come to the podium. She'd just going to talk a little bit about the profile of the typical female inmate.

MS. LIGUORI:
Good morning. My name is Serena Liguori. I'm the Associate Director for Herstory Writers Workshop, and I'd like to commend the Sheriff and Kristin for really taking real initiative around what happens to those who are incarcerated. One of the things that we really -- we do is we work with young people to create a story and narrative and use that narrative for policy change. And so many of the young women who write with us in our writing program in the jail then come home and are involved in things, which many of you, and thank you so much for participating, like the press conference we held last Friday for raising the age.

I want to talk a little bit about women's pathways to crime, because they are very different than men's. Oftentimes the rates of child abuse are twice as high as men. Women have a much larger history of severe sexual, physical and psychological abuse, and one of the things that speaks to this is -- in one of my prior positions, I worked surveying women in the State facilities, and in interviewing hundreds of women, we found that nine out of ten had survived severe abuse.

One of the other major issues is that there's a greater incidence of mental health problems, serious mental health, as opposed to male offenders, it's about 43%, and greater instances of substance abuse. You know, our women write about this in the writing workshops that we provide, and the good news is it's a really tangible population, because it is not an overwhelming group of women. And so to be able to provide them greater services would be something that would also impact their families, because many of them were the primary caretakers for their children before being incarcerated.

Tonight we're going to be hosting some of the children of incarcerated parents at Assemblyman Ramos' Women's History Month. They are reading the writing that they developed with us about having survived a parent being in prison and what kind of impact that had on them, and I know we'll talk more about that later.

On a personal -- on a personal note, I would also like to say, having been in the system myself many years ago, I wish I had been afforded the programs that we now have, so thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you, Serena. I'd like to invite Steve Chassman to come up to the podium, just to give a brief understanding of substance abuse as it relates to the typical female inmate.

MR. CHASSMAN:
Good morning, everybody. I'm Steve Chassman, the Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. I want to commend Sheriff DeMarco and Kristin MacKay for all the programs that they implement at the Youth Bureau. Certainly, this Legislative body is not unfamiliar with the current drug epidemic that we're seeing. For decades, we've been trying to incarcerate our way out of what is the substance use disorder, a mental health diagnosis. So we feel fortunate to be able to be in the women's adolescent tier, as well as the males for just about two years. There's a host of services that LICADD brings into the Suffolk County Jail, with the Sheriff's permission. First is the Start to Stop Program, moving people along, a continuum of change, and that comes through psychological education. Even though we talk about what drugs they use and it runs the gamut with adolescents today, Nassau, Suffolk, New York State, the larger United States, but not so much what they use, but why they use it, and with that, introducing healthy coping skills.

So we have an Anger Management Program that is evidence-based. Quite frankly, it's more than anger management, it's also emotional regulation, again, introducing healthy coping skills to deal with the full spectrum of emotions that many people, and particularly adolescents today, tend to want to self-medicate with a whole host of mind and mood-altering substances. And, of course,

peripherally, we do offer to their families some family support. We do pass out cards, with the COs and the Sheriff's permission, upon their discharge, and working with the discharge team that Kristin has put together. They know we have offices in Riverhead and Ronkonkoma, and, of course, in Nassau. And many of the group members that were discharged from the Suffolk County Jail have sought us out, not only for individual and for family support, but, unfortunately, if there were relapses in place, there is an established relationship where they have come to us comfortably and asked for detox, in-patient and out-patient.

So, once again, I want to commend the Sheriff. The group has been stellar in the male and female tiers, and we're looking forward to continuing our work there. Thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you, Steve. You know, really, without the support of these groups coming in, they're volunteers and they take their time to come in. It's very important. We found that a recent study of young female inmates in the Suffolk County Jail, that 65% had a drug dependence issue, and 23% of the females in the 16 to 19-year-old range reported addiction to heroin. And in jails and prisons throughout New York State, 80% of the women were convicted for nonviolent drug offenses, according to the Department of Justice. One out of three of those women in the State prison system report committing that offense to support a drug addiction. So that makes it sort of unique. You know, females do have a different profile than the males.

I'd like to invite Dawn Brown and Stephanie Frisz-Gioia to come to the podium. They are really doing a lot of wonderful work in the jail.

MS. BROWN:
Good morning. My name is Dawn Brown. I'm the Executive Director from Brighter Tomorrow. We're a domestic violence agency. I would like to thank Sheriff DeMarco and Kristin MacKay for inviting us and allowing us to do what we do in the jail.

Most people would wonder why a domestic violence agency is even in the jail and doing what we do. They allowed us in. I approached them, recognizing that in our shelter, we had an emerging problem in population that we recently started to see with greater frequency. We had women coming in straight from the jail seeking our services, and we recognized that we had to design special programs to meet their needs. We also recognized that we couldn't just do it at our shelter, that it had to start in the jail. It had to take place at the shelter, and there had to be wrap-around services that took place once they left. This is a very coordinated effort, it's a large effort, and they have been working with us to meet all of those needs, inside the jail and out, with the Department of Social Services, and with the courts, in the specialized courts. And it is a large effort, and it has grown exponentially in the last few months.

And I'm just going to hand this over at this point to my Director of Counseling to explain just a little bit more about it, because it's really her area of expertise, and she has taken this program and worked with Kristin and the Sheriff and just made it something really, really wonderful, and something I am so proud of, and something all of you in this County should be something to be very proud of.

MS. FRISZ-GIOIA:
Good morning. My name is Stephanie Frisz-Gioia. I'm Director of Counseling at Brighter Tomorrows. About a year ago, we started our first domestic violence support group onsite in the Riverhead Jail, and since then, we've grown and expanded to now having another group for 25 and under females in the DWI Program, and also for the males on the Adolescent Youth Tier, most of whom experienced domestic violence in their homes.

Also inside in the jail, we're also able to provide court advocacy and individual counseling services, as well as court-mandated mental health assessments. Once the women leave the jail, we're also able to provide shelter, transitional housing, case management, individual and group counseling, transportation assistance, and also court advocacy.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you, Ladies.

MS. BROWN:
And, again, I would just like to say, the Sheriff, I -- your proactive approach is something that I have not really seen, and I thank you. And I thank you for allowing us to do what we do.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
Thank you for doing what you do.

MS. MACKAY:
I'd like to invite Angela Delcid to come to the podium. She's also doing a lot of work within the jail with New Hour for Women & Children.

MS. DELCID:
Good afternoon. My name is Angela Delcid and I'm the Executive Director for New Hour for Women & Children on Long Island. We provide educational program, with the support of Kristin and the Sheriff, in the Riverhead Correctional Facility to the young females, the women, and the incarcerated mothers in the areas of parenting, re-entry and health and wellness. And then upon re-entry, we provide ongoing services at every stage of re-entry into the community on Long Island.
And I want to just speak briefly about the impact of incarceration on the children of incarcerated women.

Approximately seven in ten woman under correctional sanction have minor children, and they were the primary caretaker prior to their incarceration. The children of the incarcerated experience post traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and experience the same grief as a child who lost a parent. Upon a mother's re-entry, the mothers often face many obstacles, and when they are trying to reunify with their children, New Hour, Herstory and Brighter Tomorrows attempt to assist the women with many of these challenges. Some of these challenges are they must provide a stable home environment before acquiring custody of children, and often the women are homeless or need shelter services upon re-entry. Many have no means of transportation. Transportation is a big challenge on Long Island to make scheduled supervised visits with CPS or the children's temporary care providers. They require insurance often to cover the cost of needed family counseling to attempt to repair damaged relationships with children. Many are not aware of parental rights, and the process to legally regain visitation rights or custody of children. And most cannot afford attorneys to help them with Family Court appointments to reunify with their children.

One other thing I wanted to add is that often the mothers themselves will say that they don't want their children to make the same mistakes, or follow in their path, and often, they are seeking and asking for support services that are going to engage their children in positive community activities at no cost or low cost, and that's also a challenge, so that the children can remain engaged in positive activities, and not follow in the same footsteps. Thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you, very much, Angela. I'd like to invite Star Clark to come up with Debra Pure and Darnell Thomas. They are going to just talk about their personal experiences briefly.

MS. CLARK:
Hi. Good morning. My name is Star Clark. I came in contact with New Hour through the parenting and re-entry program. When I was incarcerated in Riverhead Jail, they were very helpful and offered me services upon being released in October. Since then, the services, they have included transportation with visits with my children Upstate and in Long Island. They have provided emotional support with dealing with the loss of my parental rights to my oldest son. They have provided advocacy with CPS, Family Court, and to regain unsupervised visitation. The goal still remains to be returned to parent.

Educate -- they also provided education advising and family counseling services. They have been providing support and helping me clear my traffic violations, and obtaining New York State driver's license. Their services are very important and needed in Long Island. Had they had these classes and services in jail and in the community when I was younger the first time, first time offender, it would have helped me not to be a repeat offender. For incarcerated women and mothers, these services provide hope for a healthier and more stable future for us and our children.

I want to thank New Hour from the bottom of my heart. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. Thank you for allowing me to be here to speak.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you.

MR. THOMAS:
Good morning. I'm Darnell Thomas. Well, I'm going to talk to you about my life story.

So, when I was younger, I had a lot of problems, couldn't keep my hands to myself. Always had a fighting issue and always getting in a lot of trouble hanging with the wrong crowd, just one of those guys.

I learned a lot since growing up. So my mother and father taught me, you know, the ways of life, but I just never listened. I just wanted to do what I wanted to do. So it put me in the wrong situations, and I ended up getting in trouble, incarcerated 2013, November. And I have came to Timothy Hill Children's Ranch, and since I've been here, it's been, you know, a great experience. It helped me with people skills. I learned that by helping another person, you know, it builds confidence. And I learned trustworthiness and integrity. But like, as a person, I see the ranch as a great place, and it has helped me in life. It took me a long way. I would never see myself where I'm at today because of the ranch. And I'm not going to say the ranch is the best place in the world, but it's the best thing that happened to me, which I could say.

(*Laughter*)

You know, and being there for other people, and I'm showing my family I could lead by example feels great. I've got four other -- three other brothers. I'm the middle one and I feel like I'm leading by example. So now like they've taken from what I'm doing, and I really appreciate the opportunity I've been given. Thank you.

(*Applause*)

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you. Debra pure.

MS. PURE:
Yeah, that's me. I'm Debra Pure and I'm here with Brighter Tomorrows, and also New Hour and Herstory have helped me in my journey.

"There's a new program called Brighter Tomorrows starting on Friday nights. If you want to go, put your name on the list." That's what I heard the CO yell while incarcerated at the Suffolk County Jail. I had been in and out of jail for many years and knew I wanted to change. I just didn't know where to go for that change. I did the sober house thing, where you're not allowed to work because you're mandated to daily outpatient treatment. There are a few working sober houses in Suffolk, but they're always full.

When I met Stephanie and she explained the Brighter Tomorrows re-entry program, I new this could be a change that I was looking for. I participated in her Friday night group from May until my release in August. While I was confined on the fifth floor, I also jointed a Saturday morning writing group called Herstory, and another new program that was introduced as New Hour on Thursday afternoons. Through all of my years of revolving through the system, I can't remember ever meeting women from the outside that were so concerned with helping me. At first I was a little skeptical. Why are these women here? They must be getting paid, I thought to myself.

(*Laughter*)

It's hard to explain the feeling of having civilian women coming behind the walls to support us. Jail is lonely and degrading. If you have a glimmer of hope, you'll begin to look forward to your groups and start to get excited that maybe you can have a life for yourself beyond jail.

Upon my release, I went to reside at Brighter Tomorrows. I continued to go to Herstory, where I reconnected with Serena Liguori, whom I've known for many years, and through her, I met Angela Delcid from New Hour. Brighter Tomorrows gave me a safe place to go and the freedom to get my life on track.

I am supported and encouraged at every step of the way by these women who I came in contact with while I was at the jail. Since coming home a little over seven months ago, I am now residing as the house monitor at Brighter Tomorrows Transitional House. I completed my first semester at Saint Joseph's College with a 3.9 GPA. I am employed and I continue to stay sober. I recently purchased a car with the help of my parents, and I am forever indebted to the positive mentor-type women that so freely give time and services to the incarcerated population at Suffolk County Jail.

There are a few glitches that I ran into along the way, but I would not give up. The biggest one was when I sent in my pay stubs to DOL and I was rebudgeted. I was told that I would have to pay $1,659 a month to continue to stay at Brighter Tomorrows. Somehow, Dawn Brown, the Executive Director, who was willing to let me stay there for free for a few months, got me a grant, so my rent is paid until June.

This particular program that Brighter Tomorrows has is the only one of its kind in Suffolk County that I am aware of. If someone is ready for a change and willing to do what it takes to make it through the ins and outs of the system, having these women to go to for guidance and support is a crucial step. Some people come out of jail with nothing, and if you're left to fend for yourself, it's not often very -- it's often very easy to give up. DSS does not make it easy by giving at least three different appointments that you have to get to with no money for transportation. These programs are a great asset, and the women who are involved are generally committed to see a person succeed once they are released back into society.

I can't really say enough about these programs. I have been going around in circles for many years and this was my opportunity. I hope to see some more participants turn their lives around.

It is very important to receive support while being locked up. Those programs made the difference for me this time. I won't stand up here and say if these programs were available 20 years ago my life may have been different. I will say that these programs in place now, my life is definitely going in a completely different direction. And I know all my experience can and will benefit others. When you have complete strangers in your life rooting for you to succeed, it makes all the difference. Not many people make it out of this cycle, but just to think, if one life is saved, it's a miracle.

(*Applause*)

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Thank you, Debra. I'd just like to have Erika Duncan come up for a moment. She is the Director of Herstory.

MS. DUNCAN:
And many thanks to Sheriff DeMarco and to Kristin MacKay for making it possible for us to be in the jails for 11 years now, and to see the amazing, amazing changes, especially with the institution of the Youth Tier. And it's, I guess, the highlight of my week on a Friday afternoon to go to work with the women in the DWI pod, who are now combined with, oh, say, six, you know, sometimes four, sometimes more young people who suddenly have mentors, mothers, and to see them writing together, struggling together, and look what we've done.

And it's been so amazing to partner with Brighter Tomorrows, with New Hour for Women & Children, Prison Families Anonymous. It's created a kind of network of nonprofits in and outside the jails. We've worked with, as Serena mentioned, the Children of the Incarcerated at Central Islip High School, who are just -- we're putting together now a book of their stories, which will be previewed tonight at Brentwood Intermediate School, if any of you can come to Assemblyman Ramos' presentation for Women's History Month.

And I just want to take a minute, because I know that's all we have, to share a couple of the testimonials. I had asked the women and girls to just write something about what the program meant to them, and kind of the changes in reflection in looking at their past. And, you know, so these are just a couple of the 20 responses I got.

And one woman writes, *"When you come to jail, you're always hearing about what everyone did to get arrested, their long rap sheets, etcetera. Seldom you hear in detail is why their lives got so chaotic, or what may have happened when they were children, or any traumatic event that affected them in negative ways that set off the domino effect that got them here. Herstory helps inmates really intimately tell their stories beginning to end. It's a very therapeutic program, especially for incarcerated women."*

And somebody else writes, *"Through incarceration, I realize more and more every day that there is a pattern of stories amongst the young girls. They need help and love before it's too late."*

And I just can't describe to all of you what it's like to see the older women, and sometimes by older, I mean 24, sometimes 35, sometimes 50 and the love that they are able to extend the 16, 17-year-old girls through, you know, their stories. And one thing they instituted, and Kristin mentioned the program of interns from Stony Brook University, is we're working with an intern now who is doing a special additional teen group just for the girls to give them a chance to write their stories. And one of the stories was just read for 200 people at our gala, and it was just an amazing

experience to see this young, very fragile teen mother.

I have to say, any given group of 20, probably three-quarters or more are mothers, and they're mothers who, you know, through the writing process are suddenly really looking back with remorse, wanting to change things for their children, wanting to -- wanting look at, you know, what's happening. So one girl says, *"I feel Herstory Writers Workshop is helpful in working out our past in story form, very therapeutic. It's sometimes easier looking from the outside instead of inside. I also think it helped me remember things in my past that I repressed."*

And a girl, you know, says, a girl who at nine left her home to live in an abandoned building, and tells a story of really wanting to be an opera singer and being afraid to take off her choker while she was living in an abandoned building, until she finally did, and her teacher just had to see the bruises all over her. And, you know, she says, sharing, *"Hearing the stories of my fellow inmates creates a sense of bonding and understanding between people that really helps the atmosphere, especially since we all have to live together. Sometimes it's easy to miss things and significance if you're verbally trying to tell a story. But, if it's written down, it's easier to express their point of view."*

And one of our most rambunctious teens writes, *"You know, I think it's great for those who want to be heard, our voices matter."*

And so, you know, to end it there, I think that these women and girls writing, they're writing to hear each other, they're writing to be heard. They come out of jail and they give readings for criminology students in 11 different colleges. And, you know, I just think without this kind of partnership and the support of the Sheriff's Office and the corrections officers in the jail -- you know, I've changed my feeling about a whole lot of things. So thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you very much. Yeah, we do find that the youth that are going into the DWI pod with some of the older female inmates that have gone through this throughout the years and were recidivating, that they -- this can help mentor them. So it's kind of an interesting dynamic that goes on with the young females.

We have some -- we'll just kind of end it here. We do have some requests and recommendations for you. These were kind of collaborated on by the Task Force, so I'm just going to read them for you quickly.

There's really a great need for discharge planning within the jail. To have some kind of like full-time discharge planner would be very, very helpful. We certainly thank Kara Hahn. She was able to support us with a caseworker for the Male Youth Tier Initiative. So, as we expand, we have other vulnerable populations, our mentally ill, and our female population. To have a caseworker would be very helpful to do discharge planning.

We -- I know some of the service providers touched upon the logistical improvements that need to be made to the bus system. We had to find a bus, a bus for a young man getting out of court recently, and realized that it took three buses for him to get from court to Pax Christi. And he wouldn't have made it in time, because by the time he left court, the buses would be ending soon. So it's really a challenge, you know, when you're trying to connect these services.

Technical assistance for smaller not-for-profits, micro-not-for-profits,
we could really use some help. Actually, we spoke with the Deputy County Executive, Tim Sini, about putting together possibly a website where we can put some information about grants, and maybe do some grant -- some work with the not-for-profits to help them obtain grants.

Judge Camacho has also made it very clear that we need more housing, especially for the young adults with mental illness. There just is not enough, and he's having a very difficult time in reaching out to the service providers, who are really doing their best to come up with housing alternatives.

So I was going to -- I'm reading and doing the PowerPoint at the same time, so I'm a little behind here.

The children of incarcerated parents really do need support. I know that Angela, when she came up, she talked a bit about that. Having a parent in prison makes it very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to survive childhood's emotional roller coaster intact. A National Survey of Children's Health in 2012 found that incarceration appeared to cause, or, at the very least, to aggravate developmental delays in children, including behavioral problems, speech issues and learning disabilities.

It's not uncommon for incarcerated mothers and fathers to transition from jail to the County's homeless shelter. And it would be great if there were more opportunities for the children of these parents to have more support, activities. They tend to be very isolated, and that could lead to poor outcomes.

One very important issue that's come up recently is the lack of homeless shelters for male youth. Males between the ages of 12 to 17 are often forced to return to unsafe living environments, because there are no homeless shelters for male youth, runaway shelters for this age group. Seabury Barn recently closed and the Bishop Ryan House closed. There is minimal amount of services available for this population once they are released from incarceration as well, and this often results in increased rates of recidivism, or mental health and learning needs that are unmet. So we get them into the Youth Tier, we get them the services, but there are some that are just coming in and out very, very quickly, and so they can't benefit from the Youth Tier, but they are homeless. There's a lot of homeless kids out there and there is not a homeless shelter system to support them.

And also BOCES Re-ROUT, I know Barbara spoke a lot about the services they provide within the jail. Students in transition are really in need of a stable support system for getting them back into normal routines, getting them back into their school districts. And we really need funding for an additional staff member for BOCES Re-ROUT to help support those services, getting these kids back in school once they leave the jail.

And I'm just going to turn it over to Sheriff DeMarco.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
I just want to thank you all for your attention during this. I know it was a long presentation, but I do like to keep you informed of what we're doing, and this year has been a very -- this last year was very big for the incarcerated youth programs that we have in the jail. And, as you could see, we've added a lot to it.

And I'll just end it on -- I just want to point out that the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District, Preet Bharara, recently issued a pretty scathing report to New York City Department of Corrections about how they were treating the youth that were incarcerated, and they came out, the new Commissioner came out and visited our Youth Tier and was very impressed at what we were doing. And it's my understanding now they are going to form a Youth Tier and model it after what we're doing. And, you know, we think that -- you know, we would love to see this become a national model, because the results are phenomenal, and I want to thank you for all your support. Thank you. And a thank you to --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Thank you. I don't want you to go anywhere, though. Say again.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
And I also want to thank all the service providers that come in and volunteer, because, you know, you can have a vision, but without the people coming and doing the work and volunteering, and you can see the impact they're having on people's lives, it is tremendous.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. I do not want you to go anywhere. Doc Spencer has to leave for a little bit, so we want to get through the agenda, it's a very short agenda, very quick, in order to let him leave the room. But there are a couple of questions, so if you could hang out for the questions --

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
Yeah, okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
-- with regards to this, I'd appreciate it. Okay. We will make this quick.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Tabled resolutions: ***1949 - To enforce domestic violence orders of protection using GPS monitoring (Sponsor: Kara Hahn).*** Legislator?

LEG. HAHN:
Yeah. I'm very excited about this bill and the potential for it, but we do need to have it become a budget amendment, and we can't do that until April 28th; 28th, right. So this -- I will make a motion to table.

LEG. SPENCER:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. Second, Legislator Spencer. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled.
(Vote: Tabled 6-0-0-0)

1054 - Adopting a Local Law, a Local Law to amend the membership of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (Sponsor: Kate Browning). I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Second, Legislator McCaffrey. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's approved.
(Vote: Approved 6-0-0-0)

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

1152 - Adopting a Local Law to authorize the sale and use of safe sparkling devices (Sponsor: Presiding Officer Gregory).

LEG. SPENCER:
Table for Public Hearing.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Make a motion to table for Public Hearing, Legislator Spencer; second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled for public hearing. ***(Vote: Tabled for Public Hearing 6-0-0-0)***.

1175 - Adopting a Local to protect privacy in Suffolk County (Sponsor: Tom Muratore). I'll make a motion to table for public hearing; second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled for public hearing. ***(Vote: Tabled for Public Hearing 6-0-0-0)***

1181 - Establishing a standing committee to ensure access to supportive services in the criminal justice system (Sponsor: Kate Browning). I will have to table that also, because there's a budget amendment issue, and possibly some other changes. So I'll make a table motion, and second, Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled. ***(Vote: Tabled 6-0-0-0)***

Okay. So now we'll go back.

LEG. SPENCER:
Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the accomodation.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
You're welcome. We'll see you in a little bit. So, Sheriff DeMarco and Kristin, if you would like to come back. And, again, I'd like to say thank you. I've had the opportunity to come to the jail. I've met everyone that's been involved. And Debra talked about, you know, why are these people here, they all get paid. They don't get paid enough. They're all nonprofits and we know that they don't get paid that well. So I know their heart and soul is in what they do. And, certainly, we appreciate everything they do, because we can't afford what they do.

But, with that, I believe, Legislator McCaffrey, you had a question?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yeah, Kristin, to you and to the Sheriff. I heard the Sheriff comment that it was -- would be $110 million to provide a new facility or to expand the capacity. Do you think that by -- with these programs they're offering, that these are the types of things that are going to help us avoid having to do that?

MS. MACKAY:
Yeah. You know, I would let the Sheriff speak, he just stepped out for a moment, but I do think that a lot of the work that's being done by the Youth Re-Entry Task Force, the jail, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, really collectively, through a lot of efforts that we're able to -- we're bringing down the jail population significantly. The specialty courts have played a very important role in that as well. And we're hoping for some kind of reprieve, you know, from having to do that construction. We'll see what happens down the line, but I think it's possible.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
That's great. I'm hoping to attend the Drug Court graduation ceremony tomorrow. That's one of the ones you're speaking about. And I just want to commend all the groups that are doing the work that they're doing, too. And this isn't just about $110 million. I mean, of course, we're worried about that, but it's about our youth, and the recidivism rate, and them making something out of their lives and giving them a second chance, which I think it's all about. So thank you for the work yourself and the Sheriff are doing, of course, all the nonprofits and the hard work that you're doing to improve our County. Thank you.

MS. MACKAY:
Thank you.

LEG. BROWNING:
I think earlier, you mentioned the cost or the savings with the program is 10.5 million a year, so that's tremendous. And I know the Sheriff and I came into office at the same time, and I know back then, that was his goal, was back in '06, was to start working on alternatives to incarceration and the programs. And it's taken quite some time, but now we're getting to see the benefits and the fruits of all the labor that he's put into this, so.

And, again, Kristin, I know that you're his right arm when it comes to this. You have done a phenomenal job. I can't say enough, your response, your work. There's nothing more I can say than, you know, keep doing what you're doing, because it's working. I mean, we look at the Drug Court, the Veterans Court, the Mental Health Court, the Youth Court with Judge Camacho. And I know that we're doing some stuff with him, and, you know, with our kids who are getting in trouble instead of sending them to jail. Again, he's showing some real successes with the Youth Court. So, again, I always say, you know, jails don't rehabilitate people, programs do.

I know that some people have gotten lost and probably never will be helped again. I know we had Michael here, who's with the Plumbers Union. I know there was one young kid that went into the military to be a helicopter mechanic. You know, we have these kids going to college. You know, and when we talked about raising the age, you know, these kids are victims of circumstance, you know, where they came from and just never had the right opportunities. So this is important, what you do. And, please, keep doing what you're doing.

Was there any other questions? Any comments. No?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I did want to recognize the corrections officers for all the fine work that they do in our jails, along with everybody else. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Yeah.

MS. MACKAY:
I just wanted to say, too, that, you know, Colleen Ansanelli has been a tremendous impact on this issue as well. And, you know, I'm kind of a more vocal person, because I work at the jail, but sort of behind the scenes and pushing the issue of alternatives to incarceration. She has played a real dramatic role in that issue, so I think I want to give her equal credit for some of the good stuff that's gone on, too.

CHAIRMAN BROWNING:
Good job, Colleen, wherever she is. Yeah. And the one thing I know that a lot of people don't realize, Colleen was very, very influential in our Traffic Vehicle Bureau Court and getting that up and running. I know under the last Administration, that was an issue that she brought to the County Executive to make this a reality. So there's a lot of things that Colleen has done that people don't realize and she hasn't gotten credit for. So, you know, Colleen, you keep doing what you're doing. We appreciate all your hard work. Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:
Great to have social workers in this business.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
(Laughter) And we do have to --

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
Started in the Legislature.

CHAIRMAN BROWNING:
And we do have to follow up some conversation on some of your requests. Obviously, I'm assuming Budget Review has heard what some of those requests are, and that's something that we do need to look at is discharge, making sure that we have a qualified and good person to help you with that.

So, anyway, I guess there are no more questions. I don't think there's any issues with the Sheriff's Office itself. Anyone have any questions? I mean, the jail, you know, what's going on with that as far as construction? Maybe we can get some updates from you on that.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
Okay. Well, maybe the next meeting we can come and talk to you a little bit about that.

CHAIRMAN BROWNING:
Okay. And there are no other issues you want to mention right now?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:
No.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay, great. I know that the Sheriff's, the Deputy Sheriff's Union members are here, and also Corrections. I know that's not your thing, but we -- you know, it is upsetting. There are still three bargaining units with still no contracts. And I just find it a little disturbing that we're not hearing anything on the settlement. I know the Probation Officers, I spoke with them recently. I don't know that there's any movement for them.

And, you know, George, just a real quick question. I'm sure it's not going to be a real popular question with some people, but is -- I believe there is something the Legislature could do if things continue to drag out. Because the last thing I think that we want to see, and I know with the other bargaining units, you know, the goal is to negotiate a contract and not go to arbitration, because arbitration would cost us more. Is there something the Legislature can do, I believe, for a one-year timeline, or is -- Mike's in the back.

MR. NOLAN:
General principle is, you know, the County Executive --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Right.

MR. NOLAN:
-- negotiates contracts, and then we ratify them or not. And Civil Service Law does talk about a process where, if there's an impasse, you know, a fact-finder can be appointed. When the fact-finder issues his report, if either side accepts it, or either side, then that would be transmitted to the County Legislature. And then the law states, then the Legislature can take such actions as it deems to be in the public interest to resolve the matter. What that means exactly, I don't know. That's in the statute. But I would just go back to the -- the general principle is the State Law kind of recognizes that County Executive, the Chief Executive negotiates the contract and presents that to us. So, overall, collective bargaining is very, very limited.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
However, I think I'd like to start looking into that and researching it to see what we could do as a Legislature, because I know they're all behind. I think 2010 was the expiration of their contract. We're now in 2015, and I know arbitration is a three-year agreement, so they'd still be behind, and they'd be close to three years behind.

So I don't think it's fair for them to be continuing to sit. I mean, we sat here and listened to, you know, what's going on in the jail, and we hear about our corrections officers and the good work that they're doing with the youth re-entry. We have some great corrections officers who are very involved in it. So I think it is something that we need to explore more if the contracts don't get settled over the next couple of months.

So I know -- Captain Waring, were you able to get any information? One of the issues -- Kara left? Because I know she wanted to ask about it. There was a Newsday article that we just -- I just read, I think 2 o'clock this morning, talking about the spending on overtime with the Police Department is up, jumped by $8 million to nearly 38 million. I believe we budgeted $30 million in 2014 for overtime.

So, John, I kind of wanted to get some information from you on what would $8 million buy us? I mean, I know that we hear very often, well, you know, sometimes overtime, it's cheaper than a police officer. Granted, productivity can suffer because of, you know, a police officer being asked to work overtime. And I can tell you, I know that there's officers who have gotten to the point where they say they're done with the overtime. You know, they're actually being called when it's not even their turn to be called for overtime, that -- so, clearly, you're burning them out. And I can't imagine, if you're doing so much overtime, that you're sitting in a car doing your regular tour, and now you're in a second tour, and what's your productivity if you've been doing a lot of overtime over that week?

And, you know -- and, again, might you get call now to -- on an arrest? You know, are you just going to try to avoid having to do arrests? And I know that's not what they do, they respond very well. I mean, I get the PIOs of the things that go on, and the Police Officers and the great things they've done recently, you know, with the burglar arrests, you know, and -- you know, you can't say enough about the work that they do and how active they are, but we can't burn them out. I don't think it's fair.

So what would $8 million buy us? And how -- you know, while it may cost us a little bit, wouldn't there be a long-term savings because of the new contract also?

MR. ORTIZ:
Well, $8 million, a new recruit in his first year costs about $66,000. So you divide that into 8 million and that would pay for 120 new officers. The average officer last year made a little under $19,000 in overtime. So, in the first year, you say, okay, 66,000 versus 19,000, are you saving any money? But, in the long-term, the new officers are starting out at a much lower salary, paying 15% of their health insurance, getting less pension, in the long term, absolutely, it's going to save money. And, I mean, just look at the overtime hours over the last few years and how they've increased. We're down in net, after hiring classes and moving the Park Police over, over the last five years, we're down 200 officers. So we need to hire at the rate they're retiring.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Right. Go, Kara.

LEG. HAHN:
But beyond that, because we really need to get to a place where we're -- you now, we're back up to where we were, I think we all believe. And so, if we expect -- there's usually somewhere between 75 to 85 who retire each year. As we get closer to the end of the contract, that may increase. We need to hire back the 200, plus whatever we're going to lose this year. So, you know, what do we -- what's the latest? We're just -- we're going to be graduating a class soon, right, or we just did?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Yeah. There's a class graduating in April or May. When's the class graduating?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
June, June.

LEG. HAHN:
It's June.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
June?

LEG. HAHN:
Yeah.

MR. ORTIZ:
Yeah, I believe it's June.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Which is another issue, because they're --

LEG. HAHN:
How many are in that class? Is that what you just talked about? I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Sixty --

MR. ORTIZ:
There was 68 that we hired.

LEG. HAHN:
Sixty-eight in that class. Okay.

MR. ORTIZ:
Plus the 37 Park Police Officers we have.

LEG. HAHN:
And there's no other class scheduled for later this year?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
No.

MR. ORTIZ:
No.

LEG. HAHN:
Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
No. So we're negative 200. And, you know, our numbers, obviously, Suffolk County has grown in population. So, you know, especially our five west towns have definitely grown. So, if you want to do police officer, you know, for so many people in Suffolk County, that number has dramatically increased. So, Kara, you're right.

LEG. HAHN:
We need more.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
We're already negative 200, and every year, we're losing about, what, 70? I think it was 75 last year?

MR. ORTIZ:
Yeah. And this year, we've actually -- last year through February, we had about 22 retirements; we're close to 35 this year. So they're going out quicker this year than in previous years.

LEG. HAHN:
And it will increase, I think, as we get closer to the contract, too, right?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Right. A funny number came up. I went to the retirement for the two Arson Squad Detectives and we were joking that the magic number is 32. And I think I had asked you that question about how many officers -- you know, I got the breakdown of how many have the ability to retire, but, you know, get me the 32, magic number 32. And how many do we have there? So I think there is some additional information that I will be getting from you?

MR. ORTIZ:
Yeah. I had sent you all that information. I don't recall the exact number off the top of my head, but --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Yeah. No, I didn't get the 32. Yeah, I do have the numbers, and we can -- I can share. I don't know. Did everybody get a copy? We can get everyone a copy in the Public Safety Committee. But the numbers are dramatic, and we know that it's going to be really significant over the next few years. And last year, just before Christmas, I remembered reading an article in Newsday about the Nassau Police Department, and the retirements, and the drop in numbers. And, you know, they're kind of ramping up the hiring and new classes.

And, you know, I'm not seeing the sense of urgency here like we really should have. I know it's -- a lot of people say, you know, it's not popular to support bringing in more police officers, but when somebody's home is robbed, or, you know, somebody's assaulted, then that's when people know the need. And we are short, we're dramatically short. And I believe it's going to be a serious problem if we don't pick up that 200, plus whatever's retiring, each year. So that's a message to the Administration.

LEG. HAHN:
Yeah, and we need -- there are places we need more --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Let us know what you're doing. You know, what's happening? There is like no communication with this body to say, "This is our intent." I just -- you know, we have events in the summer. We have a class graduating in June. You know, the amount of time it takes them in the summer, in those months to get out on the road on their own, so we're pretty much dead. I think it's about six weeks, isn't it, two to six weeks, that -- if I'm not mistaken. And I'm kind of looking at somebody in the back of the room who could probably tell me. Sorry. They're smiling. But how long does it take, Captain Waring, for a police officer, once he comes out of the academy, to -- I know that there's a field training that they do before they actually go out on their own. Is that -- is that six weeks?

CAPTAIN WARING:
It's four to twelve weeks.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Oh, that's not as good a number as I thought. So I was figuring six weeks. So, if they graduate in June, they're not going to be ready until August. Summer is pretty much over. So the summer is going to be over, and that's when their overtime is the worst, is in the summertime. So what is the Administration's goal for next year that we don't run into the same problem? And I think that our Budget Office has continually said September, there's a hire date in September, so that they're ready to get on the street in the summer.

So, Katie, I'm not shooting the messenger, but do you have something you want to say?

MS. HORST:
Just I will take it back and see what information we can get for you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Well, I think that the support is here from the Legislators, so let's make this happen.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Madam Chairwoman, if I could just add something to that. Captain, welcome. I know you're new here, and not new to the Suffolk County Police Department. But one of the things that was brought to my attention is the fact of the retirements being even more rapidly increased this year. You know, as you know, a lot of the pensions are based on the last three years of earnings. And we had a significant amount of overtime after Hurricane Sandy. A lot of police officers were working night and day and they made a significant amount of overtime. And this would be the last year that that would be included in their calculation for their retirements.

And someone, another police officer, actually, my brother, who works for Nassau County, brought it to my attention. He said, "You may have more than you even think," because of the three years that's going to fall off the table this year. So we really need to be prepared. And any way we do this math, I mean, we have a contract that's going to cost us 6% or so increase to the existing police officers, but we are not -- we were told time and time again that that was going to be paid for by savings from new police officers, and we're seeing increased overtime, and no commitment, no plan whatsoever to hire new police officers. You know, we should have had another class coming in right after this class was over and we should have plans for another one.

We've spoken, I've spoken to other people. In fact, I'm going to lay a bill on the table at this hearing -- at this next General Meeting that's going to call for the expediting of police officers who have already had police officer training, i.e., New York City or another department, that's State-certified training where they can come out, they've already passed training. Make sure that they've fulfilled their requirements, do some type of testing, and put them on the street sooner.

But these are the kinds of things that we need to do, that's what we can do. But we need the Administration to commit to hiring new police officers, get more cops on the street. We desperately need them, not just so we have them on the street for our public safety, but on the budgetary side as well.

So I know I've made more of a statement than a question, but going back to my original question, well, do you anticipate the possibility of even more retirements based on the fact that, you know, that significant amount of overtime that people may have worked after Sandy?

CAPTAIN WARING:
I'm sorry. I haven't heard that, and I'd only be guessing if -- to answer that. But I have not heard -- I actually have not heard one person say, you know, after -- three years after Sandy, I'm getting out. You know, I haven't heard that at all.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yeah. Unfortunately, a similar effect that they had after 9/11 in the City. You know, there was so much overtime after that, and a lot of guys just got out because they just said it was time, it made sense to them. So maybe it's something we should look at in terms of maybe we can ask Budget Review Office to see if there was a significant amount of overtime that was worked after Sandy, and the impact that that could have on possible retirements and make even exasperated more than it already is, so.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
And I know that with the contract expiration in 2018, you know, that's also the other issue. As you know yourself, with your union background, you want to get out before the next contract.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Right.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
So you don't know what's coming, so you generally want to take the advantages of what you currently have.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
In fact, one more question for the Captain. What is it -- if we decided to hire somebody today, where all of a sudden the County Executive woke up today and said, "You know what, I think we need to hire more cops," made the decision today, how long until these cops are on the street?

CAPTAIN WARING:
Roughly, nine months.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Nine months.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
How much months.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Nine.

CAPTAIN WARING:
Roughly nine, with the academy and field training. It could be shorter.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
That's nine months, including the Academy? That's from the time you call them, investigation process?

CAPTAIN WARING:
That would be the long end of it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Nine months?

CAPTAIN WARING:
It could be shorter, yes.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yeah. We'd have to call a list up, wouldn't we? We'd have to -- yeah. So that would probably take a little more, the investigation.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Right.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
So that's the least. I think we were told three months last time, when the time was decided. So it's probably closer to a year before we'd see them on the street, then. So, okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. And I know that I did make the request, because I -- you know, I heard -- I've worked very closely with John Busweiler on a couple of issues, and recently the GPS tracker. And I know it's an administrative job. However, there's nobody better than him. Sorry, I'm a fan. He does a phenomenal job. And, you know, I think with the unit that he's in, it would be good to have someone in there before he actually walks out the door, so there's somewhat of a crossover, and so let's -- to make it seamless.

And also the Arson Squad, making sure -- you know, we got -- I go to the FRES meetings and these guys back here will be coming to the next FRES meeting saying, "What's going on with Arson?" Because they -- they pay attention. They're firemen, but they work very closely with the Arson Squad, and they are very familiar with what goes on there. So, Katie, are we getting some more?

MS. HORST:
No. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
(Laughter) So it's important to make sure, and, you know, especially when the good weather comes, and, you know, there's many reasons. I know that a lot of them --

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Sparklers.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
We don't have the sparklers (laughter).

CAPTAIN WARING:
They do anticipate filling those spots, and there's currently a Detectives and Detective Sergeant selection process going on right now, so.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay, good. I'm glad to hear that. So please keep us informed and so I can let the Public Safety Committee know what's going on. Did you have anything you need to say, Katie?

MS. HORST:
(Shook head no).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. John, anything else you need to add with regards to --

MR. ORTIZ:
(Shook head no).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Okay. Excellent. So I want to say thank you. I hope I didn't miss anybody in the room. It has been a long meeting, but a very good one, I have to say. But, with that, I'll make a motion to adjourn.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:
Second, Legislator McCaffrey. All in favor? Opposed? We are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.*)