

HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE

Of the Suffolk County Legislature

Public Hearing

A Public Hearing of the Hate Crimes Task Force of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on October 21, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator DuWayne Gregory, Chairman/Legislative District # 15
Det. Sgt. Robert Reecks, Commanding Officer/Hate Crimes SCPD
Reynolds Hawkins, Social Worker/Amityville High School
Laura Ahearn, Executive Director/Crime Victims Center
David Kilmnick, Chief Executive Officer/LI Gay & Lesbian Youth Center
Reverend JoAnn Barrett, Co-Chair/Interfaith Anti-Bias Task Force of SC
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature; Co-Chair of the Latino Jewish Council
Rabbi Stephen Moss, Chair of SC Human Rights Commission, Co-Chair of Anti-Bias Task Force of Suffolk County, Director of Stop Bias
Alex Gutierrez, Chair of the Hispanic Advisory Board.
Isabele Sepulveda

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Potok, Southern Poverty Law

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT TAKEN BY:

Donna Catalano, Court Stenographer

VERBATIM MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide
Donna Catalano, Court Stenographer

(*THE HEARING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:45 P.M.*)

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

All right, folks. We're going to get started in about two minutes. Good evening everyone. Thank you for coming out tonight. I don't think the Yankees are playing so we're not missing anything. Right? Okay.

It's a great honor to have in our presence tonight some of the organizations that -- well, the organizations that we're going to have come before us, it's a great opportunity, I think, for us as a Task Force to really start to delve into what our task is and to get feedback from those organizations that are professionals in dealing with hate and hate crimes not only here in Suffolk County and in New York but even throughout the country.

So I personally look forward to the interaction and your presentations tonight. I'm sure that I speak not only for myself but my colleagues on the Task Force and I would like to welcome our newest member of the Task Force, Isabel. She was confirmed at the last -- at our last meeting.

And so at this time we're going to ask the representatives from the Southern Poverty Law Center to please come forward, we'll ask you to sit at the dais.

Yes, it's a rule that we do with the Legislators, keep us from talking a long time. You have to keep your finger on the button so I apologize. But we have a work around, if you use your cell phone it uses -- it's a pretty good work around as a weight. Okay. Welcome, please -- sure, introduce yourself.

MR. POTOK:

My name's Mark Potok. I'm the Director of the Intelligence Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. We're based down in Alabama. In Montgomery Alabama.

And, you know, very, very briefly; the Intelligence Project is essentially our investigative unit. We publish a magazine called the Intelligence Report. We do a lot training of police officers and federal agents around the country. And essentially we monitor and do investigative work around hate groups. So that's my own background. I've been with them about 12, 13 years now. And I've -- my background before that is as a newspaper reporter.

What I thought I'd do is essentially say very similar things to what I said at the press conference that we held back, I guess, on September 2nd, if I remember and just kind of walk through the report and maybe deal a little bit with some of the reactions, some of the things I've heard from all the way down in Alabama in terms of reaction up here and then try and answer any questions that you all might have.

You know, the report as I think you all know was prompted, of course, by the murder of Marcelo Lucero back on November 8th of last year. You know, what we did, we were asked to come up here and do the study and thought it would -- it made a lot of sense for a number of reasons, which I'll talk about in a little bit. But, you know, I want to say what we did was we put off and on research -- our primary researcher, a woman named Sarah Reynolds, on the ground here in Suffolk off and on through the course of about four months. She probably spent six weeks here in actual time on the ground. You know, and what WE tried to do was talk to people who had not been talked to before. She used a lot of allies in terms of immigrant rights groups on Long Island to help us make those kinds of contacts and to essentially try and reach people who were really living in the shadows, many of whom we suspected had really not talked to anybody, had not been public in any way in what their experiences had been. And in fact that turned out to be the case at least from what they said to us, to Sarah, and very many of them had never spoken to anyone about what had occurred to them.

You know, very briefly what we found overall and we called the report Climate of Fear, and that is

what we found. We felt, at least -- and let me say it by the way, that this was, you know, very much, you know, the world as is appears from the point of view of undocumented immigrants in this County, so, you know, that's the picture that was painted for us and that we tried to paint in the report.

You know, what was described to us was a real pervasive atmosphere of fear and violence; criminal violence. Some of the stories were quite amazing. It seemed like almost everyone Sarah talked to, she did formal interviews about 70 people, but she talked to several hundred people overall in making her report. Almost everyone she talked to that she interviewed talked about being run off the road, for instance, on their bicycles as they rode to work. A couple of people talked about actually being chased down the road with cars or off the road onto sidewalks.

People talked about having stones and full bottles thrown at them out of cars typically. In a number of cases people were beaten with baseball bats. And let me say, you know, some of these cases are known and some of them weren't known. People talked about being shot at with BB guns. A number of them talked about being pepper sprayed. There's at least one arson attack. Sarah met a number of people who had their, you know, jaws smashed, noses broken, plates put in their skulls.

I remember in particular her story about a man she sat with on February 15th of this year in the hospital who'd been attacked by three black men actually as he was walking in Southampton. His cheekbone had been smashed in. When she went back to visit him a few days, this was right after the attack that she first saw him, he was completely unrecognizable.

You know, she -- the people talked about employers who refused to pay employees, undocumented employees after they'd completed their work. One guy talked about having guns pointed at him out of a house, out of a second story window as he passed by. You know, there were people who were stabbed, you know, attempted murders.

You know, I think for me the story that kind of stuck with me was not the most violent story of all, but the story of one immigrant man looking out his window, at his front windows in his living room and he's looking out towards the street and he looks across the way; next door to him is a friend of his, another immigrant living in a home next door and that man's three small kids are playing out front and this guy sat and watched and this is what he described, as three men walking down the street, simply walked up on the lawn with these very small kids playing with their toys and proceeded to, you know, smash every toy the kids were playing with in front of them and simply walk off into the street and stroll away. You know, I guess it goes without saying that those kids, A, are in no way responsible for being undocumented.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Excuse me, Mark? Can we ask you to press you finger down.

MR. POTOK:

I thought I was.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

You're being recorded and we're not picking it up.

MR. POTOK:

I apologize. I slipped off the button there. Okay. Is that better for you?

You know, even after this incredible incident occurred, as the police said at the time, these kids had carried out this crime, quote, because Mexicans lived there. Their spokesman said, you know, well, they're low level terrorists, but the truth is they are terrorists. I mean, this is the description of a family who have just been subjected to a very possibly fatal arson attack.

You know, that would have been bad enough, the kind of nature, Sachem Quality of Life, but what is

the truth I think about SQL is that they became more and more radical as time went on. They started to bring up people into this County from very far away who were leaders of real hate groups, groups that are really based in ideas of race and, you know, what's wrong with the Jews and all kinds of things. You know, the Federation for Immigration -- for American Immigration Reform was one of the groups that came up here. This group, for whatever it's worth that we have listed for the last couple of -- group -- because they have a lot of -- white supremacists -- and -- ideology. You know, the comment made by FAIR, you remember at the time was that, you know, Farmingville will look like Tijuana, quote, unquote -- this immigration continues.

They brought up really a much nastier group, a group called California Coalition for Immigration Reform led by a woman named Barbara Coe. You know, Coe's comment after leaving here on her blog was she's telling the world about how terrible it was in Suffolk County. She said, you know, they urinate, they defecate, they make sexual overtures to women. And you know, of course this is the kind of thing that was said throughout the history certainly of the Civil War and Reconstruction and all that followed. Right? I mean, you know, this is the Klan, black men are coming for your white women. Be very afraid. Barbara Coe incidentally is a self-described member of the Council of Conservative Citizens as well as heading her own nasty little California group. The Council of Conservative Citizens, just for your information, is the direct descendant of the old White Citizen's Council's that were formed to resist desegregation in the south and they have not cleaned up their act much since then. The Council of Conservative Citizen's makes statements like when they made a few years ago on the front page of their website: black people are, quote, a retrograde species of humanity. That was one of their famous quotes. Non-white immigration they have said is turning the United States a slimy brown mass of {gwap}. They run up -- I'm sorry. You know, beyond that they also brought up a man named Jared Taylor. Jared Taylor is the head of a magazine, something called the American Renaissance is the name of the magazine. New Century Foundation is his real organization. You know, Jared Taylor, is a man who wrote after Katrina that black people everywhere in the world are incapable of sustaining civilization.

So, you know, this is the nature of the people who are brought up here. They also brought up a guy named Glenn Spencer from a group called American Patrol, more lately renamed American Border Patrol. Glenn -- that's a group we've listed for many years as a hate group. And Glenn Spencer is also in large part the originator of the absolutely false conspiracy theory, the racist conspiracy theory that Mexico has a secret plan, the so-called plan dot slum. And the plan is to reconquer the southwestern United States, or so Glenn Spencer says. This particular conspiracy theory's got an amazing amount of airtime out there in large part because it wound up on Lou Dobbs Tonight on CNN being presented as fact. But it's complete and utter fantasy. You know, the ideas; they're coming to get us, they're coming to take -- you know, what they think is their country back. Be very afraid. The plan, by the way, the conspiracy's often called the Reconquista, which in Spanish is the reconquering and it has a lot of kind of historic echoes because of course the Reconquista really refers to the reconquest of Spain by Spanish Catholics over the Moors, the throwing out of Arab Moors and the Jews as well from Spain in 1492.

In any event, this is the kind of people that were coming up here and really pouring their poison into the kind of civic life of Suffolk County. You know, I think that if that were the limit of it, it really might not have become the situation that it has become but reality is that, you know, as so very often happens with hate groups and their propaganda that there were enablers in this case. And then what I'm talking about are some of the politicians in Suffolk County, you know, the role they played in my view anyway in our view, was to give legitimacy to these groups and their views, which is what I've tried to describe were really straight up racist views. Really vile views. You know, the language that was heard, you know, and this was not reporting and I should say that, you know, there was very good reporting done and this is a part of the reason we felt a study like this could be done in Suffolk by Newsday, by the New York Times, so there's a decent record of some of the things that were said. So I'm sure I'm not telling anything you don't know when I say that, you know, certain Suffolk County Legislators made statements like, you know, *if they come to my neighborhood, if they were to come to my town, we'll be out there with baseball bats. If day laborers were to gather on a corner near my home, another Legislator said, I would load my gun and*

start shooting.

Another Legislator at a public hearing on all of this, you know, responding to a couple of people speaking from the podium in Spanish with translators, you know, confronted those people, asked if they were illegal and then went on to warn that, *you know, illegals in this County better beware, quote, unquotes.*

You know, I realize that some of these politicians made apologies after they were embarrassed later. But, you know, I would make the case that, you know, the damage is done. You know when Legislators who are supposed to be leaders, taking the communities to a better place, make those kinds of statements, I think it's perfectly obvious that some people are going to adopt that same attitude as well.

I think most important among the Legislators who kind of contributed to this atmosphere was in fact the County Executive, Steve Levy. Now, you know, I understand that Levy never made comments about baseball bats or loading shotguns and so on. But he, I think, made very clear that he was working against the interests of immigrants in many different initiatives that I don't need to recount to you here. And to me the kind of most telling thing was his reaction to being asked to meet with groups like the Workplace Project, right. I mean, when he -- people in good faith, human rights groups approached him to say, you know, we've got a problem that's developing in this County, we really need to deal with it. We need to talk about it. You know, his responses to call them anarchists and communists to say -- describe them as the lunatic fringe. So say that these are politically correct historyonics, quote, unquote. And that by golly he would, quote, you know, not be intimidated by their antics, you know, bring it on, he says.

You know, and I think this all culminates in his reaction to the Lucero murder back on November 8th. I mean, I guess I just find it an incredible statement the idea that, you know, his response to getting yet more bad press for Suffolk on these kind of nativist occurrences is to say, you know, is to essentially complain that this would of been a one day story had it been anywhere else and it's only because of the miserable press that Suffolk had gotten before over these kinds of matters that it was anything more than that.

So, you know, I think that kind encapsulates what the tone was that was being sent by many political -- I certainly don't accuse, you know, all political leaders at all of taking this attitude, but this is what was heard around here over the course of many years. And I think it's not difficult to imagine what one might feel about this from the point of view of an actual immigrant, let alone an undocumented immigrant.

Let me say before I want to move on, say a couple of things about the police response and so on, but that it is probably worth understanding that academic studies have shown that hate criminals are not typically people who are the kind of the lowest of the low. I mean they're not necessarily neo-Nazi street thugs at all. Very often hate criminals are young men and they are almost all young men who feel that they are standing up for their community, you know, very -- responding to language they hear at the dinner table or -- politicians or from some of the commentators. And, of course, the commentators and the politicians with some exceptions don't generally say, I'd load my gun and start shooting. They make statements short of that. But the hate criminal very typically feels that what he is really being called to do is stand up and defend his community and to go a little bit beyond what's actually being said. In other words, he's understanding that this is a call to arms for this sort of brave young men of the community to stand up and defend themselves; defend their community. So I think that's a very common -- criminals are thought of, as I said, as sort of thugs, street thugs. And very often they see themselves in a very different light.

In any event that the politicians helped very much to set the tone and that that ultimately affected the policing situation in the County in someways. I mean, it goes without saying that the County Executive -- from there. I'm sorry?

MS. CATALANO:

Your finger is off the button.

MR. POTOK:

Oh, okay. My apologies.

So let me talk a little bit about the police response. You know, the first thing I want to say is that we did not encounter any single report of serious police abuse. So, you know, I'm not trying to make the case that the police have done, you know, some terrible job here or anything like that. You know, essentially to generalize about what the response was of the immigrants we spoke to over that four month period, what very many of them described was a kind of culture of indifference on the part of many officers. Again, I have to say that, you know, many immigrants spoke about individual officers who had been extremely helpful and good to them. So, you know, I do not want to generalize to, you know, sort of attack the Suffolk County Police Department or the other departments, but I think that it is pretty clear they felt a great deal of indifference.

The kinds of stories we heard was that in fact that many of them were very often asked their citizenship status even when they were merely victims or witnesses to a crime as opposed to perpetrators. There was several of them talked to us about actually calling police in response to, you know, being socked in the nose or some kind of attack like that and ultimately being accused of the crime, not formally, but being accused by the perpetrator of carrying out the crime themselves. And so, you know, no arrest would be made and, you know, everybody would kind of go home. But the person who really was the victim, at least to hear them tell it, were often blamed and really got no kind of help.

Several people talked about experiences of being discouraged by individual officers from filing reports. One man I remember told us about being asked -- asking for a copy of the police report he had made and being told that he had to wait three weeks -- three months, I'm sorry, to get a copy of the police report, which I think on its face seems ridiculous.

You know, another described a police officer essentially barging into his house and demanding to look through his belongings because the man could not produce an identification.

As I said, you know, I don't think there's any doubt at all that there are plenty of police officers out there -- tried to do the right thing and -- but, you know, and I'm not suggesting again that this is, you know, any kind of conspiracy on the part of the Police Department or the departments in general, but that there does seem to be this culture of real indifference at least in many places.

You know, I think it is worth -- let me just move aside for one second to say that, you know, in terms of reporting to police too there's something else to know, which is there was a very important study that came out of the Department of Justice in late 2005 that was an attempt, a very serious attempt to really get a hold of how many hate crimes occurred in this country. I won't go chapter and verse, but the FBI national hate crimes statistics have very, very, very serious problems and -- for a number of reasons and very greatly understate the number of hate crimes in the country. What I want to say to you though is that one of the key conclusions of this report was that 54% of hate crimes in the United States are never reported to police. And I think it's obvious that probably the sector, the group of victims who report the least are undocumented immigrants for the obvious reason that they are afraid of getting tangled up with the police in a way that will wind up getting them deported. So, you know, that's a huge level of crime that never even gets to the police let alone those crimes that actually do make it to the department.

You know, I think -- I think it's also worth mentioning that the police unions here of course did something that from my own point of view was a very good thing, which was they opposed the 287(g) program, the County joining the 287(g) program, which is the federal program which allows local Police Departments to enforce immigration law. And, you know, I think that almost every -- every large, every major police organization in the country as far as I know opposes 287(g).

Certainly the most important ones for the simple and I think obvious reason that, you know, if you are enforcing immigration law you are not going to get the cooperation of the Latino community in particular the undocumented Latino community in solving other crimes. So you may be able to deport a number of people, but is very unlikely you're going to get the cooperation you need to solve; say a murder. I'm sorry. Politicians need to halt the demagoguery. This is obviously something that creates a worse and worse atmosphere and that kind of speech ultimately does result in criminal violence.

Number two would be that victims and witnesses of crimes never be asked their immigration status in any case. There's no reason for it. It's harmful to good police work and simply that. You know, we suggest that some of the departments may well and they probably do need training on hate crimes and bias crimes and so on.

We think also that the County should try to develop an effective and useful and public hate crimes statistical system, a provision of statistics that are easily available to the public.

And the last would be to think about some educational component in the schools to deal with the kids who are ultimately are going to carry this forward for better or for worse.

I want to say very briefly in conclusion without sounding too defensive that of course, you know, after we came up and held this press conference and I kind of went back to Alabama and we kind of heard all of this business about being accused of never contacting the Police Department, of never contacting the County Executive's Office and so on and I want to say that that is not true. You know, I'm not here to pick fights over the details of who contacted who when, but let me say that our principal writer, David Holthouse, in fact contacted the Suffolk County Police Department on seven different occasions; two of those -- there are none of those I should say, none of those calls went to the hate crimes unit. Two occasions they went to the public information officer and on five subsequent occasions, this is over the course of about five weeks, the calls went to individual investigators asking about details of the cases. In no case, in no case were those phone calls returned.

You know, there was an additional thing that David described, which is we had gotten two victims, we were trying to collect as much data on some of these, you know, very little documented events, criminal events, that we describe in the report. So in the course of this, David contacted a couple of hospitals where people have been treated, like the man I mentioned whose jaw was smashed, who sat with Sarah Reynolds our researcher on that day back in February. You know, initially the hospital said absolutely correctly, you've got to get a permission form, right, you've got to get around the privacy provision. You've got to get the victim to sign a form saying that, yes indeed, you know, I allow my medical records to be released to Sarah Reynolds or David Holthouse. That was done and David was then told that the Suffolk County Police Department had requested that the hospital not release those records because these were open cases. I should have said this earlier; that was what was said to David in each of the prior occasions of those many calls to Suffolk County Police Department. These are open cases. We don't have any comment on open cases. They're actively under investigation.

David did point out to me as we were kind of discussing all this later, you know, that one of the cases he was asking about, and this is, you know, eight months ago, occurred in 1999. It's a little hard to understand how that's still an open case and how he couldn't, you know, he was not provided with and was told he could not have the incident reports, the initial police reports. You know, I don't know the details of the FOIL law up here in New York, but it's hard to believe those aren't public documents.

In any event, David also did contact the County Executive's Office on two occasions trying to get an interview. And the calls were simply not returned. You know, again, I'm not here to make a federal case out of the back and forth about did we or did we not contact -- well, then officials, look, I mean, the reality is our effort with the report was to tell the story of what was happening in Suffolk

from the point of view of a number of people who had not been spoken to before, had been spoken -- or had felt that they had not gotten -- had not been listened to when they did speak.

So, you know, that is essentially what our findings were and let me just leave it at that. And I'm happy to take any questions now or I'm not quite sure if you want to do it later or at all, but let me just respond to whatever you may need.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Great, thank you. Thank you for coming here. I know, you know, you came all the way from Alabama.

And I read the report and we distributed it to all the members of the Task Force and I found it very informative, you know, I think -- I've always respected the work that your organization does and, you know, throughout the country. Has your organization done a similar report in other jurisdictions throughout the country or is this the first of its kind?

MR. POTOK:

No. No, we've not done. We've really never come into a community like this and tried to do an in depth report just looking at a very local place. I mean, we have done kind of investigative stories, you know, the closest thing I could think of is we did a story, really a report of sorts, looking at western North Carolina, which people may remember was the area where Eric Rudolph, the abortion clinic and Olympic's bomber was on the lamb for five years, but it was not the same thing at all. We didn't do a kind of in depth reporting. We, you know, we basically did a story talking about how there is a long tradition in the Counties in western North Carolina of real antipathy to the federal government and, you know, sympathy for a guy like Eric Rudolph and so on.

But no, we've never come into a County and really tried to put a researcher on the ground for a longtime. And, you know, for us it seemed doable in this case because we'd been following the groups that I mentioned, Sachem Quality of Life and their unpleasant friends, you know, for the better part of ten years. Essentially from their inception till, what, 2004, I guess, when they disbanded. You know, and there also was a decent record of what had been said by politicians, which seemed very important to us.

And let me say for whatever it's worth, that this is the same kind of dynamic though, you know, without having done studies in other places that we're seeing around the country. You know, I mentioned Lou Dobbs at the beginning and I think that the Lou Dobbs' of the world are very, very important in what's happening in this country at large in terms of immigration, you know. It's not that Lou Dobbs is in favor of lower immigration levels, it's that Lou Dobbs is constantly pushing out into the mainstream, you know, utterly and completely false allegations about immigrants, you know, I mean, some of them you've probably heard of. You know, that's the one I mentioned, the Reconquista, you know, secret conspiracy. But, you know, Dobbs does things like say one-third of American prison cells are filled with criminally illegal aliens, quote, unquote. Completely and utterly false. I mean, not even remotely close to the truth.

You know, he made the case and made it again and again and again even when he was called out on his, you know, egregious error that 7000 cases of leprosy had appeared in a recent three-year period and it turned out the real number was 398. The point I'm trying to make though is that the words, this kind of propaganda really does result in the end in criminal action, criminal violence.

So, you know, so it was an interesting County for us to look because it seemed like all the components that we see are really playing into this in other places were very much present here and there was a decent record of it.

So, you know, I mean, there are other places I can think of. I mean, I said I remember at the press conference at one point that, you know, look, Suffolk is not the worse place in the universe at all. You know, in many ways it's a microcosm of what's happening in many other communities, I think of

Shenandoah Pennsylvania where there was quite a similar murder about six months earlier, six months before Lucero's murder here. You know, Maricopa County Arizona, I imagine that any of you have heard of where we have this sort of slightly crazed Sheriff, Joe Arpaio, who's been, you know -- I'm sorry. So there are other similar places and, but to answer the question, no, we haven't done it in other places.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Just another question; because of the nature of the offenders of the age, typical age, are hate crimes in your estimation more of a crime of opportunity as opposed to a more calculated, organized -- I mean, I understand in the Lucero killing after the investigation's come out it seemed like it was more organized because it's something that they did on a, I don't want to say a regular basis, but certainly it wasn't a first time and only time thing. But generally are hate crimes in your experience just a crime of opportunity?

MR. POTOK:

I would not describe them as organized crimes by and large. You know, yeah it seemed like that gang of kids, you know, according to the police really had quite a record of running around and doing this. But generally, you know, hate criminals tend to be fairly normal people, you know, they look a lot like the community around them. And, you know, I think really when you look at hate crimes sort of in their masses, you know, no, I mean there have been actually studies that show that fewer than five percent of hate crimes are carried out by members of organized groups, political groups.

So, you know, they're people who are, you know, essentially reacting to the atmosphere around them and or, you know, maybe they're angry because their girlfriend was unpleasant to them that day and, you know, so they feel like they could take it out on this person who's been demonized for years and years by whoever it is in the County, the politicians or whoever it may be.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Now just one last question for myself. Because of the age, the general ages of our offenders, you know, as a politician I totally believe that we're responsible for what we say and, you know, we should be held accountable for them, but I find that there's a disconnect. You know, being the father of two teenage sons, I find it difficult sometimes to get them to follow what I'm telling them as opposed to why some teenage kids would listen to what Steve Levy has to say about immigrants when they probably don't even know who Steve Levy is. I'm trying to find -- do you have research or how does that connection may -- I understand that obviously the parents have some involvement in that. But just general, you know, I don't -- you know, when I was a kid I didn't know who my Congressman was and I certainly wouldn't -- I wouldn't think follow what they say to go --

MR. POTOK:

Yeah, I understand what you're saying.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

You know what I mean.

MR. POTOK:

And I think that's true, I mean, I don't think some 17 year-old kid hears what the County Executive has to say. And says, *okay, I'll go out and beat up some Latino today*. But I think what really does happen and look, it's anecdotal, I mean, it's something you can't prove. I mean, I sit here and say ultimately it results in criminal violence. Well, you know, I can't say, what was it those kids were reacting to directly. But, you know, what my experience would tell me is is that, you know, it becomes a part of the atmosphere, a kind of miasma, right? So it's not that one kid hears one County Executive say one thing and goes out and beats someone to a pulp or stabs them to death. It's that that filters down, you know, into the schools, into the conversation at dinner tables and so on. You know, I have a 15 year-old boy myself and I can tell you he definitely does not listen to me. So I don't think I could convince him to beat anybody up. But I think, you know, it gets in -- so that

these kids are also reacting, you know, it's a tough time of life, right, I mean, 15, 16, 17, 18 years-old. You know, so many times kids are having a very difficult time or angry about things that are happening in their own life, you know, things are very tough and, you know, it's a way of acting out.

But, you know, if you feel somehow that the community's behind you that with a wink and nod really the community thinks this is a-okay, you know, it gives an added impetus. And, you know, and if you see it on TV to boot from people who, you know, sound credible, I mean, Lou Dobbs looks like a nice guy when you turn the TV on kind of listen to him initially, I think that all feeds in. And I think it definitely feeds into the parents' view of the situation and then in some way that kind of surrounds the kid. And obviously we're talking about some small -- relatively small number of people. I mean, most kids don't react by beating anybody up.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Thank you. Isabel, she has a question for you.

MS. SEPULVEDA:

I just want to ask you if you interview Lou Dobbs or tried to interview him because as far as I know, I mean, his wife is from Mexico and I have run into him almost every year at the Hampton Classic. And two years ago I stopped him and I gave him the (inaudible) newsletter and there was a Latina newspaper and I wanted to talk to him about the Latino community and seemed like a nice guy. He listened to everything.

So, I mean, do you think he does all of that just to bring the spotlight on himself or make his show, you know, have more viewers to his show? I don't know --

MR. POTOK:

Well, let me say --

MS. SEPULVEDA:

-- because having his own wife as a Mexican immigrant --

MR. POTOK:

Yeah, and her parents live sort of outback on their, you know, hundred acre horse -- you know, in -- yeah, I mean, that's true. From my own point of view it doesn't matter. Whatever Lou Dobbs says the things he says in order to pander for ratings because he up against the O'Reilly Factor on FOXNews, which is, you know, immensely popular and always beats CNN in that time slot. Or whether he does it because, you know, he hates people with brown skin whether or not he's married to one; I think is completely irrelevant. Right? It's the same with a guy like Glenn Beck. You know, the reasons they're doing it don't matter and so I, you know, I've been very careful and we are in general, I think, to not say, you know, Lou Dobbs is a racist. I don't know what goes on in Lou Dobbs' brain. But the affect of Lou Dobbs is noxious, it's a poisoning of democratic discourse in this country.

To answer the question specifically, yeah, I've talked to Lou Dobbs a lot. I've been on the show probably, I think is four times. I'm not invited anymore, sad to say. But, you know, Dobbs initially back I think around 2001, 2002 as he was really getting rolling on this, you know, border segment he every night on show I and one of my colleagues, well, it was really me all the time, would call Dobbs and say, *Lou, you know, you know, I see from your schedule you putting this guy on, Glenn Spencer, the guy I mentioned, or any one of a number of things tomorrow night, you know, Glenn's been the --* and I tell him something about Glenn Spencer and, you know, from the very get-go, from the very first time I called him, he responded (inaudible) he called me right back, you know, ten minutes later. So we have this kind of background dialog over the course of two or three years. Ultimately, you know, we came to this place where I try to say, *Lou, you don't, you know, it's not that I'm saying you have to be in favor of high levels of immigration, that's not what we're pushing at all.* You know, our role in this was to say, *let's, yes, immigration should be debated. It's a*

matter for a democracy to debate. However, lets have a debate about the real facts right, let's not debate about leprosy an {oxalon} and all the rest of it and, you know, criminality and rape and so on.

You know, ultimately what happened was that, you know, Dobbs just kept putting these people on. He did take a couple of people off who we warned him about and didn't run them. Ultimately he sent down to our offices five of his senior people, including his executive producer and, you know, we gave him an entire day briefing for me and my whole staff, we spent, you know, about seven hours briefing them on all people and groups and the various other nativists who are anti-immigration groups. And they kind of were saying that they were going to do a three part special on race in America and a three part special on extremists in the immigration debate. Well, it never happened. And that was more or less the last we ever heard of Lou Dobbs, you know. But, you know, at that point we were very soft on Lou Dobbs, we were making the point, look, he may not of known who these people were so we were very careful, but, I mean it just seemed to propel him further and further into that world. So, you know, at that -- and then he made the infamous claim, the leprosy claim. Anyway, I'm getting off topic. I know Lou Dobbs is not here, what we're here to talk about, but it's been an interesting ten years with Lou.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Laura Ahearn has a question then Dr. Kilmnick and Rabbi Moss.

MS. AHEARN:

Hi Mark. My name is Laura Ahearn, I'm the Executive Director of the Crime Victims Center here in Suffolk County. The agency provides services to all victims of violent crime and we've provided services in support to victims of hate crime. I very thoroughly have read your report and I thank you for coming this evening.

I had some questions regarding some of the victim testimonials. In the beginning of the report, Voices from the Shadows, starting on page 14, victims are providing greater detail of what their experiences were. And there were about eight or so. But in the back in the timeline there are nearly 40 and I believe the eight are included in the 40 testimonials. My concern is and question for you is, have those victims been provided support services? I see in there that there are open hospital bills in the thousands of dollars and was wondering if those victims have been informed of what their rights are under the law and also if they have been provided support services and have received compensation to cover those medical expenses that are related to their crime.

MR. POTOK:

I mean, the honest answer is I don't know. I need to talk to Sarah Reynolds. At that level of detail I just don't know. I'm sure that there are people from the report, you know, from reading and editing the report in detail who've not gotten those things. The Justice Department and the New York Attorney General's Office are trying to put them in contact with those victims who want to be contacted. You know, of course we made these promises, right, I mean if people don't want to talk to any sort of officials we can't, you know, break those promises. But that's -- I mean, I'm very happy to do that and, but I can't -- I just can't respond to the details of the case. I just don't know them well enough.

MS. AHEARN:

I would appreciate if you could do that. Put, Sarah, her name is --

MR. POTOK:

Reynolds.

MS. AHEARN:

Okay.

MR. POTOK:

Yes.

MS. AHEARN:

-- in touch with us. And even if you would be comfortable enough with we have brochures in both in Spanish and English that maybe if you could send them to those individuals who you spoke with if they're not willing to contact us just to give them the information so they're aware and if -- you can give them an option and a choice that maybe at some point they would like to reach out.

MR. POTOK:

Yeah, I'd be very happy to do it and maybe we could talk afterwards. I'd get your card and we can get this arranged. Sure.

MS. AHEARN:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Dr. Kilmnick.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you. Good evening. Thank you very much for coming here. My name's David Kilmnick and I'm the CEO of Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth. And I have two -- two questions. One is, in your report just now you said that 54% of all hate crimes are never reported to the police and that you thought a majority of them are from undocumented --

MR. POTOK:

It's not a majority but that the reporting level, the non-reporting level would be higher among undocumented.

MR. KILMNICK:

Is that something that you think or is that something that is a fact?

MR. POTOK:

I'm sorry.

MR. KILMNICK:

Is that something that you -- is that something that is been researched and is documented in terms --

MR. POTOK:

No.

MR. KILMNICK:

No.

MR. POTOK:

That is a supposition on my part and I think just based on the obvious reasons.

MR. KILMNICK:

Okay. So it could -- it could also very well be --

MR. POTOK:

But no, that there's no real statistical basis for that. I can't prove that.

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure. Okay. So I just want to put out it could very -- also very well be gay and lesbian people who are not out of the closet --

MR. POTOK:

Yeah, I think that's true.

MR. KILMNICK:

-- as well and don't want their sexual orientation --

MR. POTOK:

And if you had asked me the same question seven or eight years ago, I would have said without question, it's the LGBT community that reports the least. But I think the reality is that that's changed over the years and that's much, much more reporting from that community. So, I mean, who's to say, you know, who has the highest percentages of non-reporting, but I think that it's very likely the undocumented.

MR. KILMNICK:

Right. And in the end it doesn't matter who has the highest amount is that there's a large number that are not being reported.

The other question that I have and maybe if you could just share a little bit more when you spoke about the culture of indifference amongst the police is that you had said that victims -- victims -- some victims when they reported to the police were accused of being the perpetrators? So maybe if you could just speak a little bit more about that.

MR. POTOK:

Well, the cases I know about were cases that happened on the street. This is not where, you know, a victim or an alleged victim walked into a Police Department and was told to basically get out of there, they weren't interested. That we did not hear. It was more like a fight happens on the street, somebody gets socked in the nose, you know, maybe the victim or his friend calls the police and an officer shows up and there's a kind of back and forth about, you know, and then the attacker says, *no, it wasn't me at all. It was him who attacked me.* And you know what the immigrants felt in a number of cases was, you know, he was believed over me because I really don't speak the language, you know, I'm a different color than the guy who attacked me and, you know, I'm getting essentially -- he's getting the benefit of the doubt and I'm not. And the result is there's no report taken. Those were the stories.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you very much.

MR. POTOK:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Rabbi Moss.

RABBI MOSS:

Hi, Mark. Good evening. I'm Rabbi Steve Moss and I'm the Chair of the Suffolk County's Human Rights Commission and also co-chair along with Reverend Barrett here of the County's Anti-bias Task Force.

And also the Director and Founder of a program called Stop Bias, which is the only educational program for bias crimes offenders in the County and we see every person who's been charged with a bias crime, whether juvenile or adult. And since 1994 when the program was established it's a very unique program. First of all, I know nationally, but since it's been established we've had approximately 350 defendants come through the program and they follow basically the statistics that you mentioned before and that is I would say maybe a handful were -- gave testimony to be

members of hate groups and the rest it was the product of situations that they went through. But they didn't go intentionally into an act saying this is what I'm going to do for the most part. So we agree with that.

I've been a member of the Southern Poverty Law Center for over 30 years and respect the work that is -- that you have done. And certainly Mr. Dees and the whole organization and I read the Intelligence Report from cover to cover and wonderful work that you do.

And in light of what you said before, that this is the first County that you've done a project like this kind of is amazing to me, consider over these 30 years, I would think that there are many others places where other kinds of research projects and investigations could have been done and should have been done. So I hope that maybe here we become not only a model for other reasons an example, but a good example of things that can be done in the future to really affect change in the community, as obviously a discussion, regardless of what sides people are taking in this discussion, the benefit is we're discussing the issue and that's always something important.

I think I have two questions basically. The first one is I tend to see things in a greater sense and try not to just get focused on one moment in time. And as you correctly stated is is that for really for years this is a -- has been an endemic problem in our County in terms of dealing with the undocumented population. If Mr. Levy had never been elected, we still have this climate of fear in a sense. If I may use that, you know, continue to use that term. And actually there was almost a murder during Mr. Gaffney's administration when two young men and now they're -- they are now serving 25 year -- life in prison who picked up day laborers and tried to beat them up and kill them also. They just happened not to been murdered.

Then, of course, you mentioned the fire burning. And Sachem Quality of Life goes back a long ways. I've been a part of dealing with them for almost all the years I've been involved in these programs and actually unless you could tell us something different, it seems like they've kind of gone into quietude. We hear almost nothing from them right now and certainly their activity seems to be almost nil at this moment in time, which I guess some people could read as a good thing, I don't know, because they're always there waiting for the right moment.

My own experience from Sachem because I worked -- I've met with a number of their people earlier on and really it's a matter of government really not doing its job that's the way they viewed it. They were disturbed by things happening in their community and they tried to reach out for assistance on their terms obviously and it became more and more frustrated and the levels build up and up into it turned into hatred and the kind that we experience.

So my question is, if this is just a part of our culture it seems and certainly nationally today and look at issues that we're trying to deal with with immigration reform, how do we fight this? What are we going to do if all of a sudden the County Executive and all the Legislators took a pledge and just transformed themselves and the language and all of us did, does that really change anything in terms of what's happening in terms of the culture of negativity toward day laborers and undocumented immigration and what can we really do about it? What is your suggestion?

MR. POTOK:

Well, I mean, we're getting into things that are a little bigger than my world. I mean, I suppose, you know, ultimately we're talking about immigration reform, right, some kind of comprehensive immigration reform. But, you know, that really is beyond kind of my world. You know, I think our focus has been very strongly on this trying to clean up the debate, let's have a debate, but let's have a debate that has to do with the facts. And I think that that is something, you know, it's, you know, what has happened in Suffolk hasn't happened everywhere in the country. It's not just a uniform situation where it's a miserable situation with immigrants everywhere.

I mean, you know, I know of Counties in Georgia, for instance, you know, where a particular County, south of Atlanta, quite a wealthy County decided they were going to teach all kids to speak Spanish.

Right. It was going to become a requirement in the school system. You know, I think in some ways look -- I don't have a good answer is the truth. You know, I just think it's worth noting that these of things have been said and done to every single wave of immigrants in this country's history. I mean, you know, it goes back to the beginning when Ben Franklin was, you know, ranting about Germans, the stupid Germans who were incapable of learning English and, you know, it looks quite amusing looking back, I mean, Germans are now the largest single, you know, the largest group of whites in this country are ethnically German, right, go back to Germany, that's a remarkable thing. You know, in the 20's, of course, it was Catholics. And, you know, who thinks of Catholics as evil immigrants now. But, you know, the Klan rose to reach a level of 4 million members in 1925 based essentially on hatred of Catholics and to a lesser extent Jews.

You know, I don't feel like I'm doing a good job answering your question, but it's, you know, it's a tough one. Right? I mean, I think in the end it really is about the tone of the debate. I mean, I don't deny that there, I mean, I think it's an absolute fact that this country is changing obviously in many ways just as Suffolk is changing. You know, there are great demographic changes a foot and, you know, this is not, you know, what I'm here to talk about tonight, but I very frequently sort of go on TV and to talk to reporters and all that about the, you know, the really furious reaction or backlash against Obama, against the President. You know, sort of a black man in the White House. And I think that more than any other thing, you know, this real backlash we've seen in the last year or so has been about the changing demographics of the country. You know, we know for a fact that hate groups have grown by a lot since the year 2000 based purely on their exploitation of the immigration issue. I mean, they understand it's an issue, people care about it, it affects them in their real lives and, of course, if your the Klan or the Nazi's, the neo-Nazi's, it's very easy to, you know, to racialize it. Right? It's not a debate about Swedish immigrants. It's a debate about immigrants with brown skin.

So I just think that that is really important to understand. That the, you know, there are real changes happening. You know, I will say that every white supremacist in America has the year, you know, 2042 kind of emblazoned in their brain because that's the year when the census bureau says that whites will lose their majority in the United States, right, they'll fall below 50%.

So, you know, we're at a moment in history where we are about to become a truly multi-racial democracy in which no racial group predominates and that is a huge thing. So, you know, I think --

RABBI MOSS:

And there's some people can't handle that.

MR. POTOK:

I'm sorry.

RABBI MOSS:

In some groups of people -- individuals can't handle that.

MR. POTOK:

That's right.

RABBI MOSS:

You know. Threatening.

MR. POTOK:

And there's a rage out there and particularly among people who really are racial. You know, what they feel is and they're right is they have lost, they have lost the battle. Nothing they do, they could seal the border tomorrow, not let another person in and still whites would lose their majority simply on the basis of differential rates of fertility, right, between the white population and the Latino population. So it's over for them, you know, barring, you know, race war and revolution and, you know -- republic and the pacific northwest. I mean, these are fantasies of theirs. That's what I feel

like we're confronting right now is a kind of very, you know, deep sense of rage from certain people who feel like, you know, this is not the country, my Christian white forefathers built; that kind of idea.

So I'm not suggesting it's easy, right. I mean, I think it's worth knowing when one tries to combat this sort of thing that there are real things happening. This is not just a black helicopters, you know, and secret FEMA concentration camps. In other words, it's not merely conspiracy theories, there are real things going on out there, which is the whole reason, you know, that, you know, we have to as a nation have a real discussion about immigration not coming to give.

RABBI MOSS:

Well this is why I appreciate your last recommendation in the report in terms of reaching out to young people because I do find that many, many young people are more accepting of others of difference than previous generations.

My other is in terms of undocumented as well as documented immigrants coming to this country who have experienced, you know, terrible fear in regards to police and people in law enforcement and government from the countries that they were -- that they're born in, then they come to this country and they transfer that in the same way to here. How do you -- and this is something that came up constantly in the Task Force meeting, the public meetings we had and this just baffles me, how do you convince someone who had horrible experiences in terms of law enforcement and people in authority in terms of oppression and whatever, beatings, whatever, illegal arrests in a -- in another country, they come here, how do you enable them or have them trust? How do you do that? And because you've met with these people, how do you do that?

MR. POTOK:

I mean, I think it's a real problem. I wouldn't deny it for a second. I mean, I think that that's absolutely true. A lot of people come from Mexico and Central America have had very bad experiences with police, you know, and official corruption and law enforcement corruption and I don't there's an easy answer. I think it's step by step, you know, it's piece by piece. In the same way, you know, how do you take someone who comes from a country with a, you know, completely authoritarian background, you know, and kind of introduce them to democracy. Well, you know, I don't think a half-hour civics class does it. You know, I think look all the work of the various immigrant rights organizations like your own here on Long Island, anti-bias organizations, is really important because it helps to bring people into the community and that ultimately is the way you understand that. I mean, I think because I say, rather than hearing it in the civic's class, you know, in a building like this, right, I mean, when an immigrant hears it from his own community, *that's not true, you know, the cops here are really decent* or, you know, whatever it may be, that's how you really penetrate that community. And I don't there's any easy or quick solution. I just don't think it's easy thing to do.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

David.

MR. KILMNICK:

Let me just say I'm framing some of my questions so that when we have our larger discussion we could take some of this into consideration so I'm not actually saying things I may believe in; just asking.

And so one of first recommendations that you gave was that politicians need to halt basically what they're saying or their -- I have such a hard time always saying the word, demagoguery. And so, you know, many people say well, *you know, hey, it's their policy stance. Vote them out if you don't like it.* What would you say to that?

MR. POTOK:

I would say that's silly. I mean, you know, yeah sure, we can vote somebody out down the line.

But, you know, it just seems to me that politicians whether they're conservative or liberal, whether they're in favor of high levels of immigration or very low levels of immigration, you know ought to have -- look, I mean, you know, what I've tried to say in a lot of other contexts is, you know, you have your right to your own opinion, but you don't have a right to your own set of the facts, right. I mean, leprosy, it turns out to be utterly false. Let's not discuss, you know, all the things I've said, right, the Reconquista conspiracy theory and so on. You know, I mean if -- it seems to me that that's essentially kind of a minimum standard for somebody who purports to be a leader of the community in some way. So, you know, yeah, I mean at the end of the day what can you do if a politician acts that way and nothing anybody says affects them.

You know, I think the reality of what's happened here is that there's been some shaming and, you know, I mean, I see the politicians sounding quite different here. But, you know, it had to come to this, right.

MR. KILMNICK:

Follow up. Would you then say that politicians need to halt their demagoguery when it comes to all different issues as it pertains to all groups who are victims of hate crimes; whether it be people who take stances against same-sex marriage, marriage equality and etcetera?

MR. POTOK:

Well, of course, yeah. I absolutely believe that. I mean, look, I think it's possible to legitimately disagree on marriage equality, you know, without being hateful. It's a different thing when you start to cite the studies of Paul Cameron, right, who says that, you know, gay people are, like, 23 times more likely to molest children instead of heterosexuals. It's Dobbsian, right? I mean, you look into that, it turns out it's utterly false, 100% false. In fact, if the studies show anything, homosexual parents are a wee bit less likely than heterosexual parents to, you know, molest or otherwise do bad things to children.

You know, and it's the same thing with criminals and immigrants. It's very funny. We've heard about the criminality of these sort of sexual beings and immigrants coming for women. You know, the reality is this has been shown by very serious studies that immigrants as a group, the whole group of immigrants in this country are far less criminal than native Americans. And what the studies really show is that with every successive generation they become more criminal, they become more like us.

All right. You know, let's have a debate about health care and the people who are not covered. You know, that's a legitimate and important topic. Talking about death panels is not.

REV. BARRETT:

Again, I'm Reverend JoAnn Barrett, I'm co-Chair with Rabbi Moss. You had said in the report that the SQL was -- is actually defunct, right? It's disband as of 2004. And you're saying that it's been the past ten years. It's five years now that they haven't been around. Have you found any other active groups that might be around on Long Island? Because you said about all these other groups. Did you find any other place or groups where --

MR. POTOK:

No. I mean, the short answer is no. I mean, I think that those years were plenty in terms of sort of pouring their poison into the politics of the County and the sort of cultural life of the County. But no. No. But I think it's -- you know, whether they were still active or not, you know, it's the pattern that we see a lot, right? Kind of a group comes in, it becomes nastier for one reason for another. You know, maybe because they're not getting attention from the politicians or they're pushed away from any kind of real power or influence, but in any case, they become nastier, they start to, you know, ally or bring in people with far more -- groups that are openly white supremacists. You know, and it goes from bad to worse very quickly.

REV. BARRETT:

Just one more question. Some of the incidents that occurred, it was -- there was -- someone was drunk, there was some kind of substance abuse involved in it. Have you found that that tends to be something -- a factor that contributes to actual incidents occurring?

MR. POTOK:

No, but it's not something that came up as far as I know in the conversations. So, you know, it may be, you know, that we've missed some piece of it. But, no, that's really not something that came up in Sara Reynolds' reporting work at all.

MS. ORTIZ:

Laura.

MS. AHEARN:

Hi again, Mark. As a crime victim advocate, something that's very important for our advocates in the agency is to have a very clear understanding of the criminal justice process. And what we find often with all victims of crime, especially violent crime, is that there's an expectation from criminal justice which might be similar to what is seen on TV. And Detective Sergeant Bobby Reecks always says things don't happen in a half an hour when a show completes and the case is closed.

It's our experience that those individuals who are victims of violent crime without that clear understanding of what the process is there are -- it leads to sometimes misunderstandings. So I'm curious -- in terms of the process, I'm curious if you know the victims that were interviewed that had had contact with law enforcement, if they had a clear understanding of what the process would be or were they just too afraid to engage past that point of making a report? Because often, and we've been in situations where somebody wants to report a crime and there are a lot of barriers to reporting, and I understand we've been discussing a lot of these barriers and actually taking the action to do outreach to those organizations that have said that they have victims that would like to come forward, so we're going to be going to them in their language and for the protected groups -- for each of the protected groups.

But do you know if there is an understanding of the criminal justice process and if organization that are representing or providing support to those individual who have been victims of hate crime, do they have an understanding of the criminal justice process, or is that just not known?

MR. POTOK:

Well, I mean, I'm talking to you secondhand, obviously. As I said, I wasn't Sara Reynolds, I wasn't on the ground, but I think that surely the truth is generally no. You know, generally, these are people who come from places who are the -- law enforcement system, the courts, the judicial system in general look very different, and as was suggested, right, I mean, who is influenced by bribes and who's related to who and who the police chief is and all that kind of thing. And I think that is certainly true. And I take your point, I think it's absolutely true that a lot of people -- you know, I think we quoted one of them in the report talking about sort of I'd seen on TV and I thought, oh, the American police were so wonderful. And obviously, that's true, right? Crimes are not solved in half an hour. I don't suggest -- I think a lot of these crimes, you know, weren't solvable. It's not bad police work at all. So I don't mean to suggest in any way that, you know, all these crimes could have been solved if officials acted correctly. You know, I guess the only thing I would say is, you know, all one can do is try and make people aware of life is really like, what the real world is like. You know, we're not living -- it's not NYPD Blue. We don't live in a TV set. It's the real world.

MS. ORTIZ:

Any other questions for Mark? I know I had asked you this at a previous presentation earlier in the week, but now that I realize that this is the first report of it's kind from the Southern Poverty Law Center, was there any conversation about any followup? I mean, you made very general recommendations like you said, but I also know that the Southern Poverty Law Center does has a wide array and some really great curriculums and other programs that they do outside of the

Intelligence Project. Was there any discussion with the organization about any other support that they could lend in followup to the report?

MR. POTOK:

Well, not really formally. I mean, let me say, I mean, this is very much what the ADL is about. And the ADL, unlike us, is really here on the ground, and it's a different situation, right? So in the -- in the press conference and when I kind of -- you know, when we released this report I tried to say to back off from getting to specific about the recommendations, because I just feel like it's not our role to come marching up from Alabama and say, "This is what you ought to do; this, this, this, this and all these details." I think, you know, in some way it has to come organically from the community itself.

You know, that said, you know, like the ADL, we do two things; we do training in domestic terrorism and hate groups and bias crimes and hate crimes of law enforcement and have some Federally certified, Federal Law enforcement training center certified instructors. You know, which means officers can get college credit and so on for the classes. And we also have our Teaching Tolerance Division. Again, the ADL has a very similar program, although I think a larger program. And that is all about producing materials for K through 12, kids in K through 12 schools.

And, you know, one thing -- one specific thing I probably should mention is that teaching tolerance, which is not me at all, I'm not involved in any direct way, it's a completely different department, but Teaching Tolerance has over the years done I think maybe ten or 11, the kind of central thing they do, aside from producing the semi annual magazine for teachers, for instructors, is they produce teaching kits built around films, typically I think a 20, 25 minute film. And the films -- this sounds like bragging, and I don't mean it to be, but I mean, a couple of the films have won Academy Awards for Best Short Documentary. So, you know, they're very well produced films.

You know, and they come with a teaching guide and so on, right? It's all about for the classroom and very much directed at kids. I say all this just to say the very latest teaching kit is a teaching kit around a movie called *Viva La Causa*, Long Live the Cause. And it is about the great boycott, the struggle of the farm workers in the United States. And I think it's really worth -- you know, I think it's the kind of thing that might be used usefully in Suffolk schools. You know, again, not to sort of push any solutions down anybody's throat, but, you know, we're all about trying to help people who are interested in it.

You know, I mean, I've tried to kind of hold back a little in terms of, you know, acting like we're here to -- you know, like the Great White Knight, we're going to ride in sort of fix everything. That's but I do think that's useful.

MR. KILMNICK:

I think teaching tolerance is teaching us to stay where we are at right now. You know, to say that someone is tolerable, there's nothing to tolerate for someone being who they are or whatever ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation or whatever. So I think that -- I mean, I'm making a statement instead of a question, but I think that if we're really going to address this get climate of fear and change the culture, we have to change the culture of tolerance and acceptance which are very low levels to reach.

MR. POTOK:

Well, I know what you're saying. You know, there's a little debate around the word tolerance and it has a certain sound to it. But I mean, look, the words in the language -- you know, our department is named -- you know, I think it's just way it is, but I certainly understand what you are saying. And I think the materials do a little more than teach people to tolerate those noxious immigrants or those noxious sort of, you know, gay people or whatever it may be. But I understand what you are saying.

MS. ORTIZ:

Thank you very much, Mark. We really appreciate it.

MR. POTOK:

Thank you very much for having me. I really do appreciate the opportunity to come here.

MS. ORTIZ:

Sandra, are you coming up?

MS. DUNN:

First of all, I want to say thank you very much for inviting me to present to you tonight. And thank you especially to Renee Ortiz and Legislator Gregory for having a prior conversation with us and for making this possible. I really appreciate that this task force is wanting to engage with advocated and with others who are concerned with these issues.

So I'll just say briefly my name is Sandra Dunn. I am the immigration program officer at the Hagedorn Foundation. We're based in Port Washington. And we are a social justice foundation that has two primary areas of concern; one is family, youth and children, and the other is immigration. And we work both nationally and locally to fund organizations doing work nationally on comprehensive immigration reform. And locally, we fund organizations that are working to ease tensions that arise from immigration and local responses to it. And when I say local, I mean Nassau and Suffolk Counties. And why we do what we do, I think Mark Potok has just laid out a very good reason for our focus locally on easing tensions related to immigration.

I'll just give a very brief overview of the broad areas we fund within the local program that I manage in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. We fund organization that work to increase civic participation and work towards immigrant integration on Long Island. We work -- we fund organizations that are working to promote understanding on Long Island among different groups. And we work -- we fund legal and policy advocacy as well as research. And tonight, I've been asked to speak about the research that we fund.

We funded Climate of Fear, Latino Immigrants in Suffolk County that Mark just spoke about, so I won't be speaking about that report tonight. But we've also funded three other reports since we were founded. We were founded in 2005. And the other reports are the Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population on Long Island, New York, and that was released in 2007. Thank you, Renee, for the show and tell. And the other is -- and the other is Strengthening Long Island, The Economic Contributions of Immigrants to Nassau and Suffolk Counties, and that was released last year in 2008 in the fall.

And we, this year, have funded the Cardozo Law School to produce Constitution on ICE, which Renee is holding up, a report on immigration home raid operations, and that was released in July. And I should say that the first two reports that I mentioned, the economic reports, were authored -- the first was coauthored by Mariano Torres, professor at Adelphi, and his colleague Curtis Skinner, and the second was just Mariano Torres was the author. And it was Peter Markowitz leading a team of authors at Cardozo Law School's Immigration Justice Clinic who authored the third report, Constitution on ICE, and then, of course, Climate of Fear from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

So I do want to just -- I'm not here to give you a lot of facts and figures because that's not what I asked to speak about. But I do want to just draw a couple of stats from the two reports on the economic contribution. And this hurts your fingers, I have to say. One is from the first report, one very interesting fact is that from 1997 to 2002, Hispanic-owned businesses on Long Island increased by 35%. And in Suffolk County especially, there was a tremendous increase. The number of Hispanic-owned businesses in Suffolk County increased by 51% and sales increased by 39%. So I think need to keep that in mind as a context, as, you know, information that we don't normally receive about immigrants, right?

And Long Island Hispanic-owned businesses employed an estimated 25,000 people during that time. And Hispanic spending -- now, on the other side, not business owners, but just Hispanics on Long Island spending their hard earned money -- Hispanic spending is estimated to have created over 52,000 jobs in 2004 alone. So those I think are some pretty amazing statistics.

From the second report published a year later, that was last year, I'll say that immigrants overall, now this is immigrants of any nationality that have come to Nassau and Suffolk Counties, immigrants overall generated an estimated 82,000 in 2006. And I should say also that for either Hispanics or immigrants overall, and let me clarify, when I say Hispanics, I mean immigrants but also nonimmigrant Hispanics, that's what we mean by Hispanics in that first report. So whether we're talking about immigrants overall or Hispanics, 46% of Long Island immigrants and -- almost half, so about the same, maybe a little more, almost 50% of Long Island Hispanic are considered to be in the prime working age category, that is between the ages of 18 to 44. So that has a lot to do obviously with the fact that they are so heavily represented in the workforce.

The most striking and I think one of the most important statistics in -- and then I'll close with these -- is that immigrants contributed \$2.13 billion in taxes and other government revenues while costing local governments 1.6 billion. So there is a net contribution on the part of immigrants overall. And what we're taking into account here as far as costs go are --

RABBI MOSS:

Sandra, was that in Suffolk or nationally, the billion mark?

MS. DUNN:

The billion part is Suffolk and Nassau together, that's Long Island. So 2.13 billion contributions in taxes and other government revenues, but the cost to local governments were 1.6 billion. And the costs are broken down in this way; Kindergarten through 12th grade education, the costs were \$772 million; health cares costs, 244 million; and correctional facilities, the costs there are 44 million. So if you total that up, you've got the 1.6 billion. So there was a net benefit economically of immigrants being present here of 1.7 billion. And that translates into \$2305 per immigrant resident, that the immigrant resident is contributing as a benefit, okay? It comes out to be a benefit, not a loss.

With Hispanics, with Hispanics, the figures are the following -- this is in 2004 again, the report was done earlier: Hispanics contributed of \$925 million in taxes -- this is, again, Suffolk and Nassau Counties -- whereas the costs to local governments, both County governments, was 723 million. And again, we're looking at K through 12 education where the costs was 520 million; health care, 158 million; and corrections, 45 million. And the reason those things were focused on because so many of the myths out there are about -- have to do with schools and schools taxes and, you know, immigrant children increasing the populations in schools and therefore increasing the cost of education; have to do health care, people going to the hospitals and not being able to pay bills, people going to emergency rooms, etcetera, but even figuring all of that in, there's still a net gain. So the net benefit to Long Island from Hispanics alone is 202 million.

And there is -- we will leave these statistics alone for a minute. The impetus for these reports, why did we fund these reports? There was a moment, and it's an ongoing moment, unfortunately, but there was a time before these reports where, you know, a number of elected officials were saying at every turn that immigrants were costing us so much. You know, this was the rhetoric that was out there, right, in addition to the rhetoric that Lou Dobbs has talked about in relation to some other things. There are all sorts of kind of facts and figures blown completely out of proportion, both nationally and locally.

So because this was the word out there that they weren't paying their taxes, they were costing governments an exorbitant amounts of money, etcetera, we wanted to find out, you know, what is the truth. This is not substantiated by them. They're not pointing to any sources when they're putting these figures out there. So we wanted to say, "What is the situation? Let's find out. Where

is the data, the research that supports these figures?" So that's what was the impetus for doing these two economic impact reports.

And this was based on -- our reports were based on -- I shouldn't say based on, I should say the methodology for the reports came from a methodology that was used in a similar report in North Carolina. And there have since been many reports around the country that different states have done and sometimes different local communities have done about the economic impact of immigrants, documented and undocumented, the economic impact of Hispanics, documented and undocumented, immigrant and nonimmigrant, etcetera.

So basing -- using the methodology of the North Carolina report, this is the methodology that the economists used. And I should say that the North Carolina report was done by a group of banks who wanted to find out this information. People are really concerned with numbers and facts, right, and not, you know, softy foundation advocate people like us. But the groups of banks found that -- in North Carolina it was found that immigrants were a net cost in the short term, but in the long term, they were a net benefit. Now, that is not what we found. What we found on Long Island was what I reported to you.

So I think I think it's important to keep all of this in mind, again, as a more positive context for what we're dealing with here. And with the other reports, the Constitution on ICE Report and from -- with the Southern Poverty Law Center Report, we have facts and figures in those reports as well, but I think an important element, a crucial element in those two reports is that so much of it is based on personal testimony and on personal story. And I think that is something that is just as valid as stats and data.

So it's important that these stories get out there, because these are the voices that are not being heard. The victim of ICE home raids are not being heard, the victims of hate crimes are not being heard. And to have these first-person accounts in these reports, I think is absolutely vital, because what we are hearing are the voices of the powerful, the voices of people who have power to define the terms of the immigration debate, whether it's locally or whether it's nationally in the figure of -- similar figures like Lou Dobbs and others.

So how can we combat that defining of terms -- defining debate and those kinds of terms where we try to do it on a small scale here by funding this kind of research to get more information out, because our belief is that the more information that is out there, the more understanding there is. And I think it takes time sometimes for this information to get out there. It certainly takes time for it to trickle down into communities. But I do believe it happens. I do believe that over time, the terms of the debate can change. And that's why I can get up and do what I do every morning for a living.

I also want to say that, you know, in another context, I work with Herstory Writers workshop and I work with Latinas who are writing their life stories. And at a Herstory event, a Methodist minister said -- she invited one Herstory Latina writer to speak at her church, and she said, "You know, this person is here speaking at my church because we can argue with a political position, you know, we can argue about whether immigrants should be allowed into country without papers or not, we can argue about policy, but we cannot argue with a story." And I think that's what we have in the Climate of Fear Report especially. We have stories of people who are not usually heard. And that is absolutely important, because if those stories don't get out, then only one story is being told.

So what we're aiming to do by getting stats and data out there as well as getting personal stories out there and accounts of people real-lived experiences, we're aiming to present the unofficial story. And sometimes, those of us who have experience with unofficial stories versus official stories, and we just have to look at the history in this country to know there's been a whole lot of that over the couple of hundred years we've been in existence, the unofficial story holds as much truth and often much more truth than the official story has. And the unofficial stories are also rooted -- the unofficial stories we're dealing with anyway at the foundation and are trying to get funding out there

is that they are still rooted in facts and they are rigorously researched and compiled. So the fact that there's a personal first-person account of a personal testimony does not mean that there's a lack of rigor in the research.

And I would say too that nobody whether we're talking about elected officials or the voices on one side that are clamoring for people to be deported or the most dedicated advocates on the other side who are fighting for the rights of immigrants, no one denies that there are real problems to be dealt with as a result of immigration and local responses to it. But the way to address these problems is not by marginalizing or denigrating an already marginalized and victimized community. And we've seen how this community is victimized through the Southern Poverty Law Center Report, nor is the way to address these problems through harmful rhetoric that further divides communities. That can only pull people further apart. We've seen it nationally in Lou Dobbs and the kinds of examples that Mark just cited, and we've seen it locally at all levels. And I would say from the County Government on down to local civic associations.

I don't know if it's appropriate for me to respond to a question that was asked earlier, to incorporate here. May I do that? Okay. Just a word about civic associations. Sachem Quality of Life may not exist, but local civic associations do exist. And it's my understanding that Sachem Quality of Life splintered in some fashion, but some of its members kind of reformed, reinvigorated in some sense the Farmingville Civic Association. And I've experienced civic associations locally where I live on the East End, a few of them. I ran for office a couple of years ago and had to do many, many, many, Meet the Candidates Nights and debates that are hosted by every little civic association that you can imagine.

And some of what you hear in these civic association meetings -- and these are just regular folks in their communities, right, trying to do the right thing by their community -- but some of what you hear in relation to immigration is truly appalling and unbelievable. So Sachem Quality of Life may not exist any more, but that attitude and that atmosphere that Mark talked about as being so pervasive, it's still there, and it's still alive, and it's still being recited at civic association meetings. So I think that's something to keep in mind.

I'll also say that every publication that we've done has been accompanied by a flurry of media activity and reactions from leaders, community leaders, including officials, elected officials, and then the flurry dies down. And unfortunately, often what we're left with is defensiveness and no positive action being taken. What we would like the reports to be doing, and of these reports, is we would like elected officials and community leaders to see them as opportunities for self examination and opportunities for real dialog.

So you have got this information here, you've got this new report. What can you do with it as an elected official or as a community leader that is positive? You can try to create events around it, you can try to create dialog and conversation around -- around those reports. Some people have criticized them and reacted in defensive ways. But I think that this only fuels the fire and it fuels the harmful rhetoric and it keeps the debate rooted in that harmful rhetoric and keeps it rooted in myths and it keeps it rooted in the point of view of just one side, which is the side that has the platform to speak and the side that has power, the official story side.

I will say that the way to address the problems is to engage in open civil rational dialog about the issues of concern, whatever they might be. What's on our table tonight are hate crimes in relation to immigrants, but anything, that would be the answer, and to base arguments in fact rather than myth and perception, and to make sure that all voices are heard. Again, that first-person voice of that Latino victim is absolutely important.

To do this, to create this dialog and to have a rational conversation about these issues, of course, takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of dedication and commitment from everybody, it needs to be the people in the civic associations, it needs to be people in neighborhoods, people in houses of worship and other places where people interact regularly. And it needs go on up and I would say start at the

top as well to elected officials and leaders who have the power and the platform to influence public opinion.

So we produced these reports because we believe that they can and do make a difference. We just need to get them into the right hands, and I think here is a good place to have the report -- reports talked about and I think just keep them out there, you know, keep them being talked about, keep them in the news so that that flurry of media activity doesn't die down and so that perhaps people locally, on the very local level of a church or a synagogue or a civic association can say, "Well, you know, let's have a discussion about this." You know, a social justice committee of the church could do something, an anti-bias task force could do something.

So that's where I leave you, with those thoughts. And just to say we -- you know, at the Hagedorn Foundation, we're a staff of five. We understand that the work to change people's hearts and minds is painstakingly and painfully slow, but we believe it is possible to do so. So we keep doing it. Again, thank you for inviting me to speak with you tonight. I'd be happy to take questions or try to clarify anything. Just please don't ask me specific economic questions about methodology, because I'm not the economist who wrote the report.

MS. ORTIZ:

Any questions for Sandra? Rabbi Moss?

RABBI MOSS:

Not a question, if I may. Just to say to continue doing this work because it's very necessary, as you know. And actually, many of the things you've discussed or the problems that have been presented have already been confronted over the years, as you know, through many organizations that we're all involved with here sitting at this table and in this room. And even the report itself has been a topic discussion at the Anti-bias Task Force Meetings and taking those recommendations on the last page and actually looking at them, and the human rights Commission as well, and saying, "What things haven't we been doing possible or what things are we doing more?" So it has been inspirational in those ways.

I'm sure, if I may speak for my good colleague and friend here, to say that when we were talking before Sachem Quality of Life and some dissolution, certainly the people who are members of an organization and still in the communities. It's sort of like saying the America Neo-Nazi Party that was very powerful here 50 or 60 years ago, there -- some of those members still live here and their children live here and their grandchildren live here. So it doesn't mean to say that just because the organization doesn't exist anymore, obviously what they stood for doesn't happen -- doesn't exist any longer. So we certainly agree with you. And I thank you for your efforts.

MS. DUNN:

Thank you. Thank you. I would just like to say since -- just another thought occurred to me if you don't mind. You know, the Farmingville Civic Association, I will say, I have not attended a meeting of theirs, I just know that some of the SQL members kind of reformed and resurrected the Farmingville Civic Association. But something like an antithesis to that that is going on at the local level is the Farmingville Residents Association, which formed a few years ago because they were not happy with what was going on in their community.

Louise Scarola is featured in the film *Farmingville*. She didn't like the day laborers and the trucks and the noise and everything in her neighborhood, however, she decided to do something more positive rather than take the negative stance that SQL and others took. So she along with a few others formed the Farmingville Residents Association. And they've been trying to work -- not entirely successfully I'm afraid. It's a project we funded and it hasn't worked out so well, but I still have faith. Trying to work with different Latino organizations, reach out and -- and try to do things together in the Farmingville community to show that there is some solidarity, to show that people really do have a common interest no matter where they are from or what their documentation status is that they do have a common interest in bettering their community, in taking care of their children,

in keeping their family safe, etcetera.

So I would say that, you know, there have problems with how that work has gone, but I think just the effort to found a group that says, "No, we aren't them and not all Farmingville residents are like that. They do not speak for us." And to try to do something positive, that effort is to be commended. And I think that those efforts on different scales are going on all over Long Island. I think that in churches and synagogues and other place of worship, congregations, I think that a lot is happening. And I know, you know, we're familiar with the work in Patchogue. It's slow and sometimes it's just a handful of people, but what is that famous quote by Margaret Mead? Something like, "who says a handful of people can't change the world? It's the only thing that ever has."

MS. ORTIZ:

Laura.

MS. AHEARN:

Hi. You had mentioned that Sachem Quality of Life members have -- have they organized to become the Farmingville Civic Association? Is it leadership from SQL or members? And are they in leadership or membership positions for Farmingville?

MS. DUNN:

I don't have details on that. I can't comment on that. I just know that from what I learned from others that some of the SQL members are now part of the Farmingville Civic Association. That's what I know.

MS. AHEARN:

So you don't know if there were -- there are members from SQL, so you know, they're not leadership from former SQL?

MS. DUNN:

I don't know the names or their positions.

MS. AHEARN:

I'm not asking you names. I'm just curious to know if you know if they've moved into leadership positions at the Farmingville Civic Association.

MS. DUNN:

I don't know.

MS. ORTIZ:

Any other questions for Sandra?

REV. BARRETT:

I just want to thank you for clarifying that, because that's very specific. And that's what I looking for, for something very specific, because we don't only sit on this task force, we do other work, and we can get that work going. So thank you.

MS. DUNN:

Thank you.

MS. ORTIZ:

Thank you so much.

MS. DUNN:

Thank you very much.

MS. ORTIZ:

ADL is on deck. I just ask that you each introduce yourself for the stenographer.

MR. MEYER:

Absolutely. We will certainly do that. Good evening. First, I want to thank Chairman Gregory and the members of the task force for inviting us to be with you tonight. I know I'm joined with the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Hagedorn Foundation. ADL is very pleased to be here and very pleased to know you are here. It's very important to us and I think to the road forward.

My name is Ron Meyer. I'm the Director of ADL's New York Region. And I'm here tonight with two colleagues; Steve Friedman, who you'll hear from in just a minute who's the Associate Director of our Civil rights Division of ADL and Robin Levy who is right back here and some of you have met before, because she has been a regular attendee at all of your hearings since the task force was founded not that long ago, who is the Assistant Director of the New York region of ADL.

Some of you know but some of you may not know that ADL does not come -- did not come to this work yesterday. ADL was founded in 1913. We're as a matter of fact anticipating in a few years from now, our 100th anniversary. A lot had changed in that hundred years, that's for sure. It was one small office with one staff person in Chicago in 1913. And today, we're in 28 locations around the country, the largest, which will not surprise you, right here in the New York Metropolitan area, the region that I direct.

While that has changed, the size and scope of ADL has changed, the mission has not. From the first day and the first person to today when our scope is much broader, our ability to help communities respond to issues of hate and intolerance and bias, anti-Semitism and so on, there have been two really founding principles of ADL and they remain the founding principals of ADL and they're why we're here tonight and hopefully are somewhat relevant to your work and hopefully a resource to you as you proceed.

One, it's really been, as our name says, the Anti-Defamation League, to respond to and prevent and counter the defamation of the Jewish people as expressed in anti-Semitism and many forms, forms we knew back a hundred years ago and forms that are quite new to us today. But along with that and from our inception, it has also been to secure the justice and fair treatment for all citizens of this country, to fight for the equal treatment of anyone in society just as hard as we would fight for a Jew who's facing anti-Semitism in their community. These are equal pieces of what we are about as an organization.

And it's in that context that we come to meet with you this evening. We have a deep commitment and some history in helping communities on Long Island respond to hatred and bigotry in whatever form it comes. Obviously in the wake of the brutal murder of Marcello Lucero, now almost a year ago, our organization was drawn almost immediately into your work, the work of this community and have had contact with your law enforcement folks; your Police Department, your schools, and obviously with community leaders, pretty much from that point forward.

We very much welcome the formation of this task force and have pretty much been involved in it since its inception. Chairman Gregory, you know, invited us to meet with him, a few of us to meet with him, just after the task force was formed. As I mentioned before, Robin, who is sitting back here and Sonya Spar, who could not be with us tonight, have followed you around the County, that is to say, have been with you at every one of your community hearings, I think spoke out at one of them in, I think, English and Spanish if -- if I've got it right from Sonya, because we wanted to hear what people were saying, both what the task force was saying, but what the community was saying because it's a community that we are happy to be partnering with, but we need to know what the pulse of the community is too in any way to be any help at all, at least in my view.

If there's anything that we've learned over the past almost hundred years about what it takes to fight hate and intolerance it is this, and then I'm going to turn everything over to Steve who really

will lay out a whole range of possibilities, options, resources, ideas. But the one thing we have learned, and it's been consistent no matter what form the hate comes it, no matter what the target audience is, and that is the outcome will be determined by how leaders respond. That is to say you look at throughout history, recent and ancient, where leaders in the community spoke up in the face of the outpouring of hate, a solution was almost always found.

Whereas leadership was passive or, God forbid, fueling the fire, this is where hate in some sense had a hard time finding its boundaries and finding a stopping point. We've seen it with tragic consequences, we've seen it with all kinds of consequences. And the leadership comes from all kinds of different places clearly. It's not only the elected officials, although it is the elected officials. It's not only the Police Department, although it is the Police Department. It's not only the leaders of the school system, although it is the school system. It's not only the leaders of the churches and synagogues and mosques, although it is the leaders of synagogues, churches and mosques. How leaders respond is really the key factor, key variable in how this -- how these things resolve themselves. And that's why for us it was such an encouraging sign that a group of leaders came together under this task force to help this County come through some terrible times and some difficult circumstances that you're still working your way through.

So all I can say is that all of us here tonight and those that are not here from ADL, a good number of us, will be pleased to be partners, resources in any way that we can be helpful to your efforts to find the solution. The solution lies there, not here. But you do have partners and friends and resources that you can draw on. And one of them, only one of them, is ADL. And if you want to take advantage of that, we would welcome it. That's obviously your call. And with that having been said, I am delighted to turn over the podium and the button to Steve Freidman who will share some ideas from our years of experience on how communities can respond most effectively to hate.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Thank you, Ron. Thank you, all. I welcome the opportunity to be here. I welcome particularly the opportunity to share this occasion with Mark Potok and the SPLC and with Sandra and the Hagedorn Foundation. I have enormous respect for the work that they're doing and the contribution that they're making to this issue. The work -- the issues you're grappling with or the issues we're grappling with together, if I had an easy, if we had an easy answer, we would have given it to you a long time ago and you would have found it a long time ago. There really aren't easy answers. I might take a stab at some of the questions that Mark was asked as well, but I don't have any magic bullets either.

I do think just to sort of put in a different framework -- I was thinking about how I was going to introduce what I wanted to say. And we've all been reading and hearing a lot about the Swine Flu and how to deal with the Swine Flu. I see a couple of people looking at me going, where am I going with that. Well, there is an analogy. I think hate is a kind of a virus too. I don't think that Suffolk County any more than any other place is inherently evil or inherently bad or inherently tainted, but when there's a virus out there, there are two things you have to do. You have to look for ways to treat it when there's an infection, and you have to look for ways to immunize people so that it won't spread and other people won't catch it.

And I think that in a way what we're all trying to do is trying to deal with a different kind of virus which has infected some people in this County and some places in this County, but I think -- and it's tarnished the reputation of this County. But I think that there are things that can be done. Just like there are things that can be done to deal with the flu, there are things that can be done to deal with hate.

I want to say before I get into that in more detail, I'm here wearing my hat as ADL's Associate Director of Civil Rights and Director of Legal Affairs. And I've worked on hate crimes issues for a long time. I've been at ADL for almost 25 years. And as many of you probably know, we've pioneered hate crimes legislation. Our model is the one now on the books, similar to a model in 45 of the 50 states. We're on the verge of a major victory in Washington with Federal hate crimes

legislation. But I'm also a very proud resident of this County. I've lived in Holbrook for 18 years. I have an 18 year old who graduated from Sachem High School East in June and is now a freshman at Stony Brook. I have a daughter who's a sophomore in high school there.

We are proud members of Rabbi Moss' synagogue. He Bar Mitzvahed my son and Bat Mitzvahed my daughter. We have a real grounded and a real history in this County. And I know from my own personal experience that Suffolk County is not a bad place to live, a bad place to raise a family, a bad place to have kids go to school and so forth. But even in the case of my kids, my son has started at Stony Brook this fall. He had another kid write something on his Facebook page saying, "Why are you a racist?" And he had no clue where it came from. It wasn't a kid that he knew. And he asked the kid, "Why did you write that? And the kid said, "Well, because you went to high school in Farmingville." Because Sachem High School East is on Granny Road in Farmingville. And he said, "I'm not a racist." He is not. The kids he went to school with are not racists. He went to school with kids who are Asian and Hispanic and African American and all different across the spectrum. He has friends. My daughter who is a sophomore there now has friends.

It's systematic of what I think we're grappling with. There's that sense out that somebody could come along and that the association that they have. And the kids know -- when my daughter rides the school bus to school it goes up North Ocean Avenue, and they see day laborers standing on the corner across from the 7 Eleven, people shouting things at them. That undercurrent is still there and it's still a problem. And I know that we're all equally looking for ways to try to grapple with it. And it really cuts close to home.

And one of the things that ADL has learned and one the benefits that we have is because we have offices around the country, we understand and we've dealt with -- helped different communities try to deal with similar issues, because the issues are not unique to Suffolk County. And one of the things I want to talk about is how others deal with the virus, some of the strategies, some things that work, some things that don't work, some things that might work in combinations with other things. And I hope that the analogy is useful. I'm happy to answer questions after I'm done.

But I want to start by saying -- echoing a little bit of what Mark said, only I have four instead of five, four key components that I think are essential to treating the virus of hate. And I hope that outlining it this way and structuring it this way may give you some thoughts as you work towards that very important report that you have to write. The four that I've listed; one is political leadership, you've heard it before, and I'll talk about it some more. I'm sorry to be beating the same drum, but I think it's critical. The second is police community cooperation. The third is police training. And the fourth, which may in some ways be the most important, is educational programming.

There are short-term strategies and there are long-term strategies. And obviously, you want to try to solve the problem overnight, but I don't think the problem is necessarily solvable overnight. Let me talk first about political leadership. It matters. The bully pulpit matters, the tone matters, what the leaders say matters. In answer to your question, yes, my kids probably don't know who the County Executive is or who some of the people in the County Legislature are. Actually, they do know who the County Executive is because we've talked about it, but otherwise they wouldn't.

But the tone that's set by the political leadership, I think carries over and carries down, and I do think it's important. Our experience -- we had an experience in Los Angeles. There was -- there was an outbreak of ethnic violence there, anti-immigrant violence, Anti-Mexican in particular. We are part of a Latino-Jewish roundtable in Los Angeles. Our Los Angeles office had been spearheading this together with some of the Hispanic groups in Los Angeles.

And together, we came up with the idea for what became known as the "Declaration of Los Angeles," which was a broad coalition of community groups coming together and putting together on paper a declaration which had a whole lot of Whereas Clauses -- I have copies of it, you can see -- and a bunch of Resolves. And basically what it said, what they agreed they would all commit themselves

to was recognizing and protecting the basic human rights of immigrants, supporting human rights and the humane treatment of undocumented persons, recognizing and publically denouncing Xenophobia, which I've heard the Rabbi do many, many times, monitoring and responding to extremists groups who advocate bigotry or racism, vigilantism, violence, any other tactics that subverts the democratic process, holding to the standards of human rights and dignity all law enforcement and judicial processes that relate to deportation, detention and immigration status, and not insignificantly, recognizing the need for a safe and secure United States.

So what happened with this declaration? A group -- a coalition of community groups; Interfaith Coalition, Group Coalition, Hispanic groups, gay groups, Jewish groups, other religious groups, Asian groups, came together and persuaded the Los Angeles City Council to adopt it as a declaration of theirs. The Los Angeles City Council did that. They then -- a member of the City Council or the leader of the City Council then took it to Sacramento to the State Legislature, and it was adopted as a resolution by the State Senate and the State Assembly of the State of California and put on the books officially and passed on and circulated to other officials around the country. Similar declarations are now being considered in Chicago, in New Mexico, a couple of other places.

It's an idea that just again the power of leadership, the power of words, to put together a model, put together some language and say this is a statement of what we believe and what we think it important. Mark mentioned Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, as a place where a similar tragedy, similar kind of hate crime occurred six months before Marcello Lucero in July of 2008. Well, what happened after that? And our office in Philadelphia was very involved in that situation. A group came together, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission served as the organizer. They brought together the Mayor of the town, the Borough Manager, the Superintendent of Schools, the City Council leader, Police Chief, representatives of the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the other officials of the school district, community groups, even some of the major business leaders in the community. And they all sat together and they all said, "This is intolerable in our community. What can we do about it?"

And the fact that they came together, in fact, was doing something about it. What they did was they created a committee to facilitate communication between community groups and leaders and political leaders and law enforcement. They declared themselves a "no place for hate community." They took some of ADL's programming. We have a program, which we've modeled in a number of communities, where the community says this is no place for hate. And that involves curriculum in the schools, it involves public service announcements, it involves working with the media and so forth. And what it -- basically, it says what it is. If somebody encounters hate, then they say, "That doesn't belong here and we're going to speak out about it."

There was a prosecution of the case. The prosecution unfortunately did not end with the convictions we were hoping for, but now it's being considered by Federal authorities. But there was a really important coming together of leadership at different levels. It wasn't just one person speaking out, it wasn't just one group seeking out, it wasn't -- didn't become a political issue, didn't become a Democratic or Republican issue, it became a, okay, we have a problem, how do we problem solve. How do we deal with this? How do we get on the same page and make it clear that we don't want this incident to be what everybody knows our community for forever and ever from now on, that this is what people are going to associate with us. That's not where we want to be -- that's not where we want to be as a community.

And that leadership, that message trickles down, because when you involve the Police Chief and you involve the Superintendent of Schools and when you involve the City Council President, they each in turn -- their involvement is noticed and remarked on by the people that they supervise. If the superintendent is involved, that means the school district is on board. The Police Chief is involved, that means the Police Department is on board. The DA is involved, that means the DA's Office will take the case seriously and prosecute it and so forth. So there's a ripple affect of that kind of leadership.

And I think part of leadership that's particularly important is data collection. This is something that Mark thought was important enough to mention as a separate point, and I think he's probably right -- I incorporated it into political leadership -- knowing the scope of the problem, knowing the breath of what you're dealing with, getting the statistics, getting people to report, getting law enforcement to identify when they encounter an incident, to identify it correctly as a bias or as a hate crime is really important. That goes to training too, because if the police on the ground don't know the indicators of what a bias crime is, they may not recognize it as being a bias crime.

So saying that we want to collect data, saying that we want it -- a lot of communities take the attitude that we don't really want the word to be out there that there are hate crime in our community because we think it will turn people off to our community, it will give us a bad name. Well, actually, the opposite is true. What it shows is that a community is going to take it seriously and get credit for taking it seriously. And there are groups like us and others who will say to that community, "We applaud you for gathering data, we applaud you for tracking hate crimes in your community and coming to grips with a problem that everybody has."

When you look at data collection that's required by the United States Congress by the Hate Crimes Statistic Act and you realize that there are communities in this country -- I'm proud to say Suffolk is not one of them -- but there are communities in this country which report no hate crimes or no hate incidents over a year. Well, obviously, something doesn't ring true there. A whole state or a whole city is not going to go a whole year without having hate crimes. The ones that report it diligently are the ones that have come to grips with most effectively and have dealt with it most effectively, have bias units, train those bias units, know how to identify bias crimes and deal with them, and therefore, in turn, create a certain confidence in the community that the community is going to be able to deal with those problems.

The second thing on my list was police community cooperation. I think there are a series of steps that can be taken. I think Suffolk has already taken some of them. The theme, the general theme is "building trust." We hear in the context of international relations all the time, "confidence building measures," it's a variation of the same thing. The fact that you all exist, that you're here, that there is a commission is a step in that direction. But particularly in terms of police, in trusting special officials in the Police Department with the responsibility for focusing on bias crimes is really critically important, and for those officials to have open lines of communication with community leaders, including clergy, including people who are on the ground and have their ears to the ground and hear about the crimes.

The police have to say to them, "Come to us, tell us, we want to hear what you're hearing." There has to be that -- for this to work, there has to be that openness and that willingness to say, "People may not tell us, but they'll tell you. We want to build confidence so that you can tell us and then in turn they'll be comfortable talking to us."

You might want to consider a hotline for complaints. I'm not talking about 911 emergency complaints, but for people in the community who may anonymously want to share information about something, to have some way to communicate that to law enforcement so that they can then at least know there was an incident and try to find out more about it. Obviously you talked about bilingual materials being in relevant languages, resource materials, but not just resource materials on the programs that are available, the availability of interpreters. If there is a crime and there are witnesses and there is a victims who can't communicate with the police, there's a problem. And it shouldn't be that hard in a County like this to find people who are willing to be on standby to say, "If there's somebody who is trying to talk to the police and willing to talk to the police and is having a problem communicating, hang on for a minute, let's see if we can get somebody to come down here and serve as an interpreter."

I think that Mark made a critical point when he talked about immigration status and the fact that local law enforcement should not be checking the immigration status of victims and witnesses of bias crimes. There is a role for immigration enforcement. There is an agency charged with immigration

enforcement. Local law enforcement has other responsibilities and there's a tension there. If you deputize and ask local law enforcement to start enforcing immigration laws, it's going to undercut their ability in a serious way to deal with bias crimes, because the same people who are impacted very frequently by bias crimes are not going to want to be coming forward, particularly in the context of the Hispanic community in this community and immigration-related issues. That may be less true in other contexts for hate crimes, but it's certainly true in this context.

We talked earlier organized hate activity and what's going on in the area. Mark said, and I think our information is the same as his, that we don't know of any organized hate group activity, formal organized hate group activity in Suffolk right now, but there are organizations like ours and like his that are available and are willing to share resources and share information. And it's certainly, on an ongoing basis, another line of communication that should be open. What do you know about what going on in our community. Do you have any information about hate groups forming, changing, reemerging. We share that information when we get it anyway, but it's useful for us to know, for us to communicate that we're a resource for that. And it's part of the training that we do for law enforcement. It's not just on hate, but it's also on extremism and extremists groups and extremists ideologies and what you should be aware of.

It goes also to training what are important occasions, what are particular holidays, when is a particular community vulnerable. Training -- it's a good segue into training. I want to step back for a second and talk about law enforcement training, because I think that the mindset is what's the key. There's a sense that I hear from some people that, oh, my God, we have to have law enforcement training on bias, it's one more thing we have to do. Actually, it shouldn't be seen as a burden. It should be seen as something that will help.

And I think that it helps builds allies in the community, but more than that, in a profound kind of way from cops that I've talked to, it reinforces why people decided to go into that as a profession to begin with. Most people sign up for that kind of public service which is a very tough challenging career with some sense of idealism, with some sense of wanting to help the community, wanting to serve, wanting to something that puts their life at risk, that puts themselves in harm's way. And they do it because they believe in it, they believe that it's a higher calling in a way.

People who go into that profession, I have enormous respect for. It's a much, much -- there's much more -- it's much, much deeper than people who -- not to denigrate people who do other things, but most people don't choose professions which can put their lives on the line the same way. And they do it -- they say, you can be better at what you do if you know what you are looking for in the context of a hate crime, if you know, for example, bias indicators, things like tattoos, the location of a crime or the date of a crime, or the victim's perception, the witnesses' perception, the ethnic differences involved, those kinds of things.

If you let people know that this will help them do their job better, they will buy into that. ADL has a program -- I wasn't planning on talking about this, but I want to mention it parenthetically -- we do a joint program with the Holocaust Museum in Washington. And we take law enforcement officers through the Holocaust Museum and we talk to them about how the role of law enforcement changed in the -- in the years of the Second World War from the early years where they were protectors of people to the later years where they became persecutors and how did that happen. How did somebody who in 1939 was serving and keeping the peace and protecting people and reporting and dealing with crimes -- look at some of those photos, and then you look at the photos a few years later, and they're shooting people? What happened? And what kind of a perversion -- how could that have happened?

And we've has discussions with the cops afterwards and we say to them, "What's your reaction to this and how do you feel about your profession and what you do and why you do it?" And the reactions we get, it's sort of a reenforcement of that sense of idealism and that sense of, "Yeah, I'm proud to be a cop. It's something that I'm proud to do, because I'm serving my community."

In the context of hate crimes, it's a really important principle to underscore and to emphasize in the course of training and it's part of our training, something to talk about. There was a question that came up about are all hate crimes offenders opportunity seekers. I think you were the one who raised it. I would answer that little differently and it relates to the training as well.

There are really three different kinds of hate crimes perpetrators from our perspective. And the three that I classify; one is thrill seekers who just -- it's obvious what that means, they think it might be fun in a perverse kind of way; others are reactive offenders, people who wouldn't necessarily commit the crime, but something comes into their neighborhood, a mixed-marriage couple or something like that and they just -- it just sort of offends their sense of who they are and what matters and they just react to it in a sort of outpouring of rage; and the third kind are what we call mission offenders where it's really almost an ideological kind of thing. They're on a mission to preserve white America or White Supremacy or something like that.

Now, there's a blurring of lines between those three. But there really are three different categories that we talk about when we do our training. And I think it helps law enforcement to understand what they are dealing with in a particular case. These hate crimes, particularly the ones that are committed by the mission offenders are brutal. Among the -- they keep stabbing people after they're already dead. I mean, it's real violent, it's real brutal in a way that other kinds of crimes don't see. And that's that hate manifesting itself.

The last point I mentioned is education. It's really the critical point. And I thank Mark for his comments. Obviously, we have a lot of pride in what we do. And the Southern Poverty Law Center's Program is also a terrific program. We have something we call a World of Difference. We also have our No Place for Hate Program, which I mentioned before. We have some material on it which we're pleased to share with you. We do do it around the country through our regional offices, including the New York Metropolitan area.

And we also have something fairly new that's specifically relevant to your work I think, which is a new curriculum for elementary, middle and secondary schools on challenging anti-immigrant bias in the United States, specifically on challenging anti-immigrant bias. The lesson plans for this are downloadable from the ADL website. It's www.adl.org. And the main points of this curriculum to build empathy for the experience of immigrants, to appreciate the integral role immigrants have played in our country, to heighten awareness of the negative affects of anti-immigrant bias and to challenge discrimination on both personal and institutional levels. The curriculum has built-in lesson plans, it had readings, it has questions, it has discussion items. It's, I think, very interesting and almost something that a teacher could just run with, download it, look at it, run with it.

It's obviously something that could be part of a recommendation in addition to dealing with hate crimes and hate crimes laws and hate crimes training. And I think the long term -- the Rabbi asked before, "How do you address this problem? It's seems almost intractable." The long term answer is really education. But in the meantime we're all faced with what do we do in the meantime. And I think the answer to that is lots of things at the same time.

Coming back to the virus, the people who are infected, you treat, whether that's through trying to help them redress their grievances with the legal system, trying to get them help through the medical system to get themselves together physically, psychologically and so forth. You treat them the way you treat somebody who's infected. But you also, at the same time, try to figure out ways to prevent the virus from spreading, to prevent it from affecting people who aren't infected. And you do that through training, you do that through, education, you do that through training and education together, you do that through leadership.

You try to convey a united message and a united front that everybody is on the same page regardless of politics; from the political community, the business community, the Legislature, the education community, and the law enforcement. The more you can get everybody on the same page, the more that you can make recommendations which say, "Look, if we do this by ourselves,

it's okay, but if we do it together, it's, you know, the difference between an orchestra and a solo performance." It really does work. We've seen it work in regions around the country. We've dealt with hate crimes, very heinous hate crimes in every region of this country through our offices. And a lot of it comes across my desk too.

We've found it doesn't make the pain go away, it doesn't make the person who's the victim not a victim any more. But it does send a message to the victims community that that victim is not isolated, that that community is not vulnerable, isolated alone, having nowhere to turn and nobody to look to for support, that people get it, people care, people understand.

We're trying now to convey this message even beyond the borders of the United States. I have the honor of representing the United States at a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in Vienna. And I went to a meeting, and there were representatives of 58 countries talking about how they deal with hate crimes. And in many of those countries, law enforcement doesn't have the role that they have here in the sense that they are a negative force and not a positive force. Our experience here, pretty much across the board, is that law enforcement is well intentioned and wants to do the right thing. Sometimes they understand better than other times what the right thing is.

I'll give you one little example for that before I close. We've had cases where the police officer was so offended by what say that he didn't want to write down the exact epithets or the exact graffiti, because it was -- he wrote "slurs," "epithets." And when the DA went to prosecute, it wasn't as strong a case because the DA didn't have the exact language that the jury would have said, "Ah, this is really bad." So part of the training is to tell the officers be truthful and straight and write what you see, because that goes to educating people as to the impact it can have.

But our experience generally has been that people want to do the right thing. Task forces like this are created because people want to do the right thing. And we would like to try to help people do the right thing and grapple with these issues together and deal with the infection and try to minimize the cost and keep it from spreading. Thanks. I'm happy to answer any questions.

MS. ORTIZ:

Before I take questions, I just wanted to -- Legislator Gregory asked me to extend his apologies. He got a call for a pressing matter in his district, so he had to leave. So he's really sorry, so he wanted me to apologize to Robin and company and also to Sandra, but thank you. But you've also met with him previously, so I'm sure your message was relayed already. David, did you have a question or comment?

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you very much for coming to present. And thank you, Steve, for devoting a career to such an important organization and such an important cause. One of the things that -- I mean, I love analogies, I really do, but when you say that hate is a virus, a virus will always be around, right, you can never get rid of it. So I just want to clarify if that's what you're going for. It's not -- you can't take -- it's true. I mean, you can't get rid of a virus. You know, like, for your first example, political leaders, well, we could treat one, but eventually, another one of those are going to come around if we don't real get rid of the problem.

MR. FREIDMAN:

I've heard Abe Foxmann, who's ADL's national director say, "I wish some day we could go out of business. We've been around for almost a century fighting hate and we're still doing it and it shows no signs of going away." You know, in an ideal world, sure, I think that this is as intractable a virus in some ways as, you know, finding a cure for cancer or the common cold. Hopefully some day we will, but in the mean time, it's just really, really hard work to keep it at bay. And I don't have a happier answer than that. You know, some day maybe we'll -- some day maybe we will go out of business, some day maybe you'll go out of business. That would be wonderful.

MR. KILMNICK:

I mean -- I mean, I guess we're going to talk. I mean, I do think, you know, according to the Climate of Fear Report that perhaps some of the way that we're hearing at things and looking at things we may be a little bit off. For example, you said those that are infected we need to treat with these remedies. I would argue that we're all infected and it's not just those that are infected. We all live in -- if you read the report, we're all living in the same world and the same climate to different degrees perhaps.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Yeah, I think it's fair to say the County is infected. What I meant by that, and maybe it wasn't -- I didn't convey it well -- the people who are the victims clearly -- you know, we can't necessarily -- we can't do anything to have them -- you know, have the beating not have taken place or the killing or whatever. So the people who are directly affected, you know, we should just offer whatever resources we can, whatever care we can to try to help them heal from it as best we can. But the infection, you know, it's like -- all it takes is one drop of poison to poison a thousand gallons of water. Once it happens, the infection is the system, it's in the bloodstream, if you will, it's out there, and, yeah, everybody's touched by it.

And really the best thing to do about that, I think -- just repeating myself about education -- is to try to teach people as they grow up and as they learn, you know, hate is a learned thing. Hate is not an innate thing. And people channel it from models, whether it's parents or peers or whatever or hate groups. And unlearning is really tough. But that I think is doable.

MR. KILMNICK:

Well, one of the other things that I don't think we've heard at all -- and then I'll really stop -- is that we -- when we've been hearing testimony and some of the presentations tonight, we're hearing it about the other, the white man that may be committing these hate crimes. What about the groups that we're talking about that are victims of hate crimes committing hate crimes against other groups as well.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Hate crimes laws -- the way hate crimes laws are written, the perpetrator can be any race, the victim can be any race or ethnicity or gender or sexual orientation and so forth. It's not -- unfortunately, it goes both ways. The landmark Supreme Court case, which I have the honor of working on an amicus brief, which we won 9-0 back in 1993 was a case where the perpetrators were black and the victim was white. I said that backwards. The perpetrators were white and the victim was black. And they go both ways and they're equally as pernicious. I think in the context of hate groups and extremist activity, a lot of it is tied up with White Supremacy, a lot of it is tied up with this notion of Xenophobia. But in terms of the hate crimes themselves, absolutely.

MS. ORTIZ:

Detective Sergeant Reecks.

DET. SGT. REECKS:

Good evening. Again, thank you for your presentation. I guess the question I have to ask is that with all these suggestions that we have had, and we've been hearing them over and over again, are you finding with the ADL that the counties or the municipalities that have a Hate Crime Unit seem to be the one under the spotlight?

The reason I ask that is because we're calling it what it is out here in Suffolk County. And I believe that is causing attention being paid to the issue versus the county or municipality that does not call it a hate crime. And we can go right to the Lucero case. Within eight minutes we were calling it a hate crime. We did not call it an "unknown Hispanic male stabbed in the middle of the street." And because of that -- and we do report monthly, we do have interpreters, we do do education. And that's almost becoming a burden that -- I'm trying to stay away from defending myself or the Police Department -- but I'm finding that because we do all of that and because we've

been in business for 30 years, as you know -- it started out as an Anti-Semetic Task Force. I'm sure the ADL is quite aware of how this County has been the forefront of that. It almost appears to become a negative because we're doing what you are -- four out of the five suggestions, I can't help you with the politicians. Because those are being done it seems like that's a spotlight. And I was curious if the departments that are reporting or the municipalities that are not reporting it, does that mean it's not a problem and you're not sitting in front of their task force explaining the whole situation?

MR. FREIDMAN:

I think that what you are highlighting is probably a flaw on our part that we aren't giving you credit where credit is due, because by and large, I don't think that Suffolk's image is being tarnished because of the work that you are doing with the Hate Crimes Unit. It's being tarnished because unfortunately these crimes are happening and are getting a lot of high-profile publicity and there is that climate out there which more than is really fair for the Police Department to take on to try to deal with by itself. I mean, there's a role for the Police Department to play, but it's something the police -- there's no way the police can solve that single handedly, and I think everybody understands that.

No, I don't think -- I think that -- it's one of those questions where if you've shone the light on any particular Police Department or any particular community, you would probably find that community was dealing with hate crimes, some better than others. Suffolk came to attention for reasons you all know, because of this particularly high profile horrible tragedy, violation crime. But if we are doing our job right, then the communities that really should be getting the most credit are the ones that confronting it head on.

And we do, as far as I know, as best we can acknowledge with appreciation the work that law enforcement combating hate crime. It's been a source of pride for us that we work with a lot of the associations like, IACP, International Association of the Chiefs of Police, and other law enforcement agencies. And we have, you know, a specific website just for information for law enforcement and work a lot with coalitions of law enforcement agencies to promote hate crimes laws.

One of the major -- less well known, but one of the major coalition partners on the Hate Crimes Legislation in Washington is -- major law enforcement agencies are all supportive of it. To the extent that we can do our job better, we should. To the extent that there are improvements that can be made in the training, reaching more people making sure everybody's getting it, making sure people are refreshed, make sure people have it -- be enforced, making sure they have the resources, even a card to remind them of what their bias indicators are or other tools. Happy to sit down and talk and figure out how we can do it better, happy to give you credit where credit is due and happy also to say I think we're all in this together.

I'm not looking for an adversary, I'm looking for a partnership to say, we both have the same goals, ADL and law enforcement when it comes to hate crimes, we both are interested in trying to make the enforcement of hate crimes laws the most effective it can be. And to the extent that we can come up with resources, tools, materials, ideas, we would love to try to brainstorm together. We're not in the business of trying to -- of trying to hold law enforcement up for criticism. We're in the business of trying to say, "This is really, really important job that you're doing. We appreciate that you're doing it and what you are doing, and anything we can help you do it, we'd like to try."

MR. KILMNICK:

If I could -- you know, I believe why the task force was formed was because we're supposed to seek out the tensions that are causing these hate crimes. So, you know, we're here because eight minutes later, you had to report something as a hate crime, you know, not because you did it eight minutes later. And so I think that is important to point out is that's why we're here. We're here, at least from what I could understand, you know, from all the first story reports that we have where people are being run off the roads, stones, bottles being thrown at them, beaten with baseball bats, pepper spray BB guns, that's why we're here. Not perhaps how fast we report something as a hate

crime. We have to get to why this is all happening.

MR. MEYER:

I was just going to add something to Steve's response. And let me just -- in the spirit of full disclosure, while Steve can count his association with ADL in the number of years, I can count mine in the numbers of months. So I come as a newcomer. I know you have you have one newcomer to the task force tonight. I'm a relatively newcomer to the ADL, not to these issues necessarily.

I think there is something, and I've only become more aware of it in this last number of months, it does distinguish Suffolk County, not unique in our experience around the country, that's for sure, so not to single you out, but the role that elected officials have played in Suffolk County has certainly been a variable that has been extremely negative in the course of events that have taken place. Causal, absolutely not. But climate setting, absolutely, yes. And to a certain extent, you are going to -- to a certain extent, it makes all the more important -- and perhaps the burden of -- not of proof -- but raises the bar for what a Police Department has to do to help address these issues, what a school system has to do to address these issues.

When the climate -- at least the third part of that triangle, at least for the time being, is suspect in the sense of a lot of doubt in the community about where, you know, elected official or some of them, probably only a few of them, you know, where they are in this picture. And I think there's tremendous opportunities, some that you've already taken advantage of and pursued, you know, obviously, actively, but some perhaps that you haven't that both in terms of training in the law enforcement area, certainly education, both of kids, of teachers, of school administrators, all those resources, all those tools are available to you from lots of different places. But I think to a certain extent, you're going to have to bolster -- you're going to have to build your strengths as well as try to deal with the weaknesses that you've found in the community. You have some strengths. Those are your opportunities to build, and you have to build them doubly hard if there's some other weak points that perhaps don't respond to some of these other issues.

MS. ORTIZ:

I just want to ask, in the interest of time, because in fairness to our stenographer who has no one here to relieve her, let's keep it to question and answer. And you know we're going to have plenty of time as a group to share our thoughts and add for our final report. Rabbi Moss.

RABBI MOSS:

Question. Steve, my question to you is are you working with refining the Hate Crimes Law as it currently is? Certainly Sergeant Reecks has expressed this many times, I've experienced this in the work that I've done through Stop Bias, the law is wonderful. Many of us here were instrumental in getting this law passed, and yet it has created more frustrations in terms of actual litigation and prosecution, I should say, because you now have to prove intention. And a perfect example is a couple of years ago when this young man was confronted with a Menorah and a Christmas Tree and he kicked out the Menorah. And Sergeant Reecks couldn't charge him with a hate crime because he said, "I have no problem with Jews. It just was easier kicking down the Menorah than the Christmas Tree." I'm generalizing, of course. But the need to prove intention now has created many problems in terms of charging and prosecution. And I'm wondering -- because, actually, we want to begin a campaign regarding this here from Suffolk County, because proving much more is proving very frustrating in terms of actually seeing the pursuit of hate crimes and the definition of those when they're committed.

MR. FREIDMAN:

It's a tough question. The reason it's a tough question has to do with the First Amendment to the Constitution. It's a tough question because the intent requirement, the targeting requirement, targeting the person because of race, religion, ethnicity and so forth, is how you get passed, how we get passed arguing that you're not punishing somebody's expression, that you're punishing -- you're targeting the person because of their status, then that makes it -- that is what makes it constitutionally sound from the point of view of the Supreme Court decision.

So we know the law is crafted that way, we know it's not an easy thing to prosecute, we recognize the challenge. On the other hand, there is some value to it. Hate crimes prosecution shouldn't necessarily be easy. Hate crimes prosecutions are serious. And the fact is there's an enhanced penalty for a hate crime means that it's more than just sort of -- that there is an element of targeting and an animus associated with it.

But I know that's not a satisfactory answer. I want to think some more about what can be done to not get in the way of prosecutions which are legitimate prosecutions based on the evidence. I don't have a good answer for that one off the top of my head. There is a complication. There is a constitutional complication with doing that. But there may be things we can do to take another look at it to see if there are intermediate steps we can take.

RABBI MOSS:

Because the sad part of it is that it loses the opportunity then to educate I'm not talking about punishments -- educate the person who has committed a crime that's hurtful to somebody else regardless of why they did that. And that's the sad part, because before the Hate Crimes Bill, we had a lot more people coming to Stop Bias, okay? And now those are incidents, and incidents just get lost in the wind somewhere and we never see those people and have the opportunity to maybe bring them a sensitivity and awareness to change them in the way they behave. And that's very sad.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Stop Bias only applies to crimes and not incidents, which can't be proven as hate crimes, is that the way it's set up?

RABBI MOSS:

Basically. I mean, sometimes we will get people like. But basically it's through the course in Probation, so you have to be charged. And that's sad. But that's another issue. We're very frustrated, as you are also, and we're at that.

And the last thing I just want to is -- you don't have to put this on the record if you don't want to, take a rest -- just to say my father was on the National Board of ADL through B'Nai B'rith, that he was involved with in the City, I know the work and it's wonderful. But the sad part, if I may say personally, is that here in Suffolk County, we've lost the ADL Office, the American-Jewish Congress Office and the American-Jewish Committee Office, and that's sad.

So when you say you want to partner with us, please come back to Suffolk County. What you're doing here and the offers you make are wonderful, but we need your presence, and that's sad. It's all about money, and that's sad -- you know, that's what it's all about. But this happened many years ago as well. All of these organizations were part of the Anti-Bias Task Force when we first formed in the early 1990's. And the Hagedorn Foundation, we also welcome as well to be a part of the task force.

MR. FREIDMAN:

I will let Ron speak to that. But I know even though we're not physically here, we're with you. And it's true, not just Long Island, we're doing this in other communities too. We have offices that serve, you know, multiple cities. And we have people who spend their evenings and spend their days on the roads, on trains, getting places, representing us, helping out people. It's not a unique situation to Long Island. And I wish we did have the office here still.

You know, I do the commute from Ronkonkoma to Manhattan every day. If I had an office on Long Island, maybe I wouldn't have to do that every day. But we are -- for example, we work with -- just in -- you know, we have an office Iowa that -- sorry in Omaha that serves three or four different states, and our directors spend a lot of time traveling. We have an office in Atlanta that serves three or four different states. We have an office in San Francisco that serves the entire Bay area.

We do it. And we do it thanks partly to lay leaders, thanks partly to staff who are willing to put in the hours and travel and help make contacts and work with people. And we do -- we try to project our presence physically beyond where our offices are and do trainings, work with police, work with community leaders, work with Legislators and so forth to the best that we can. You know, we are out there doing it. And it's not a hardship to come out to Long Island and be with you and help you and do what we can in the schools and do what we can with police and do what we can with communities. And, yeah, it would be easier if we were here, but sometimes, you know, you do with what you can the best you can.

MS. ORTIZ:

I'm sorry. We're going to have to try to bring this to a close because my stenographer is struggling. Laura has a question.

MS. AHEARN:

Quick question and the last question because she's in charge now. There was a little bit of a discussion about the difficulty with prosecuting hate crimes, and I just would like to ask you if you could just give this some thought, because proving underlying motivation seems to be somewhat of an impossibility, especially if an alleged offender lawyers-up very quickly. So could you give some thought to that and maybe we can touch base with you again on some recommendations? Because the task force does have to make recommendations Legislatively.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Sure. Be happy to.

MS. ORTIZ:

I want to thank everyone for their help. And I'm sure you all will be open for us to reach out to you if we require any further information or assistance as we work toward compiling our final report. And we will be -- I'll be sending out e-mails to everyone that's here -- I think everyone here is on my distribution. We will be meeting several more times and hearing from other organizations. We'll be hearing from the LGTB community, from the Muslim community, other organizations that deal with law enforcement on this issues, other municipalities that have seemed to have success in this area. So we'll be -- the dialog will continue. So thank you so much for coming.

REV. BARRETT:

I just want to say though that all of our meetings are public, they're all open. We don't have any closed meetings.

MS. ORTIZ:

Just for the record, because I know I spoke to Patrick when I came in -- if the message gets out there, our meetings are open meetings. So you can come and sit in on any meeting that we hold.

MR. FREIDMAN:

Thank you. Thank you for what you are doing.

MS. ORTIZ:

Thank you.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:25 P.M.*)

{ } DENOTES BEING SPELLED PHONETICALLY