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SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE

William H. Rogers Legislative Building
Legislative Auditorium
725 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, New York

June 24, 2009
2:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

LEGISLATOR DUWAYNE GREGORY, Chairperson

REPORTED BY:

THERESA PAPE, Court Reporter/Notary Public

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S :

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5 D R . D A V I D S C O T T K I L M N I C K

6 R A B B I S T E V E N M O S S

7 L A U R A A . A H E R N

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9 R E V E R E N D J O A N N B A R R E T T

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12 A L S O P R E S E N T :

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14 T I M L A U B E

15 M A X B E L L R O S E

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2 (WHEREUPON, this proceeding
3 convened at 2:00 p.m. Off-the-record
4 discussions ensued, after which the
5 following transpired:)

6 (Time noted: 2:13 p.m.)

7 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: We're going to
8 convene, get started. We're going to
9 wait for some of the other members.
10 We're making phone calls to make sure
11 they come.

12 For those of you who don't know who
13 I am, I'm DuWayne Gregory. I'm the
14 chairman of the Hate Crimes Task Force.

15 What I want to do, just as a way
16 of -- by way of introduction, I just
17 wanted us to go around and kind of
18 introduce ourselves. It's the first
19 time any of us have met each other.

20 We'll start with Renee.

21 MS. ORTIZ: Hi. Renee Ortiz, chief
22 deputy clerk here at the Suffolk County
23 Legislature.

24 MS. AHERN: Laura Ahern, executive
25 director of Parents for Megan's Law and

2 the Crime Victims Center.

3 MR. KILMNICK: David Kilmnick, CEO
4 of Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth.

5 MR. MARMO: Robert Marmo, I'm the
6 chief planner for the Suffolk County
7 Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

8 REVEREND BARRETT: Reverend JoAnn
9 Barrett, I am co-chair of the Suffolk
10 County Anti-Bias Task Force.

11 RABBI MOSS: Rabbi Steve Moss,
12 chair of the Suffolk County Alliance
13 Commission.

14 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Great.
15 Thank you.

16 We have some other members,
17 Reynolds Hawkins who is not here
18 at the moment, Mohsen Elsayed,
19 Chief Inspector Ty Mojica,
20 Reverend Roderick Pearson, and we have a
21 member from -- I'm not sure exactly if
22 he'll be an appointment, but we'll have
23 someone representative in the Hate
24 Crimes Unit.

25 Just as a point of clarity, in the

2 original bill that I proposed, we had a
3 member from the district attorney's
4 office. They had asked that they be
5 recused because of their prosecution of
6 the hate crimes. So, you know, we
7 respected their request, so they will
8 not be participating on the task force.
9 But, certainly, they will be here
10 present, and that's something that I
11 think that we're going to discuss a
12 little later on.

13 But, at this point, we have
14 Tim Laube, the -- the clerk. He's going
15 to actually give us our oaths -- swear
16 us in as members of the task force.

17 MR. LAUBE: If you would, please
18 stand and raise your right hand and
19 repeat after me.

20 (WHEREUPON, sworn oaths were
21 performed.)

22 MR. LAUBE: Thank you.

23 (WHEREUPON, Mr. Laube left the
24 Legislative Auditorium.)

25 (Time noted: 2:16 p.m.)

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LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Also, just as a little bit of housekeeping, we had some oaths that all of you should have received. If not -- if you haven't had an opportunity to send them back yet, we're going to pass these around and ask that you fill them out. And we'll give them to either Max or Renee Ortiz, and they'll have them notarized, but make sure that you get one; okay?

All right. I don't think that we're going to be here too long today, but I wanted us to meet as a way of introduction and kind of get the ball rolling on the task that we have at hand.

This task force was a creation that I felt was important after the killing of Mr. Lucero, the incident in Patchogue. And given some of the history that we've seen in Suffolk County, you know, with particular legislation and some of the animosity and debate, if you will, regarding

2 immigration in Suffolk County, I thought
3 after that incident that it's important
4 and imperative that we have this
5 discussion. And I thought the perfect
6 means to do that would be to have a task
7 force such as this, people from the
8 community from different walks of life,
9 different backgrounds that could provide
10 input into this very important issue.

11 So that's -- that's why I -- the
12 importance for me putting this
13 legislation forward. So I just want to
14 be -- I want to thank you for your
15 participation. I'm very appreciative,
16 and I'm sure that all the residents of
17 Suffolk County appreciate your efforts
18 as well.

19 And it actually goes beyond Suffolk
20 County, you know. The one thing that
21 I've learned since, you know, putting
22 this bill forward is that, in the
23 process, you know, we got invited to
24 different -- talked to different people
25 from -- you know, from Brooklyn and

2 Manhattan and Nassau and other places.
3 You know, people really look in Suffolk
4 County and -- and they have an opinion
5 that we are not tolerant of those that
6 are different than -- than us, or --
7 the -- the -- the generally conceived
8 perception of who us are in Suffolk
9 County. And that was alarming to me, it
10 really gave me the strength to follow
11 through on this initiative.

12 So I think, you know, saying that,
13 you know, the broader population at
14 large is really looking at what we're
15 doing today or going to be doing with
16 this task force. So I'm really
17 appreciative of your efforts and look
18 forward to the final product.

19 I wanted to hear --

20 Well, before I do that, one of the
21 main things that I felt that was
22 important, that we send is a message to
23 the community that, you know, we -- hate
24 crimes in Suffolk County is not
25 tolerated and that as a community and as

2 a task force and as a legislature and
3 elected officials, that we send the
4 right message that those who are victims
5 of hate crimes, that they -- that they
6 will be fully prosecuted. And I think
7 in the past that image, that impression
8 wasn't necessarily so. And I think
9 that's the message that we should send.
10 I think that's probably the most
11 impact -- the most important impact that
12 we'll get from it.

13 Obviously, we're going to look into
14 what hate crimes and how we investigate
15 hate crimes and the numbers and all
16 those types of things. But I think as
17 far as -- from the victim's standpoint,
18 I think it's important that we send that
19 message to them so they can feel
20 comfort -- comfortable in coming forward
21 to -- to this forum or their local
22 pastor or whoever and report, you know,
23 an incident that they may have been a
24 part of or -- or that they know of.

25 So I think it's important that we

2 understand that and that we not kind of
3 get beyond the scope of what -- you
4 know, what we should be trying to do
5 here.

6 So I just wanted to get your
7 feedback -- your thoughts on that
8 individually as to what you see your
9 individual mission is, or how you feel
10 that you can contribute to the task
11 force.

12 And I'll start with you,
13 Rabbi Moss.

14 RABBI MOSS: First, let me say
15 that -- oh, press this button here?

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yeah. We call
17 that -- for those of you who are not
18 familiar with the legislature, we call
19 that the anti-Romaine -- he likes to
20 ramble on. So we make it more difficult
21 just by pressing the button.

22 RABBI MOSS: Okay.

23 First, I do want to thank you,
24 legislator, for this initiative. There
25 are, as you know, many programs, many

2 agencies, organizations throughout the
3 county that have been working for many
4 years in this area. But I've always
5 believed that there can -- cannot be
6 enough of them in showing the effort and
7 sending out, as you very, you know,
8 succinctly just said, a very, very clear
9 and powerful message that intolerance
10 will not be tolerated.

11 Actually, of course, there's a --
12 we need to move away from the word
13 "tolerances." It's really a word by
14 some people by saying, Well, I just kind
15 of put up with you. And I know you,
16 certainly, and no one here means it that
17 way.

18 But I'm glad to see that we're now
19 adding, from the legislative
20 perspective, another weapon to be
21 sending out this message and to be
22 saying to those who think about these
23 crimes or commit these crimes that once
24 again, people are coming together and
25 saying, What you do is not a part of our

2 community, and we are not going to
3 accept that, and we are going to stand
4 strong against that.

5 As you do know, in addition to
6 being part of the Human Rights
7 Commission, I'm also very much a part
8 and a founder of the county's Anti-Bias
9 Task Force, the establishment of task
10 forces in the towns, an educational
11 program called "Stop Bias" through the
12 district attorney and probation offices.

13 So I'm very curious to know, is
14 this -- where does this fit in and what
15 exactly our role is in addition to being
16 another group and to send out the
17 message? I mean, we would -- of course,
18 this will be defined as we go along, but
19 what you see, the role that we're going
20 to play.

21 I'm assuming that it's not
22 programmatic. That's the Anti-Bias Task
23 Force, there's another agencies (sic),
24 there's some represented here today,
25 developed programs, and are reactive and

2 proactive in that regard. So I'm very
3 interested in that.

4 And from what you're saying is, is
5 that -- are we to be an oversight on
6 to -- the police department's
7 activities, is it just to that, or is it
8 more to that in -- than that in terms of
9 what we're going to be doing?

10 But I'm looking forward to this,
11 and I thank you very much.

12 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

13 Just to make a comment on your last
14 statement.

15 We're not going to oversee the --
16 the police department. I think we'll
17 look into some of their -- their -- the
18 way they investigate, as I said, hate
19 crimes. You know, look at the numbers,
20 the process, the procedures.

21 We'll actually have a member of the
22 hate crimes bureau as a part of this
23 committee -- this task force. And I
24 think that's important. I understand it
25 can get tricky at certain points, and

2 I've had this discussion with other
3 people, but I felt it was important that
4 we have a presence with the people that
5 are actually investigate --
6 investigating the hate crimes.

7 As well as we have Laura here and
8 her agency, they actually represent the
9 victims. So I think it's good to have
10 both sides of that -- of the issue, but
11 certainly we have to have a candid
12 review of how we do things and are we
13 doing it correctly.

14 And -- and if so, that's -- that's
15 why we have Mr. Marmo in the -- in
16 the -- in the -- the Criminal Justice
17 Coordinating Council. They're going to
18 actually be doing the report for us.
19 And in that report, I -- I suspect we'll
20 have recommendations. And part of those
21 recommendations will be changes to
22 whether we -- maybe to the way we
23 investigate or conduct our
24 investigations, or maybe changes to --
25 to -- to the law. But, you know, we'll

2 see -- you know, we'll feel that out as
3 we go along.

4 But certainly we're going to look
5 at everything. And if we have to make
6 recommendations -- well, the
7 recommendations will go to the
8 legislature, but we'll see. You know,
9 we'll see how we do this.

10 RABBI MOSS: Because, you know,
11 certainly there are two parts to the
12 issue.

13 One is investigative work.

14 But the other part, as many of us
15 know -- all of us know here, is -- is
16 that there is almost an ingrained
17 unfortunate, based upon historical
18 experience by certain groups within
19 the -- our communities, a resistance to
20 report crimes of things done to them for
21 various reasons.

22 And so whatever is felt as part of
23 the -- the need to go out and reach out
24 to those communities that you mentioned,
25 and that would be if that was also part

2 of this task force's work to be able to
3 demonstrate to everyone that everyone
4 has a right to justice.

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.
6 Absolutely.

7 REVEREND BARRETT: Well, I'm not
8 really sure what my role will be. I
9 think that I need some more time to kind
10 of clarify that.

11 Just to -- I am from the
12 Inter-Faith Anti-Bias Task Force in the
13 county. And as Rabbi Moss had said, we
14 do programs and we're interested in that
15 work, so we could be a great liaison in
16 the activities that are going on.

17 I think, for myself, to get a lot
18 more information to clarify the exact
19 nature of the situation, the extent of
20 the nature -- you know, what's really
21 out there, I -- I see that as a lot of
22 this task force. And I'm hoping to help
23 participate with that to get a little
24 more honest --

25 We -- we reach out to, like, the

2 town levels in trying to get the
3 Anti-Bias Task Force active on the town
4 levels and are having a hard time doing
5 that in keeping them active. It's the
6 interest level. You know, how
7 interested is the community in
8 supporting this work, you know.

9 Also, with the schools, the
10 systemic problems and the way the
11 schools are distribute- -- you know,
12 divided up and what's going on in the
13 county that -- there's a lot of areas of
14 the county where this problem has helped
15 to foster.

16 You know, and so -- so to be of
17 service in helping to look at those
18 issues and bring them to the forefront
19 more. So -- not so much to blame
20 anybody, so we can clean it up.

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right. Okay.
22 Thank you.

23 Do you have any --

24 MR. MARMO: Sure.

25 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- comments or

2 suggestions here --

3 MR. MARMO: Yeah, I can just tell
4 you --

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- that you
6 want to give?

7 MR. MARMO: Just a quick rundown.

8 Yes, hi. The Criminal Justice
9 Coordinating Council has served the
10 purpose in the county of doing -- really
11 doing reports, doing evaluations studies
12 that have allowed the policymakers to
13 make good informed decisions in terms of
14 criminal justice issues.

15 So, historically, over the years,
16 we've done these type of topical reports
17 that we try to, you know, give you all
18 the information that's factual, that's
19 based on good, sound research methods.
20 And that allows you, then, to look at
21 what the problem is, how do I best
22 address it, and what would work for
23 Suffolk County.

24 So, historically, that's what we've
25 done, and that's what we would plan to

2 do in -- in helping out this task force.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Great. Thank
4 you.

5 DR. KILMNICK: I would also like to
6 thank you for your leadership on -- on
7 forming the -- the task force.

8 And what I see as my role here
9 on -- on the task force, I kind of
10 compare it to when I'm at the
11 organization and talking with staff
12 about the difference between inreach and
13 outreach, when we had a program. And
14 people want to let -- you know, think
15 that they're doing advertising to let
16 people know about the program, but
17 they're only telling people that are
18 already coming to other programs.

19 And so what I see the role of this
20 task force is to really hear from the
21 people about -- you know, through public
22 forums, I guess, and town hall type of
23 meetings about what's really going on
24 out in the community, what are some of
25 the barriers, perhaps, to reporting

2 what's happening to them in the
3 community. It may not necessarily be
4 what everybody thinks is the police. It
5 could be other stuff. And then, you
6 know, based upon what we hear from the
7 people's stories, because I think that's
8 the most important, you know, then, as a
9 task force, I think, that we can come up
10 with some recommendations to help remedy
11 that and -- and help all the people
12 in -- in Suffolk County.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Thank
14 you.

15 MS. AHERN: As a representative of
16 victims, actually, for over a decade, I
17 see my role on this task force in many
18 different ways.

19 But, more specifically, in Suffolk
20 County, we receive referrals directly
21 from the police department for every
22 victim of a violent crime. So if a
23 victim wants advocacy and support, our
24 agency does follow up, work with them,
25 makes multiple referrals to existing

2 agencies that exist in the county. But
3 that is -- we see -- we see the victim's
4 perspective, and also we see law
5 enforcement perspective. Because often,
6 to a victim, there may be elements
7 that -- for them, there's a feeling that
8 something was a hate crime. And then
9 with law enforcement, they're dealing
10 with a law.

11 So as Legislator Gregory had said a
12 little while ago, we have situations
13 where we know, the victim knows, all of
14 us know that yes, this is a hate crime.
15 However, the law prevents everybody from
16 moving forward to -- to prosecute it,
17 and it should be prosecuted.

18 So I see my role significantly
19 in -- in that arena as well, because I
20 have a lot of experience statewide with
21 helping to -- to shape laws to be more
22 effective.

23 Also, as David had said, in
24 evaluating inreach and outreach -- as a
25 crime victims' center here in Suffolk

2 County, we did a tremendous amount of
3 outreach after the horrible incident in
4 Patchogue, and we had a tremendous
5 amount of difficulty reaching out.

6 We have bilingual advocates, and
7 they walked the streets, went into the
8 bodegas, spoke with people in the
9 community, went to agencies, and we --
10 we kept pushing and hammering to try to
11 get the information out there. And we
12 did have a number of cases that came
13 into the agency as a result of that, but
14 I think it's really important to
15 evaluate what existing outreach efforts
16 are out there. To evaluate not only
17 their existence, but exactly how are
18 they doing that outreach and their
19 effectiveness. Because outreach is --
20 you could be doing outreach by walking
21 around, you can do outreach through the
22 churches, you could do -- there's so
23 many different potentials for doing
24 that outreach. So we have to evaluate
25 that.

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LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Great.
Thank you.

Renee.

MS. ORTIZ: As an administrative
role -- administrative is what -- the
role I play here at the legislature, so
I'm often behind the scenes.

But I think my experience in county
government, having been about six years
now, I understand the various entities
within the county. And I hope that I
can bring that knowledge to the table
with this task force to try and review
the -- the currently existing
organizations or entities like the Human
Rights Commission, the Anti-Bias Task
Force, our Hate Crimes Bureau, and we
can re- -- evaluate their roles. And if
there needs to be an alternative role by
some of these entities, if they're being
given the proper tools to work on this
issue and in addressing crimes of this
sort.

Also, outside of the county, before

2 I became a county employee and worked in
3 government, I worked very closely in the
4 immigrant community and I created a
5 coalition to look at services for
6 immigrants and to evaluate needs or lack
7 of services and tried to fill voids.
8 And I think through that work I was able
9 to build a network with several people
10 who are here today, and people that are
11 still very, very closely involved with
12 the immigrant community. And I know
13 that, you know, our immigrants are not
14 the only ones that are victims of hate
15 crimes, but right now, they are the --
16 the primary targets.

17 So I hope I can bring some of that
18 knowledge and some of the experience and
19 the relationships I've created in that
20 community to help us evaluate and just
21 create a really, really good rapport and
22 try and carry out some of the
23 recommendations.

24 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Thank
25 you.

2 I think the -- probably a critical
3 component of this task force is going to
4 be our public hearing. So I felt that
5 it's important that we kind of get the
6 discussion moving on that.

7 We're going to schedule four public
8 hearings, so I'm going to be looking for
9 feedback from the task force as to where
10 you think it might be appropriate. If
11 you have a certain facility that might
12 be more conducive to doing the type of
13 public hearings that we're looking to
14 do, please let me know.

15 Do you have any thoughts on that as
16 of right now?

17 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

18 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Does anyone
19 have any thoughts on that?

20 MS. AHERN: Are you looking for
21 locations first?

22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yeah, well,
23 maybe a geographical region. You know,
24 whether it's, you know, maybe the Town
25 of Islip, or Brookhaven, or -- then we

2 can kind of narrow it down from there.

3 I don't necessarily want to focus
4 everything on Patchogue, considering
5 that, you know, it's gotten its due
6 attention. But it -- I mean, I -- I
7 think there are other locations
8 throughout the county that we may want
9 to reach out to that we may be able to
10 get some feedback from.

11 MS. AHERN: Can Bobby Reecks make a
12 comment about maybe the concentrations
13 of -- of the areas in the county that
14 have higher concentrations of reported
15 hate crimes?

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Well, he's
17 here just to attend today --

18 MS. AHERN: Okay.

19 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- but we'll
20 certainly seek out his -- his guidance
21 and advice at a later point.

22 MS. AHERN: Oh, okay.

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: I don't want
24 to put him on the spot.

25 DR. KILMNICK: While I think

2 geographic location is -- is one factor
3 to consider, another factor is to go
4 where the communities are and where the
5 communities feel safe to come out and
6 talk so that we get a -- a true
7 representation of all the different
8 communities affected by hate crimes.

9 And so -- you know, as -- as a
10 representative of the Gay, Lesbian,
11 Bisexual, and Transgender community, I
12 would offer the Long Island Gay,
13 Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Community
14 Center to be a place where, you know,
15 folks would feel comfortable to come
16 down and -- and -- and talk. And we
17 could hear from other members about, you
18 know, where else in -- throughout the
19 county that communities would feel safe
20 about coming down and talking about
21 this.

22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: And I think
23 that's probably the -- the critical
24 component of this is -- is -- is, you
25 know, since we want to send a message to

2 the victims or potential victims, allow
3 them to feel comfortable enough to come
4 forward. It has to be in an environment
5 that they feel conducive or comfortable
6 coming forward in. So I think location
7 is important, but we want to kind of,
8 you know, hit critical mass and have a
9 place where we can get the most
10 participation, and that's convenient for
11 people's -- you know, if there are
12 transportation issues. So we have some
13 real considerations to consider -- to
14 look at.

15 MS. AHERN: What about public
16 schools?

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Certainly.

18 MS. AHERN: Can you fill a
19 cafeteria at public schools? Building
20 use form, it's simple to do.

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Well, we'll
22 have to work it out with public schools.

23 MS. AHERN: I'm sorry. I offered
24 public schools. All we'd have to do is
25 fill out a building use form, and

2 there's no charge for that.

3 RABBI MOSS: I was going to say, I
4 think it's very important that we
5 include the East End, out in the
6 Riverhead area, which would help also
7 because, certainly, Southampton is one
8 of the critical locations right now.

9 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

10 RABBI MOSS: I mean, obviously, you
11 could do -- you could do -- what if we
12 have one in the North Fork, one in the
13 South Fork, but we -- quite often, and
14 sadly enough, is that the East End is --
15 is kind of seen as a -- as a nonentity
16 and, certainly, is a very important one
17 and part of the entire county.

18 Recently, our Human Rights
19 Commission was trying to develop a
20 program. We would have our monthly
21 meetings in different locations. And we
22 identified for the -- for the
23 forthcoming year meeting, beginning
24 after the summer recess in September,
25 one would be in the Riverhead area,

2 either the Riverhead Seat where the
3 county government is, or actually we had
4 a recent meeting at the Cornell
5 Educational Center right there in
6 Riverhead itself. And then, also,
7 within the Brentwood/Wyandanch area, I
8 think, is critical, as well as one in
9 Patchogue, let us say. Or if we want to
10 also -- on the north end of Brookhaven
11 Town closer to Farmingville.

12 But we saw those as the four
13 critical areas, both geographically, as
14 well as outreaching out to certain key
15 populations whose voices need to be
16 heard.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

18 DR. KILMNICK: I would just --
19 would -- would like the -- us to keep in
20 mind that for those in the LGBT
21 community, they may not be out to other
22 folks. So showing up at a public school
23 may not be the ideal location to hear
24 from the LGBT community. Because
25 their -- their neighbors could find out,

2 if they're not out to them, and, you
3 know, there's still a lot of bias that
4 exists in terms of discrimination --
5 housing discrimination and -- and
6 employment discrimination.

7 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Thanks.

8 MR. MARMO: (Indicating)

9 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes.

10 MR. MARMO: I was just going to --
11 just going to add that you may want to
12 consider also some other forms of
13 communication for the -- for the
14 populations that the public hearing may
15 not -- they may not be comfortable
16 coming in speaking publicly, but if you
17 offer some other type of -- of way that
18 they can get information to the task
19 force, that might help, whether it's
20 e-mail or whether it's a Web site that's
21 set up to allow people to -- to get
22 access.

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Great.

24 Thank you.

25 RABBI MOSS: Good idea. That's a

2 good idea.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yeah.

4 MS. ORTIZ: I think that's a good
5 idea. And, generally, even just using
6 legislative sessions comparatively, we
7 allow people to submit written testimony
8 and it's -- it's written into the -- the
9 official records. So I think that
10 would -- that wouldn't be something that
11 would be difficult to do.

12 MS. AHERN: Now, if we are going to
13 allow somebody to submit testimony, they
14 would have to have their name and a
15 contact, because we find -- we have
16 anonymous capabilities for reporting in
17 our agency, and if there is a problem
18 and they don't -- there's no way to
19 communicate with them, it's very
20 frustrating. So we need some kind of a,
21 you know, requirement to have contact --
22 follow-up contact.

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

24 MS. ORTIZ: Again, Legislator, we
25 require -- we won't submit it to the

2 record if they don't give us some kind
3 of --

4 MS. AHERN: Okay.

5 MS. ORTIZ: -- contact information.

6 RABBI MOSS: But wouldn't that be
7 self-defeating in terms of some people
8 don't want to be identified or are
9 afraid to --

10 MS. ORTIZ: I was going to say
11 that --

12 RABBI MOSS: I know --

13 MS. ORTIZ: -- it may be up to the
14 discretion of the task force for this --

15 RABBI MOSS: No, I think --

16 MS. ORTIZ: -- particular issue --

17 RABBI MOSS: I think it's vital --

18 MS. ORTIZ: -- because anonymity
19 may be something that we may want to
20 allow.

21 RABBI MOSS: Well, I know the
22 police department now accepts anonymous
23 comments. So if they can, as a criminal
24 justice organ- -- body, I think that we
25 can, all the more so, and I think it's

2 critical in certain key areas. Whether
3 it's day laborers or the gay population
4 or whomever, to ask people to give their
5 name and -- and phone number -- first of
6 all, some people don't have a phone. So
7 I think the -- the idea here of allowing
8 other means of addressing us is very
9 important. And I -- the key is -- I
10 just --

11 I hope you don't mind me saying
12 this, but the Human Rights Commission
13 would hold public hearings, and it got
14 to be very frustrating because people
15 expected us to act on the things that
16 they spoke about.

17 So I think it's very important that
18 we become very serious, not only in
19 these four hearings, which is great, but
20 at what we do with the follow-up is the
21 key. Because that gives us, then, real
22 credence, as well as a sense of
23 sincerity in what we're doing. So I
24 want to make sure that a part of our
25 program is what we do afterward in terms

2 of recommendations that are made.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: But I think
4 there may be the possibility that
5 someone who's a victim comes forward, so
6 we're going to need that information for
7 law enforcement so that they can follow
8 through and investigate.

9 I mean, they may -- like I said,
10 may or may not be -- may not come
11 forward, but just in case they do,
12 somehow we're going to have to send that
13 message. If they don't feel comfortable
14 enough coming to the public hearing,
15 that they -- you know, if they feel
16 comfortable enough to submit a letter or
17 a statement with their information so
18 that we can follow up on that. We don't
19 want a victim to come forward and not
20 have -- you know, forward that
21 information to the appropriate
22 authorities and not have a proper
23 investigation. That would kind of
24 defeat the purpose.

25 But, also, part of the

2 presentation -- excuse me, part of the
3 public hearings are actually going to be
4 presentations by various groups, and
5 that's something that we definitely have
6 to consider.

7 Just in giving the making -- making
8 the -- the task force itself, we
9 could -- it's impossible to incorporate
10 everyone, all the different various
11 interested parties of communities. So I
12 felt it was important that those groups
13 that may or may not feel that they have
14 been represented on the task force
15 itself, that they have the opportunity
16 to come forward and express their
17 concerns about this issue at our public
18 hearings.

19 So I've talked to several groups
20 already, but -- so I want you guys to
21 give some thoughts about that as well.
22 Whether we have groups from the
23 immigration community come forward, or
24 the NAACP or the Asian community or
25 whatever community there may be or

2 organizations, that we give them an
3 opportunity and that they have a stake
4 in this and that -- so that they can
5 have the confidence that -- you know,
6 that we're on their side and that we're
7 listening to them, and this is -- they
8 have a forum to voice their concerns.

9 So if anyone has any -- you know,
10 we're going to be compiling a list, so,
11 you know, give it some thought and I'll
12 have my staff reach out to everyone
13 and -- so that we can -- we can put a --
14 kind of put a schedule together.

15 Okay. Does anyone have any --

16 REVEREND BARRETT: I would like to
17 add that the majority of the hate crimes
18 are being committed by adolescents. So
19 they really should be somebody that we
20 have on our mind that we're -- you know,
21 what's going on in their mind, that
22 they're the ones that are actually going
23 out and committing these crimes. You
24 know, maybe -- the problems might be
25 within the community with all these

2 other groups, but they're the ones that
3 are actually going out and doing it. So
4 we need to hear from them and have them
5 feel comfortable. I don't -- I -- I see
6 some younger kids here, I think that's
7 great, but you don't usually see that --

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

9 REVEREND BARRETT: -- in these
10 types of forums.

11 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right. We
12 do have a member here, who is not
13 present today, who is from the school
14 districts, Reynolds Hawkins, a social
15 worker. So I think he'll give an
16 interesting perspective, but we may want
17 to consider having more professionals
18 from -- you know, regarding youth issues
19 come before us and address their very
20 concern. Is it economics? Is it --

21 Because I would think -- my
22 perception is that younger people are
23 more -- you know, they seem to have more
24 color blind, but it's interesting to --
25 to kind of -- you see the hate crime and

2 it kind of reverses that thought
3 process. So I'd be interested to have
4 someone come forward -- before us and
5 talk about that.

6 MS. AHERN: Is that a Suffolk
7 County statistic, that most -- most hate
8 crimes are committed by juveniles?

9 RABBI MOSS: Yeah.

10 MS. AHERN: Is that a fact?

11 RABBI MOSS: About 70 percent --
12 65 percent between 15 and 19 years of
13 age.

14 REVEREND BARRETT: Yeah.

15 MS. AHERN: Do we have any stats on
16 the age of the victims to go along with
17 that?

18 RABBI MOSS: Yes, they do.

19 MS. AHERN: Is it possible to make
20 that request of somebody who might be
21 sitting out in the audience? Am I
22 allowed to do that?

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: My office will
24 reach out to those -- who has -- the
25 keeper of the knowledge, if you will.

2 REVEREND BARRETT: I know mostly
3 the statistics on New York City, and
4 New York City, they're even higher as
5 far as the percentage that are committed
6 by, you know, that -- that age group.

7 DR. KILMNICK: I don't want to
8 belabor the point, but, you know, those
9 statistics are what we know, and I think
10 part of putting the task force together
11 is what we don't know. And so we have
12 to do whatever we can do to make sure
13 that we reach out to those that haven't
14 told their stories for whatever reason
15 and that we create those environments
16 that allow people to come forward.

17 And I think it's real critical that
18 if someone -- you know, if the only
19 option for them is to -- because they
20 don't feel -- we -- we create these safe
21 environments, but they don't feel
22 comfortable even coming to those, then,
23 great, we have another option for them
24 to submit something on the Web or
25 whatever it may be. But I think we --

2 we really have to do -- you know, do
3 what needs to be done to get to -- so
4 that people's voices are heard, and we
5 hear what's going on so that we can make
6 the recommendations to move past
7 tolerance and even move past acceptance
8 so that Suffolk County could be a place
9 of support and nurturance for all the
10 diversity that exists out here. And
11 it's real critical that we hear from --
12 we know the statistics that exist, but,
13 you know, I believe part of the reason
14 this task force was created, because of
15 all the stories that are untold and that
16 haven't been reported.

17 MS. AHERN: Is there possibly a way
18 for us to designate an individual,
19 maybe, who is in certain situations --
20 it would depend upon who is making the
21 report. Our experience is when somebody
22 makes an anonymous report, it's very
23 difficult to capture the nuances that
24 you want to capture to identify what the
25 problems are. So when it's anonymous

2 and it's in writing, it's impossible
3 because you can't ask those questions
4 that you need to ask, and they may not
5 know how to answer them because they're
6 just making a complaint in writing.

7 So is it possible, if somebody is
8 afraid to come before the entire
9 committee, to designate a person or
10 individuals as -- to rotate, that they
11 would do an intake for anybody who wants
12 to make an anonymous report? Can we
13 make it available on the site that you
14 can make an anonymous report, but you
15 have to come in person and talk to an
16 individual?

17 If somebody who's afraid to say
18 within -- typically, our experience is,
19 when somebody calls as a victim of a
20 hate crime or any other crime, if
21 they're afraid to come forward, we will
22 welcome them. And then, when we're
23 talking to them, they feel much more
24 comfortable because they understand
25 that -- they're not afraid that we're

2 going to cause them a problem. They see
3 all the abundance of services and
4 support they're going to get. But
5 without that one-on-one contact, it's
6 really impossible to really identify
7 what the problem is and even help to --
8 to offer up a solution.

9 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: So you're
10 saying that, at a public -- at a public
11 hearing, we identify the -- you know, if
12 anyone that wants to come forward and
13 make a complaint or -- or anonymous
14 statement, that they can see Joe Smith
15 in the -- you know, in room whatever of
16 the building that we're in?

17 MS. AHERN: Uh-huh.

18 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

19 MS. ORTIZ: Even if we advertise
20 before --

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Advertise,
22 right.

23 MS. ORTIZ: -- before the hearing
24 that this is the standing policy of the
25 task force and this is -- you know,

2 these are the options that you have to
3 report. This way people know before the
4 hearings that these are the options for
5 reporting. Because I think it's im- --
6 you know, you would hope that someone
7 wouldn't falsely submit a -- you know,
8 that they were a victim, but you also
9 want to be able to verify legitimacy of
10 a complaint or an incident, too. So --
11 but we can put it out there beforehand
12 so they know before the hearing that
13 these are the options that they have.

14 RABBI MOSS: Well, I think the
15 advertising of what we're doing is the
16 key to a lot of this.

17 I mean, as Legislator Gregory said
18 at the beginning, is -- is that Suffolk
19 County is getting, in some sense, a bad
20 wrap. And why? Because newspapers and
21 the media are like leaches, you know,
22 grab onto negative stuff that's going
23 on, and the good stuff that goes on also
24 every single day, you very rarely hear
25 about. Those of us who are -- in our

2 organizations, when we do good things,
3 it's very difficult to get people in the
4 media there for those events. But when
5 there's a horrible thing that goes on,
6 they're there in a second.

7 So I think it's important that the
8 word we send out is that there is this
9 group. And then, as Renee just said,
10 is -- is that also to -- to offer to
11 people that there's different venues in
12 which they can make contact with us.

13 And I also see -- I mean,
14 obviously, just talking without really
15 thinking this whole thing through, but
16 as a reaction to what's been so far, I
17 could see two different ways of reacting
18 to people and their voices.

19 One is when a specific person makes
20 a specific complaint about something,
21 it -- it might be, then, appropriate,
22 now that we know who the person is,
23 they're identified, to, then, possibly
24 refer them for -- for further action, or
25 if less to help them with that as a

2 referral service, and after you know the
3 specific situation.

4 But with the anonymous complaints,
5 the value to them is -- is that we might
6 eventually start seeing patterns of
7 misbehavior in a community. And when --
8 and then we can act on those as well.
9 Not specifically dealing with one person
10 and what happened to that person, but to
11 map one person's anonymous voice, add it
12 to other anonymous voices from a
13 community, should then raise red flags
14 within this group and others as well to
15 say something's going on here, and what
16 can we do in terms of community action
17 to things that are going on.

18 So I see it on two different
19 levels. And one does need the person
20 identified, the other doesn't. It just
21 helps to say, something's going on here
22 and -- and let's begin to investigate
23 further into a whole community what's
24 happening.

25 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Great.

2 Thank you.

3 Also with the public hearings,
4 we're going to -- my feeling is that we
5 should have them in the evening so that,
6 you know, peop- -- it's more accessible
7 to people. So we'll -- we'll be talking
8 about that as well. So my office will
9 reach out to everyone and find out, you
10 know, the availabilities. You know,
11 everyone -- I know the summer, and
12 people go on vacation and stuff, but we
13 want to try to wrap this up as quickly
14 as we can but as thorough as we can, and
15 be respectful of everyone's schedules
16 and calendars.

17 So -- so I -- I don't have any more
18 that I -- that I have on the agenda. Is
19 there anything else anyone -- that I've
20 missed that the task force may want to
21 talk about, discuss?

22 MS. AHERN: So are we going to
23 establish a policy for the four
24 reporting sites, or the four hearing
25 sites? And then a policy to ensure that

2 people are aware that there's another
3 alternative other than going to these
4 four sites, you can speak individually
5 with somebody?

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

7 MS. AHERN: Are we going to write a
8 policy up and -- and advertise it, or
9 are we going to put it on a Web site,
10 or -- how are we going to do that?

11 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: What I
12 think -- what we'll do is, I can reach
13 out to the police department. I think,
14 actually, some of the initial public
15 forums that they had in the -- in
16 Patchogue, they had some of the
17 investigators there and representatives
18 from the district attorney's office,
19 they were able to talk to the actual
20 investigators, and they were able to --
21 to investigate some of these crimes.
22 I'm sure Detective Sergeant Reecks can
23 have some feedback, and we'll have
24 feedback on how that went. So I think
25 we can kind of set up a similar format.

2 But yes, advertising is going to be
3 the key. You know, what mediums do we
4 do that, is it through the churches,
5 through the media, through the
6 newspapers? I'm sure there's going to
7 be a lot of word of mouth as well. But
8 whatever medium we use, we're going to
9 have to ensure that that message gets
10 out there so that people feel
11 comfortable coming forward.

12 RABBI MOSS: Are we going to have a
13 meeting before the first hearing for us
14 to discuss procedure and rules of order
15 and stuff like that?

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes. Yes, we
17 will.

18 (WHEREUPON, Reverend Roderick
19 Pearson joined the proceeding in
20 progress.)

21 (Time noted: 2:53 p.m.)

22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: We have
23 Roderick Pearson, who went to my office.

24 REVEREND PEARSON: You had to tell
25 them.

2 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: That's all
3 right.

4 We were about to adjourn, but we
5 wanted to welcome you.

6 So my office will reach out to
7 everyone in probably another week or so.
8 If it's that way, my -- my -- my
9 thoughts are that we can kind of get
10 going with the public hearings in July.
11 And -- you know, so we'll talk about --
12 you know, you'll have some more time to
13 think about where -- you know,
14 locations -- geographic locations or
15 facilities, and then we can kind of put
16 that -- you know, put that in concrete
17 so we can start securing locations and
18 facilities right away. Okay.

19 Reverend Pearson, before we go, do
20 you have anything that you want to say?

21 REVEREND PEARSON: (Head gesture)

22 MS. AHERN: Can I just say
23 something?

24 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Sure.

25 MS. AHERN: It's our experience,

2 we -- we -- when we're offering up
3 services for individuals to come in
4 anonymously -- we have a procedure set
5 up through our advocacy program. And I
6 can provide -- if we're going to have
7 individuals who have been victimized,
8 want to talk to somebody, I have trained
9 advocates I can make available for the
10 days of the hearings to do intakes.
11 Because it is a process and it's a
12 process that -- that is very carefully
13 constructed to ensure that they're
14 feeling supported and not retraumatized
15 by the experience. So I'll offer that
16 up if we wanted to use that.

17 MS. ORTIZ: And I'd like to add
18 that I think that's a great idea. Also,
19 given the -- in my experience with the
20 immigrant community at least, that
21 it's -- that they have an option to
22 speak to a nongovernmental person as
23 well, just for trust issues. So I
24 didn't want to volunteer you, but I'm
25 glad you volunteered yourself.

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LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right.

REVEREND BARRETT: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Thank you.

All right. So having no more
business, we stand adjourned.

Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, the proceeding of the
Suffolk County Legislature Hate Crimes
Task Force adjourned at 2:56 p.m.)

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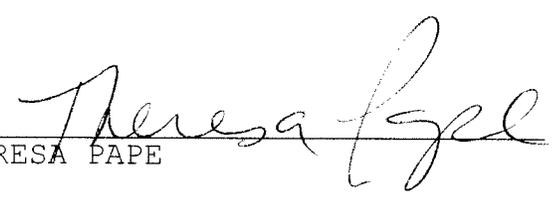
C E R T I F I C A T E

I, THERESA PAPE, a Shorthand Reporter and
Notary Public of the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the foregoing is a true and accurate
transcription of the stenographic notes taken
herein.

I further certify that I am not related to
any of the parties to this action by blood or
marriage; and that I am in no way interested in the
outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand this 24th day of June 2009.



THERESA PAPE