

HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE
OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing of the Hate Crimes Task Force was held at the Suffolk County Legislature in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on January 13, 2010.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator DuWayne Gregory, Chairman/Legislative District #15
Det. Sgt. Robert Reecks, Commanding Officer/Hate Crimes SCPD
Roderick Pearson, President of the Islip Town NAACP
Inspector Aristedes Mojica, Commanding Officer/5th Precinct, SCPD
Reynold Hawkins, Social Worker/Amityville High School
Laura Ahearn, Executive Director/Crime Victims Center
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature; Co-Chair of the Latino Jewish Council
Isabel Sepulveda-de Scanlon

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Legislator Ricardo Montano, Ninth District
Mike Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Rose Maxwell, Aide to Legislator Gregory
Luis Valenzuela, Long Island Immigrant Alliance
Patrick Young, LIIA, CARECEN
Nadia Marin-Molina, LIIA, Workplace Project
Andrea Callan, LIIA, NYCLU
Margarita Espada, Teatro Yerbabruja
Vincent Diaz, NYCLU
Sandra M. Gil, Long Island Immigrant Alliance
Michele Lynch, 1199 SCIU
Charmaine A. Nygaard, Long Island Immigrant Alliance
Debbie Valenzuela, National Association of PR/Hispanic Social Workers
Gilda Ramos, Resident
Enzo Bard, Freeport Community Worklink Center
Maryann Slutsky, Long Island Wins
Lucius Ware, Eastern LI NAACP, Southampton Anti-Bias Task Force
Melissa Sostrin, Long Island Immigrant Alliance, Latino/Jewish Council
Lisa Votino-Tarrant, Eastern LI NAACP
Maria J. Bard, Long Island School of the Americas Watch
Catherine Carballera, Long Island Immigrant Alliance
Cheryl Keshner, Empire Justice Center
Soh Young Lee-Segredo, Korean American Association of Long Island
Dianne M. Rulnick, Neighbors in Support of Immigrants
Maria Contreras, Student, Stony Brook University
Sandy Schreier, Student, Nassau Community College
Anna Cerulo-Jolazo, Student, Stony Brook University
Ed Love, NAACP
Jean M. Kaleda, Resident
R. Greg Maney, LI Teachers for Human Rights
Charlene Obernauer, Long Island Jobs With Justice

VERBATIM MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

(THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:30 PM)

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

All right. Good evening, everyone. I apologize. We were waiting for some of our members so we can start the meeting.

I'm going to ask that Dr. Valenzuela and whoever, I don't know how you want to do the presentation.

MS. SOSTRIN:

It's just scrolling.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. So tonight we -- we've had our public hearings. We've had presentations by some organizations. And tonight is a continuation of that. We're going to have the Long Island Immigration Alliance come before the Task Force. So, we welcome you tonight. We welcome you tonight, Dr. Valenzuela, and Long Island Immigration Alliance. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and concerns about hate crimes here in Suffolk County. I'll end with that and let you begin your presentation.

Before we start, I just want to recognize that we do, in attendance with us today, we have Legislator Rick Montano from the Ninth Legislative District here.

DR. VALENZUELA:

All right. Well, thank you for giving us the opportunity to present before you. We also want to recognize the distinguished members of the Task Force, and, again, share some thoughts with you.

We're going to do this presentation quite differently than the presentations you've had before. We have over 20 presentations. And a statement for each presentation is going -- for each recommendation is going to be made by a representative of a different LIIA member organization.

The recommendations that we submitted to you have a formal introduction. But I just want to share some thoughts. And we're here tonight to present a set of preliminary recommendations that are necessary to begin to address the issues of hate crimes as a systematic problem.

The following statement is intended as a summary of the Alliance's previous testimony before this Task Force and serves to situate our presentation within the appropriate social context.

I also want to mention something about the power point presentation that's going to be playing throughout the evening, and that is a presentation that our Public Education Committee has put together for dispelling and debunking myths about immigrants. Self-explanatory. Okay.

So the recent brutal murder of Marcelo Lucero, a modern day lynching, has shed some light on the terroristic nature of hate crimes. The difference between hate crimes and lynchings is that the latter part of normal life actions that were not punishable, but instead they were seen as one day stories necessary to set indelible examples. Not only are the individual victims of hate crimes made to suffer, but as representatives of socially constructed collectives, their communities are terrorized.

The hateful slaying of Mr. Lucero has also begun to make visible patterns of behavior that make possible or that facilitate horrific violence perpetuated with an out of sight/out of mind sense of impunity against a specific class of individuals that are labeled as "illegals."

The underreporting of hate crimes and the misclassification of reports that are made makes likely the increase of hateful attacks and compromises our public safety. As we have stated previously, hate crimes occur in a social context.

The problem with assigning sole responsibility to the murderers of Marcelo is that it perpetuates a view of hate crimes as being committed by pathological individuals. While legal definitions of hate crimes that are very narrow and specific are needed for law enforcement, they're not sufficient for the elimination of hate crimes.

From our perspective, hate crimes also have to be seen as resulting from a process of dehumanization aided by elected officials, other stakeholders and institutions that transforms a community of individuals who share a characteristic into, for example, "a hoard of invading illegals and anchor babies that take our jobs, covet our women and pollute our lawns."

All of the recommendations that we present here tonight are intended to advance specific actions that can be adopted to help to prevent the occurrence of hate crimes. With the implementation of these recommendations, Suffolk County can quickly make clear that hate crimes are not tolerated and can demonstrate leadership that prioritizes human rights with an emphasis on the values of inclusion, equality and diversity.

Again, in the interest of time, we're going to start reading the recommendations. And I'm also going to ask for those who are going to sit up here, to come forward at this time, also. Thank you.

(PRESENT AT TABLE: Dr. Luis Valenzuela, Greg Maney, Andrea Callan, Nadia Marin-Molina, Patrick Young)

MR. WARE:

My name is Lucius Ware. I am with the Eastern Long Island NAACP and the Southampton Anti-Bias Task Force. I'm reading number one.

"We strongly encourage the members of the Suffolk County Legislature to refrain from introducing or passing any legislation that can be used to spur acts of hatred. The Legislature and all of us must be ever mindful that certain legislation, if passed, can indeed incite hatred. The Suffolk County Legislature can light the way during these times by opposing bigotry, intolerance and hatred of others by promoting and avidly supporting social, political and cultural programs that educate our residents about the truth as opposed to myths." Thank you.

MS. SLUTSKY:

My name is Maryann Slutsky. I am with Long Island Wins.

Recommendation number two: "Pass a welcoming resolution. Throughout the United States hundreds of county and municipal legislatures have issued resolutions that welcome immigrants to their communities. Research indicates that authorities play critical roles in promoting positive inter-group relations. Welcoming statements offer models for behavior within communities and are greatly appreciated by immigrants. We recommend that the Suffolk County Legislature issue its own welcoming statement that will signal its determination to end the climate of fear that contributes to hate crimes." Thank you.

MS. CONTRERAS:

Hi, my name is Maria Contreras. And I am a student at Stony Brook University. We are affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's third recommendation is to adopt a civility statement. "We recommend that the Suffolk County Legislature adopt a civility statement that is consistent with the principle of loving thy neighbor as thyself. By welcoming the stranger amongst us and extending our hospitality, we bring out the best within ourselves. For people of faith, civility reflects deeply rooted teachings based on histories of religious persecutions, exile and migration. A civility statement would signal the County's abhorrence to the incivility of hate." Thank you.

MR. BARD:

My name is Enzo Bard. I am with the Freeport Community Working Center. We are affiliated with LIIA.

This is the fourth recommendation, is to create official hiring sites. "One flashpoint of conflict has been street corner day labor sites where workers have often been subjected to harassment and hate crimes, as well as

exploitation by unscrupulous contractors. Official hiring sites, where day laborers are able to look for work in safe and dignified conditions, have been shown to reduce hate crimes against laborers and conflict with local businesses. We recommend that Suffolk County work in collaboration with day laborers and their organizations to pass legislation establishing official hiring sites in communities where such a site would be supported by day laborers and other stakeholders." Thank you.

MS. SCHREIER:

My name is Sandy Schreier. I am a student at Nassau Community College. We are affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's fifth recommendation is to fund shared community spaces. "Research shows that such shared spaces and projects are indispensable in creating a culture of acceptance. We call upon the County to work with LIIA and Marcelo Lucero Foundation to establish a multicultural community center in Patchogue that will serve as a living memorial to Marcelo Lucero." Thank you.

MS. RAMOS:

My name is Gilda Ramos. And I am affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's sixth recommendation is to create a permanent standing committee on hate crimes. "Without long-term oversight, the careful considered recommendations of this Task Force could simply be thrown in the trash by high ranking government officials whose animosity has fueled hate crimes against immigrants in the first place. Accordingly, we request that you join us in calling upon the Suffolk County Legislature to create a permanent standing committee on hate crimes that has the authority, the tools and the resources needed to ensure your recommendations are put into action."

MS. VALENZUELA:

Hi, my name is Debbie Valenzuela. I'm with the National Association of Puerto Rican Hispanic Social Workers. We are affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's seventh recommendation is to form partnerships with organizations supporting immigrants. "As recently as October 2009, the County Executive used belittling language and misrepresented organizations and community leaders that advocate for the rights of immigrants. Specifically we are continually called 'advocates for illegal immigration'. We advocate for immigrants, which most of our ancestors also were. The community would be best served if county officials respected and partnered with community advocates and service providers." Thank you.

MS. CERULO-JOLAZO:

My name is Anna Cerulo-Jolazo and I'm a student at Stony Brook University. I'm also affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's eighth recommendation is to create an agency responsible for entering immigrants into County affairs. "We recommend that Suffolk County establish a governmental agency specifically to coordinate services for the immigrant community that will help educate and power and integrate individuals to be active participants in social, economic and civic life. The primary purpose of the new agency will be to provide a means of communication and dissemination of vital information to the immigrants of Suffolk County.

This agency will be the link between county government and the immigrant communities, organizations and businesses. The agency will assist the County government in making informed and culturally competent policies and will assess the efficacy of services provided by the County government to help coordinate and identify needs in the immigrant communities as they arise." Thank you.

MS. NYGAARD:

My name is Charmaine Nygaard. I'm new to LIIA. And I'm Director of Music at St. Francis of Assisi in Greenlawn.

LIIA's ninth recommendation is to outreach to immigrants through houses of worship. "Immigrants should be given an opportunity to meet with County leaders at forums held regularly at houses of worship to hear

immigrants relate their concerns, aspirations, mistreatment and frustrations about life on Long Island. After listening carefully to their comments, County leaders should take action towards improving the quality of life of life immigrants." Thanks.

MS. LYNCH:

Good evening. My name is Michele Lynch. I'm here today representing 1199 SCIU United Healthcare Workers East. We represent over 240,000 members and four states. We are affiliated with, and proudly affiliated with, Long Island Immigration Alliance.

LIIA's tenth recommendation is to integrate immigrants into community life. "Suffolk County government should encourage towns to revive the deeply rooted and distinctly American tradition of voluntarily welcoming committees that greet newcomers through the community whether they are domestic or foreign born. These welcome committees should inform newcomers of all the facilities, resources and elected officials available to them. The County should also fund English and civic classes to engage new immigrants in community life and towns should establish advisory boards responsible for integrating immigrants into their communities." Thank you.

MR. LOVE:

Hello. My name is Edward Love. I'm a Shinnecock Native American. I'm with the NAACP. We are affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's eleventh recommendation is to launch a positive relations campaign. "The negative public perception of immigrants is in large part a cause of community tension. This negative perception of immigrants has been fostered by the County. In order to counter this negativity, we suggest the County create an alliance with local businesses and utilize a positive multi-lingual media campaign to enhance the public's understanding of important contributions of immigrants to our communities. Our communities have placed billboards and ads on the local public transportation system displaying multi-cultural images and unifying statements to improve our community relations." Thank you.

MS. GIL:

Good evening. I'm Sandra Gil and I am an immigrant from Ecuador, a community advocate and affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's twelfth recommendation is to avoid participation in sweeping, indiscriminate ICE raids or 287 MOU's. "When Suffolk Police engage in civil immigration enforcement activities, they undermine efforts to win the confidence of the immigrant community. Accordingly, we recommend that the Suffolk County Police Department refrain from cooperating with or assisting sweeping, indiscriminate ICE raids." Thank you.

MR. DIAZ:

Good evening. My name is Vincent Diaz and I'm with the New York Civil Liberties Union and we are affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's thirteenth recommendation is to demonstrate that hate crime enforcement is a top priority. "Because immigrants believe that hate crime enforcement has taken a back seat to immigration enforcement, County leaders must publically and visibly affirm that hate crimes are an attack on the fabric of Suffolk life and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law." Thank you.

MS. MARIN-MOLINA:

Good evening. My name is Nadia Marin-Molina and I'm here on behalf of the Work Place Project. We are also members of the Long Island Immigrant Alliance.

LIIA's fourteenth recommendation is to adopt, publicize and strictly enforce a clear confidentiality policy. "Suffolk County Police recently enacted a confidentiality policy for those reporting hate crimes, which is known as Memorandum 08-282. However, this policy, which was clearly not developed in coordination with other organizations, contains no protection for witnesses and has no prohibition on sharing information with ICE once it's been received, among other problems. For these reasons we recommend that Suffolk County and the police

work with LIIA and its members to adopt and publish, in English and Spanish, a new confidentiality policy that fully protects immigrants and allows them to approach the police without hesitation. Our proposal contains model language for this policy in the report."

MR. YOUNG:

Hello. My name is Patrick Young. I'm Special Professor of Immigration Law at Hofstra University and I'm also the Director of Legal Services and Program at the Central American Refugee Center in Brentwood.

LIIA's fifteenth recommendation is that the County must ensure cross-cultural competence in law enforcement. "Lack of bi-lingual, bi-cultural officers has hindered the reporting and investigation of hate crimes. Accordingly, police officers should receive training in cultural competency in order to better respond to hate crime complaints. The ability to speak a second language widely used in Suffolk County should be a criterion in hiring new officers. Existing officers should be supported in learning a second language and obtaining interpreter certification. Spanish speaking officers should be on duty at all times to ensure that reports of hate crimes from Latinos are not ignored due to a shortage of Spanish speaking officers. Signage and literature in police precincts advising limited English proficiency individuals of their rights, including the right to an interpreter, should be in multiple languages as appropriate to the local limited English proficiency communities and prominently displayed in all entrance areas to police facilities. Lastly in this regard, we recommend telephonic interpretation for officers in the field during 911 calls, or in other instances in which a range of languages could be encountered and swift response is necessary." Thank you.

MS. RULNICK:

Good evening. I'm Diane Rulnick and I'm a member of the Neighbors in Support of Immigrants, the Coalition for a Work-Link Center and the Anti-Bias Task Force of the Town of Southampton. We are affiliated with LIIA and proud to be affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's sixteenth recommendation is to fully implement new protocol for identifying and responding to hate crimes. "We are happy to see that the Suffolk County Police Department has recently adopted a protocol for identifying and responding to hate crimes based upon the policy recommended by the International Chiefs of Police. Moreover, we commend the Suffolk County Police Department for adopting our recommendation to clearly state in writing that victims will not be queried about immigration status.

Nonetheless, we are concerned that the new protocol will not be fully and consistently implemented. In Montauk, a Latino man was beaten while his assailant hurled racist slurs at him. The Suffolk County DA's Office said the incident was not a hate crime because the victim was not severely wounded, just a split lip and bruising on his shoulders and forearms. The protocol, however, clearly states that even the threat of violence constitutes a hate crime. To ensure that the new protocol is fully implemented, the Police Commissioner should speak at each precinct, *speak at each precinct*, about the importance of properly handling hate crimes and make clear that precinct commanders will be responsible for the compliance." Thank you.

MS. CARBALLERA:

Good evening. I'm Cathy Carballera, the former President of the National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers and I'm a doctoral student at Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare.

I'm reading the seventeenth recommendation which is to publish hate statistics on a weekly basis. "Hate crime statistics should be published in local papers on a weekly basis indicating the number of incidents reported as well as the outcome of the investigations and the number of actual prosecutions." Thank you.

MS. KESHNER:

Good evening. My name is Cheryl Keshner. I'm with the Empire Justice Center and we're affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA eighteenth recommendation is to distribute hate crimes pamphlets to all County personnel. "Those who commit hate crimes view silence and inaction as tacit support. Each one of us has the responsibility to intervene to protect the human rights of other County residents. All County personnel, including elected officials, should sign and acknowledge receipt and review of a hate crimes pamphlet. The pamphlet will assist County employees in identifying and responding to hate crimes and hate incidents. If County employees don't

Speak up and take action, who will?"

MS. YOUNG LEE-SEGREDO:

Good evening. My name is Soh Young Lee-Segredo, proud immigrant to have started at high school at age eighteen. I serve public school last twelve recent years in Long Island including New York City, 27 years. I'm a Vice President of Korea American Association of Long Island, Educational Committee Member of Freeport to Roosevelt to NAACP and public school teacher in Long Island and supporter and member of LIIA.

LIIA's nineteenth recommendation is to create a mandated reporter system. "Another way that Suffolk County can quickly make clear that bias crimes are not tolerated is through the creation of hate crime mandated reporter requirement for all entities that work for or contract with the County. The mandated reporter requirement addresses hate crimes as a systematic problem. It educates the County workers and contractors about the deleterious effort of hate crimes on the victim, the targeted community, and on our collective well being. Additionally, it begins to address the problem of the underreporting of hate crimes. Lastly, a hate crimes mandated reporter requirement underscores the civic duty to protect and assist victims of crimes.

MS. CALLAN:

Good evening. My name is Andrea Callan and I'm a Director of the Suffolk County Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union and we are proudly affiliated with the Long Island Immigrant Alliance.

LIIA's twentieth and twenty-first recommendations are to educate the public on hate crimes and to document those educational efforts. "Education and community outreach are essential components in combating hate crimes. Law enforcement officials need to play a leadership role in this area and should document their efforts through periodic reports which are made available to the public." Thank you.

MS. BARD:

Good evening. My name is Maria Bard and I am here representing the Long Island School of the America's Watch. And we support LIIA.

LIIA's twenty-second recommendation is to reward officers who fight hate effectively. "As seen in Brockton, Massachusetts, police officers are more likely to recognize the seriousness of the hate crimes when these crimes are taken seriously by the Police Commissioner, police chiefs and precinct captains. Accordingly, we recommend that promotion in the ranks should take into significant account the efforts of officers to reduce hate crime by their work in the community." Thank you.

MR. MANEY:

Good evening. My name is Gregory Maney. I'm an Associate Professor of Sociology at Hofstra University. I'm also affiliated with Long Island Teachers for human rights and the Immigration and Social Services Committee of the Irish American Society of Nassau, Suffolk and Queens. And we are affiliated with the Long Island Immigrant Alliance.

LIIA's twenty-third recommendation is to establish valid measures of hate crimes. "Underreporting by victims and witnesses who fear and mistrust the police combined with failures to recognize and properly record reported action of hate have contributed to the gross underestimation of hate crimes in figures produced by the County. As journalists and service providers alike can tell you, there was more than one hate crime in the County during the year that Marcelo Lucero was murdered. The failure of government figures to reflect this reality only serves to reinforce the perception that the County is trying to sweep the problem of hate under the rug. By partnering with the university researchers, the Suffolk County Police Department can develop valid and reliable measures of hate crimes and hate incidents. Such measures will also provide the cornerstone for methodologically rigorous statistical analyses of the causes of hate crimes in Suffolk County as well as the effectiveness of steps taken by the County to reduce hate crimes." Thank you.

MS. SOSTRIN:

Hello. My name is Melissa Sostrin. I am with Long Island Immigrant Alliance and I'm secretary of the Latino Jewish Council of Long Island.

LIIA's twenty-fourth recommendation is to utilize immigrant advocacy organizations for monitoring and reporting hate crimes. "The underreporting of hate crimes against immigrants reflects a fear and distrust of law enforcement agencies. Victims of hate crimes are more likely to come forward if they can first approach advocacy organizations with proven records of defending their rights. We recommend that the County publicize a list of LIIA affiliates that hate crime victims may contact and establish a regular system of communication between those organizations and law enforcement officials." Thank you.

MR. WARE:

My name is Lucius Ware; a longtime school person having served as a teacher and as an administrator in the states of Ohio, New Jersey and New York, including school district superintendent.

LIIA's twenty-fifth recommendation is to create a County-wide social justice curriculum. "We call upon the County to create a social justice curriculum for our schools. This curriculum can provide opportunities for youth to discuss cultural and socioeconomic differences, identifies sources of conflict and develop skills for a conflict transformation."

By the way, the Suffolk County Legislature can jump start this action by supporting the New York State Dignity For All Students Act that has languished in our Legislature for the last ten years, having passed 7 times in the Assembly, 7 times in the Assembly in the last ten years and has never made it out of the Senate. We ask for your support in that endeavor. Thank you.

MS. ESPADA:

My name is Margarita Espada. I'm Artistic Director of Teatro Yerbabruja, Yerbabruja Theatre Group, and also a member of the Advisory Board for the Arts for Suffolk County. And I'm affiliated with LIIA.

LIIA's twenty-sixth recommendation is to sponsor community events that serve as rituals of inclusion. "Rituals of inclusion are events that celebrate diversity as a defining value and asset of the community. We recommend that the County as well as towns sponsor events that celebrate a multicultural, inclusive vision of the United States as a nation of immigrants. Lady Liberty's words need to be repeated a little more often."

MS. VOTINO-TARRANT:

Hello, my name is Lisa Votino-Tarrant. I am with Eastern Long Island NAACP and I reside on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation in Southampton.

And we -- well, NAACP is affiliated with Long Island Immigrant Alliance.

LIIA's twenty-seventh recommendation is to sponsor "Crossing Great Divides" events. "Across the County, many borders divide us. Neighborhoods are segregated by class, by ethnicity and by "race." By fostering prejudice and denying equality of opportunity, these borders weaken our communities. We recommend that the County take a leadership role by working with LIIA to hold events that encourage those with different backgrounds to forge long-term relationships with one another. The events will send a clear message that getting to know those are are different from us enriches our lives and strengthens our communities."

MS. OBERNAUER:

Hi, my name is Charlene and I'm with Long Island Jobs With Justice. We're affiliated with LIIA also proudly.

LIIA's twenty-eighth recommendation is to establish goals, timelines and ongoing evaluation. "To ensure that recommendations made by the Task Force translate into effective action, we recommend the creation of goals and timelines. We also recommend that an independent external researcher be hired to assess the County's progress in meeting its obligations as well as the effects, if any, of the County's interventions upon reducing hate crimes." Thank you very much.

MR. VALENZUELA:

Okay. That concludes the presentation of recommendations. And we hope that the manner in which we presented it is helpful to you. There's no way to present each individual, but it also gave us the opportunity to have half of the members of LIIA to present.

I just want to close by, again, reiterating that we are here as a resource and you can use us with your important work. We are also going to finalize a report consequent to your report. And I just want to state that in 2008 there were 596 hate crimes in the State of New York that were documented, reported. There were 159 arrests so there's is a big gap there. On Long Island there were 161 hate crimes with only 22 arrests. In Nassau there were a hundred hate crimes and 16 arrests; in Suffolk reportedly 61 hate crimes and 6 arrests. So that gives Nassau an arrest rate for hate crimes of 10% and Suffolk a 6% arrest rate. And clearly for all that we know, there's an underreporting of hate crimes. But the statistics that I just quoted tell us that there's a lot of work to be done. So, again, we're a resource to you.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Okay. Great. Thank you for your presentation. I think it was very different and certainly the recommendations as we were going through them, I found them personally to be insightful. I know one of the Legislators and myself are working on some of your recommendations as we speak. Maybe two and five combined, but I'll leave at that. You'll probably hear more details with that coming the next month or so.

Does anyone have any questions? No?

MR. VALENZUELA:

With your permission I'd like the members who are sitting here to introduce themselves. Again, I'm Luis Valenzuela, Long Island Immigrant Alliance.

MR. MANEY:

Yes. Greg Maney.

MS. CALLAN:

Andrea Callan, New York Civil Liberties Union.

MS. MARIN-MOLINA:

Nadia Marin-Molina, Workplace Place Project.

MR. YOUNG:

Patrick Young, Central American Refugee Center. And just wanted to add something because I mentioned this to Renee earlier. You may not be aware of it, but national public radio did an hour long documentary, radio documentary, on the Marcelo Lucero case that appeared two weeks ago. It went -- it interviewed Mayor Pontieri, Yusela Lucero, some of the people at this table.

But I think some of the interviews that were the most telling were interviews with students who were attending Patchogue-Medford High School. The interviews were conducted a full year after the killing of Marcelo Lucero at the time of the anniversary. So it was in the news. People knew about it.

One young man said that he didn't believe that people should have to go to jail for beating up Mexicans. A young woman "We're all racists here. We all hate the Mexicans." I think it's extremely important for this body to understand that the hatred that led to the murder of Marcelo Lucero and that led to -- not to killings, but to beatings, brutality against immigrants really beginning as far as back as 1999 is as present today in Central Suffolk County as it was the night that Marcelo was murdered.

I also think of something else that occurred recently. I don't know if people listen to WNYZ, which is the public radio station in New York City, but Bob Henley, who's their primarily political reporter, was asked about the County Executive's press conference in Albany. And he said, you know, it's hard to get your message out that you're a fiscal conservative when the first question you're asked are -- is "Are you a racist?" And the second question you're asked is "Why do you hate Latinos?"

Suffolk County's record of hatred against immigrants is known in New York City, is known in the Hudson Valley, is known throughout the state and is actually known nationally. This is something that will have a dramatic effect on development in Suffolk County, on the Suffolk County economy and on race relations in Suffolk

County for the next generation. And the focus on Suffolk County will only intensify once the trial of the attackers of Marcelo Lucero begins. The best way that the County can deal with this focus is not as Steve Levy did in the Bob Edwards and PR documentary in which he said that the people who, you know, there was an incorrect statement that Levy's most recent comment denouncing immigrant rights groups was in October; it was actually two weeks ago when he characterized those who are stand for justice and against hatred in Suffolk are pro-illegal immigration organizations.

My organization works with legal residents, people applying for citizenship. But you know what? When somebody attacks somebody on the street, they don't check documents. This body needs to take Suffolk County away from that dichotomization of Latinos as the illegals, Latinos born in the United States, US citizens under the fourteenth amendment, the amendment that made non-white US citizens characterized as anchor babies. We need to move away from the dichotomy of Latinos as being second class citizens even if they're born here and to inclusion of immigrants, Latinos whether they're born here or whether they've immigrated legally or illegally into the fullest meaning of Suffolk County residents and citizenship.

APPLAUSE

MS. ORTIZ:

Patrick, can you just state on the record where they can find the MPR piece?

MR. YOUNG:

To find the MPR piece, if you go to Long Island Wins.com and you scroll down, there's a link. It's in the main blog there. And you can also fine it by typing in Bob Edwards Show in Google. But if you go to Long Island Wins.com there is a link to the documentary. It's a full hour long documentary. And you'll recognize most of the people who are interviewed in the documentary.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Thank you. Nadia.

MS. MARIN-MOLINA:

I just wanted to add one more thing which was that -- on behalf of the Long Island Immigrant Alliance, I wanted to say that the group put a lot of time and work into those recommendations and really tried to ensure that the recommendations were as specific as possible; because we've seen that a lot of times people recommend that, you know, we should get along, we should be nice to each other, etcetera. But it seems to be very vague. And so we tried to the degree that we could to find model language, to find specific policies, to find specific references and put them in there. And we're continuing to work on that.

But part of the reason that we did that was to be able to propose them as concrete policies and for you to be able to take them and go with them and to have actual things where we can say Suffolk County did or didn't implement these recommendations on recommendation of the Task Force. So, you know, if you can look at them, if there are things that are missing, we also are willing to work and to get more information and more language and bring them to your attention as well. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Great. I want to thank you again for your efforts. It's this type of dialogue and information gathering that I think is beneficial to the Task Force, so that we can implement it and put it into our report. For those of who who don't know, I've put in a recommendation or I put in a resolution to extend the deadline for the report, it was going to be due in February, so we would have more time as a Task Force to gather information, to have more groups come before us. We've had some agencies contact us and express an interest. We're trying to schedule dates for them. So the deadline's going to be moved back to August. That doesn't mean that we'll submit it in August, but we have up until August to do that so that we can have more information, presentations like this.

So, again, thank you for your input and your thoughts. And we really appreciate it. We know that a lot of hard work went into it. Yes, do you have something to say?

MR. YOUNG:

I just wanted to say one last thing before we finished up. Everybody here appreciates the work of this Task Force and especially your work, Mr. Chairman, in both coming up with the idea and then pursuing it. And we've seen you at many -- cold nights, out in the cold and also early mornings attending events to make sure that you get all the information.

I also think it's important for us to thank everybody here because as you all know, you recognize a lot of our faces because although we're not from one organization, we're from dozens of organizations, we've had representatives at every hearing that you've have had. The folks in this room have spent literally thousands of hours either attending hearings, interviewing immigrants, working to investigate what's been going on or coming up with the recommendations.

And we hope to continue this and we hope that this is a model for the way that Suffolk County government does business with the immigrant community, because this is the model that's used in Nassau. This is the model that Mayor Bloomberg uses in New York City. This is the model in Westchester. It should not be an antagonistic model. It should be a model in which we all work together because it's in our interest that crimes are solved and it's in everyone's interest that crimes are solved.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Absolutely. Thank you. Okay.

I'm going to go to our agenda. Does anyone have any old business to discuss? No? New business? Nothing.

We do have some tentative dates that we wanted to run by everybody so we'll just jot them down. I know we've had some issues with scheduling.

February 18th, if you can look at your calendars for that, we're looking at 3 or 5 PM; February 24th, that will be a 3 PM meeting or March 10th at either 3 or 5. Okay. So we'll have my office contact you guys by early next week so we can kind of firm up the date and we can send the notices out. Okay. All right?

MR. VALENZUELA:

We want to give you the opportunity to follow up with questions so you have our contact information. Again, thank you.

CHAIRMAN GREGORY:

Great. Thank you. All right. We stand adjourned. Thank you.

THE HEARING CONCLUDED AT 6:20 PM