

Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

A Public Hearing

Re:
Suffolk County Wide

Senior Citizen's Task Force

9:40 a.m.
March 27, 2007

Held at:
William H. Rodgers Building
Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, New York

- 1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
- 2 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen Task Force
Membership:
- 3
- 4 Legislator Steven Stern - Chairman
- 5 Susan Harty - John J. Flanagan Activity Center
- 6 Robert Kern - Associate Director Seniors Against
Discrimination
- 7
- 8 Priscilla DeMasi
- 9 Thelma White
- 10 Elizabeth Lorenz- Commissioner Town of Islip Dept. Of
Human Services
- 11
- 12 Carolyn Gallogly
- 13 Eugene Pritz
- 14 Holly Rhodes-Teague - Director
- 15 William Stoner - Associate State Director - AARP
- 16 Karin Bennett - Senior Citizens Center Manager

17 Karen McLaughlin - Director Southold Town Human Resource
Center

18

19 Rita Glasheen - Director Eugene Cannataro Senior
Citizens Center

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21 Pamela Giocia - Director Town of Southampton Senior
Services

22

23

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 Audience Speakers:

3 Glenda Jackson - Councilwoman - Town of Huntington

4 Charlie Gardner - Director - Suffolk County Office of

5 Consumer Affairs

6 Robert Mitchell - Attorney - Suffolk County Legal Aid

7 Society

8 George Roach - Attorney - Suffolk County Legal Aid

9 Society

10 Lisa Tyson - Director - Long Island Progressive

11 Coalition

12 Myra Wallach - Senior Citizen - Melville

13 Bruce Blower - Director - Suffolk County Office of

14 Handicap Services

15 Tara Purcell - Social Worker - Broadlawn Adult Health

16 Program

17 John Seaton - President - Moriches Nutrition Center

18 Paul Arfin - President - Intergenerational Strategies

19 Cathy Rosenthal - Vice President - Long Island FECS

20 Ellen Katz - Project Director - JASA

21 Jim Gallagher - Member of SAD
22 Donald Clark - Board of Directors - Senior Huntington
23 Center - Huntington
24 Irving Toliver - Director - Human Services - Town of
25 Huntington

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 CHAIRMAN STERN: Good morning, everybody.

3 It's great to see everybody this morning. The
4 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
5 will now come to order. I'm going to ask that
6 everybody please rise and join us in the Pledge of
7 Allegiance lead by Gene.

8 (Pledge of Allegiance)

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: I'm going to ask that
10 everybody please remain standing and join us in a
11 moment of silence. First of all, to keep in your
12 thoughts and prayers our very brave men and women
13 fighting for us overseas. Also, to keep in your
14 prayers two passings that occurred yesterday.
15 Theresa Romaine, the mother of Legislator Ed
16 Romaine from the east end, and also, Jack Kennedy,
17 a true leader certainly in our local labor
18 movement, and the father of Legislator John
19 Kennedy. And also, I'm sure everybody would agree
20 that we should take just a couple moments to keep
21 in our thoughts the memory of Ed Seaman. Ed was a

22 true voice for seniors here in Suffolk County
23 serving as a true advocate, and really encouraged
24 all of us of all ages to get involved. And so, we
25 remember him in our prayers as well.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 (Moment of Silence)

3 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Before we begin
4 our business this morning, I'm going to ask that
5 all of the members of the County Wide Senior
6 Citizens Task Force to please rise. Before we can
7 act in our capacity, we need to have everybody
8 sworn in and take the oath. So, Mr. Clerk?

9 CLERK: Please raise your right hand and
10 repeat after me. I do solemnly swear -

11 PANEL: I do solemnly swear -

12 CLERK: That I will support the Constitution
13 of the United States -

14 PANEL: That I will support the Constitution
15 of the United States -

16 CLERK: And the Constitution of the State of
17 New York -

18 PANEL: And the Constitution of the State of
19 New York -

20 CLERK: And that I will faithfully discharge
21 the duties -

22 PANEL: And that I will faithfully discharge
23 the duties -

24 CLERK: Of the office of member of the
25 County Wide Senior Citizens Task Force.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 PANEL: Of the office of member of the
3 County Wide Senior Citizens Task Force.

4 CLERK: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Good
6 job everybody. You did that really well.

7 My name is Steven Stern. I am the
8 Legislator representing the 16th District to the
9 Suffolk County Legislature representing part of
10 Huntington and Babylon. It's also my privilege to
11 serve as the chairman of the Legislature's
12 committee on veterans and seniors. And I tell
13 this story all the time. I'm a little league
14 coach for my older son, and there isn't a game
15 that goes by where someone doesn't come up to me
16 and say, and ask, Mr. Stern, can you bat my son a
17 little further up in the order for this game, or
18 can you put my daughter out on the pitcher's
19 mound, their grandparents are here and this is the
20 only game their grandparents will get to see this
21 season because they live so far away. And because
22 of my interest in this incredibly important issue,
23 I will get to talking with the family and we'll
24 talk about why mom and dad live so far away and
25 what made them go. And of course, it's great to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 hear these stories about how they worked hard and
3 they contributed to their community and now they
4 wanted to have a leisurely lifestyle of playing 18
5 holes of golf everyday in Florida. That's
6 wonderful, but as everyone here knows, more often
7 than not, the story goes that it just became too
8 expensive to live here on Long Island, and that
9 grandparents had to move away in search of a lower
10 cost of living and a better quality of life. And
11 we all know, certainly I experienced it in my
12 family, that how important it is and how wonderful
13 it is to have that family unit that spans for
14 generations and how we all know that certainly
15 something is missing when families are spread out
16 all over the country for whatever reason they need
17 to go, but that seniors have to leave their
18 families and communities that they helped build in
19 search of a lower cost of living and better
20 quality of life and better services in their
21 golden years. We know that's just wrong and so
22 today we begin what I hope to be, what I think we
23 all know will be, an important process of
24 beginning a dialogue, beginning a process where we
25 examine so many of the critical issues that affect

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 our seniors and their families. And in creating
3 this committee, the vision really was not to
4 create a committee of a housing expert or a
5 transportation expert or a long term care
6 specialist, it was to create a committee of those
7 people who are not only seniors in their own
8 communities, but also those professionals that
9 work with seniors, that deal with seniors and
10 their families on a daily basis. I say all the
11 time, we can come up with great policies at the
12 federal level, at the state level, even here at
13 the county level, but ultimately the delivery of
14 services and the day to day function of working
15 with seniors, the disabled and their families
16 really lies with the towns. And so, you'll see
17 that the makeup of this committee is comprised of
18 these professionals that have dedicated their
19 careers of working with seniors at most local of
20 levels, because ultimately, they're the ones that
21 will have to take policy and implement it. And
22 this committee is also made of those that have a
23 committed expertise, demonstrated interest in
24 working with seniors, fighting for the rights of
25 seniors and just seniors who, of course, are the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 focus and most important subject of these
3 proceedings.

4 This task force was formed to hold hearings
5 and to focus on the challenge of meeting the needs
6 of older adults in Suffolk County. And it is a
7 significant challenge to prepare for. I'm sure
8 many who say that it is a challenge, where we're
9 perhaps, already behind, given the current numbers
10 of our senior citizen population here in this area
11 and throughout our nation, but certainly, a
12 growing issue, in fact, growing exponentially.
13 And if you haven't already, I instruct you to take
14 the time and look at some of the charts that we
15 provided today, which show, not only our
16 significant population, but the trend, and we all
17 know where the trends are going. And the question
18 is whether or not we are prepared, and what do we
19 need to be prepared for? We need to be prepared
20 for access to long term care, which needs will
21 only increase. We need to rethink how and where
22 those long term care services are provided. And I
23 have yet to meet anybody who said that they would
24 rather receive their long term care in a nursing
25 home rather than at home, rather than in our

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 communities. And how can we, at the most local of
3 levels, help with what needs to be a shift out of
4 the institutions, out of the nursing homes, and
5 back towards a more community based setting. We
6 also need to think long and hard, not just about
7 the number, as reflected on those charts, but so
8 many of us know that we have elderly parents who
9 live out of state who say what; well, when I get
10 sick who's going to take care of me? But do they
11 say; my kids are going to be the ones to take care
12 of me. So that means, and we're starting to see
13 this already somewhat here and certainly in other
14 parts of the country, that those seniors who are
15 living the retired lifestyle out of state, when
16 they need assistance, they look to their families
17 to provide that assistance, and where do they get
18 that? That means that they're coming back.
19 They're coming back here to New York or coming
20 back here to Suffolk County. And those numbers
21 that we're going to be experiencing and have to
22 deal with in the future aren't even really
23 reflected in the numbers that we're already aware
24 of today. How we acknowledge that and how we plan
25 for that in the future is also a critical issue.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 But serving on this task force means that we need

3 to take another hard look at affordable housing,

4 recognizing the value of family caregivers,

5 understand that our families today are more

6 nontraditional than in the past, but not only

7 recognizing that, but how you work that into our

8 system. Also, recognizing the tremendous amount

9 of stress on family caregivers, who those of you

10 as part of the baby boom generation know that you

11 are also referred to as the sandwich generation,

12 working so hard to care for an elderly parent

13 while at the same time, raising your own children.

14 And this isn't just a family issue, but also very

15 much an economic issue. The cost of family

16 caregiving in this nation is staggering. A recent

17 study said that over 90 billion dollars in lost

18 wages and services and loss of promotion

19 opportunities because of the responsibility of

20 family caregivers. So, we also need to come up

21 with innovative ways to attract, support, and I

22 think most importantly, retain quality caregivers,

23 social workers, home health aides, nurses, and

24 other professionals right here in Suffolk County.

25 And of course, it's not important just to care for

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 the sick, or the aging, for those who have current
3 needs, it's just as important to reach out and
4 provide services and a quality of life to those
5 who are approaching retirement or those who are
6 healthy and enjoying a retirement lifestyle. How
7 to help those who have retired maintain their
8 sense of dignity and independence, and most
9 importantly, control over their lives right here
10 in our own community. We have to encourage
11 businesses to adopt policies now, right now, to
12 attract and retain all the workers as they are
13 confronted with the coming labor shortage here in
14 this area. How to keep and integrate seniors to
15 have a positive impact on the strengths of our
16 economy, and also encourage volunteerism within
17 our community, and to do all we can at all levels
18 of government to support continuing education,
19 particularly for our senior citizens. And as our
20 residents age, we need much more focus on public
21 transportation, services for the disabled, which
22 not only need to be affordable, but also reliable.
23 And, of course, we also have to be proactive and
24 not just reactive when it comes to protecting
25 seniors from scams and ID theft, proactive in the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 fight against the scourge of elder abuse. And, of
3 course, we need to strengthen our programs to keep
4 seniors active in and involved which, of course,
5 is critically important, not just for their
6 quality of life, but also for mental health. And
7 not just mental health, but to do what we can to
8 stem the growing tide of suicide among seniors.
9 It's kind of ironic, actually, that in this day of
10 advances in medical technology, particularly to
11 help our seniors, that it is unfortunately those
12 same seniors that chose more often to end their
13 lives. And, of course, enhancing our local
14 nutrition programs. But I think everybody would
15 agree that we have wonderful programs already out
16 there. There are already great ideas on the
17 table. But I think everybody would also agree
18 that with anything else, there's a need, I think,
19 for a better coordination, a better coordination
20 among services, service providers, better
21 coordination among all levels of government. And
22 we need that coordination in order to strengthen
23 our local aging network and to maximize the
24 effectiveness of the wonderful programs that we
25 already have in place. We need, like all other

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 issues that we face here on Long Island, certainly
3 in Suffolk County, to take what we do well locally
4 and coordinate it in a more regional approach to
5 maximize effectiveness.

6 The purpose, I think of this committee of
7 this task force, really, is to ask one simple
8 question, and that is; is it good to grow old in
9 Suffolk County? I'm excited about this process.

10 I'm excited about everybody else's excitement to
11 begin this process, eager to hear everybody's
12 thoughts, engage in a meaningful and productive
13 dialogue and to answer that very important
14 question, not just for our seniors, but for our
15 entire community.

16 And with that, let me first ask our Vice
17 Chair, Sue Harty, representing the Town of
18 Huntington, to introduce herself, make a couple
19 comments, and then we'll go around the horseshoe
20 and give everybody that opportunity.

21 SUSAN HARTY: For over 25 years I have
22 worked in various capacities that have provided
23 services to seniors. I have experience in nursing
24 homes, health related facilities, adult homes,
25 senior nutrition centers, adult daycare, and I

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 cared for my own parents during their declining
3 years. During the last 7 years I've been the
4 director for the Town of Huntington Senior Citizen
5 Division. In this role, I oversee a staff of 50
6 who are responsible for administering numerous
7 programs and services for the over 25,000 seniors
8 in the entire Town of Huntington. I know this
9 Task Force exhibits a comprehensive knowledge of
10 lifestyle needs for the older population and we
11 will learn more through the form of these public
12 hearings. I anticipate a very constructive
13 outcome. Effecting positive changes is a goal
14 that we all share. Establishing a proactive
15 approach to future senior issues will allow us to
16 stay ahead of the curve on this changing
17 demographic. I thank Legislator Steve Stern for
18 his leadership and commitment to enhancing the
19 lives of seniors in Suffolk County. I also thank
20 Town of Huntington Supervisor Frank Petrone for
21 asking me to take part in this innovative project.
22 Thank you.

23 ROBERT KERN: Yes, good morning. My name is
24 Bob Kern. I'm one of the associates with SAD,
25 Seniors Against Discrimination. This organization

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 started about four years ago. We've been fighting
3 for various issues, and originally started with
4 medical insurance, and it's now expanded to cover
5 many different issues. We just try to get the
6 best we can get for the seniors. Seniors also
7 have to help themselves. They cannot believe or
8 think six people, six seniors over the age of 70
9 fighting for all the seniors of Suffolk County.
10 And we're not giving up and we don't want the
11 seniors to give up. And we thank Steve Stern,
12 Legislator Stern, for fighting and starting this
13 organization, and, hopefully, we will make some
14 inroads into the future. It's not only for us,
15 it's for the baby boomers. It's what we fight for
16 today is what's going to help the boomers in the
17 future. Thank you.

18 PRISCILLA DEMASI: I'm Priscilla DeMasi.
19 I'm experienced in running long term care
20 facilities, nursing facilities, and I'm currently
21 the director of one on the east end of Suffolk
22 County. I've been very interested in my career
23 and my education in gerontology and I'm very
24 thankful for being on this task force, and I'm
25 very excited to be able to affect change, to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 listen, to understand and to address policy in our
3 needs to help the seniors have a great experience
4 in Suffolk County. Thank you.

5 THELMA WHITE: I'm Thelma White from
6 Riverhead. I've worked on the Senior Citizens
7 Advisory Board in the Town of Riverhead. And I,
8 too, cared for my mom. It's not an easy job as
9 many of you know. But our concern now in
10 Riverhead is the concern that everybody else has;
11 the transportation, the housing, health, long term
12 care, and it's reaching proportions that you would
13 not believe in Riverhead. I hope to be able to
14 take back information and things that will help us
15 and anyone involved. Thank you.

16 ELIZABETH LORENZ: Good morning. I'm
17 Elizabeth Lorenz. I'm a Commissioner of Human
18 Services for the Town of Islip. I am 20 years
19 working in the human services area and I spent six
20 years working in the senior citizen's division. I
21 am very pleased to be here this morning and
22 excited to be part of this task force. I'm very
23 grateful for the Town Supervisor, Phil Nolan, for
24 asking me to represent the Town of Islip here, and
25 I am very thankful to Legislator Steven Stern for

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 creating this task force, and I will thank
3 everybody in advance who's going to share their
4 stories with us today and the next few meetings
5 that we have. Thank you.

6 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: I'm Carolyn Gallogly, and
7 I have a couple different roles in Suffolk County.
8 I sit as the chairperson for the Senior Citizen
9 Advisory Board which works very closely with the
10 Office for the Aging. I'm also a professor at St.
11 Joseph's College and a student at Stony Brook
12 University. So, I kind of have my fingers in a
13 lot of different areas, but I've worked in the
14 field of gerontology for 30 years, and I think I'm
15 growing to be a dinosaur in Suffolk County. But
16 also I'm excited to be here and I'm eager to hear.
17 In my capacity here, I'm a liaison with the Senior
18 Citizen Advisory Board and I'm very hopeful that
19 all good results that people hope for in this room
20 will come to pass.

21 GENE PRITZ: Good morning. I'm Gene Pritz,
22 and I call myself a senior affairs consultant.
23 I've been involved in senior affairs for many,
24 many years. At present, I'm a media consultant to
25 the United States Department of Health and Human

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Services. I sit on the office of the aging of
3 Suffolk County. I'm a member of the Association
4 of Public Television Stations, and I'm a
5 consultant to channels 13 and 21. I also am a
6 member of AARP and serve as a project specialist.
7 And I want to thank Steve Stern for inviting me,
8 and I hope to make a contribution. Thank you.

9 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: My name is Holly
10 Rhodes-Teague. For the past 20 years I've worked
11 in human services, and for the last 10 I've had
12 the privilege of being the director of Suffolk
13 Office for the Aging. In that capacity, I've had
14 the very, very large privilege of working with
15 most of the people in this horseshoe in one
16 capacity or another, especially Legislator Stern.
17 He used to be on our advisory board and since his
18 move over to Legislator, he's here and I get to
19 see him every month at those meetings. I guess
20 what I see our office doing is, we do work with
21 all those people in Suffolk County who are over
22 the age of 60. Right now, 2007 they're predicting
23 224,000 people. We are charged with developing
24 and administering programs under the federal Old
25 American's Act, and also the money that comes to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 the New York State Office of the Aging. We
3 integrate partnerships that we have on the
4 federal, state, local and county level, and I
5 think in Suffolk County we get an awful lot of
6 bang for ourselves, because we didn't have the
7 relationship that we have with the township or the
8 nonprofits. I do see that many of the nonprofits
9 are in the audience today and I can't thank
10 everyone enough for the services that you provide
11 to our office for seniors in Suffolk. So, I am
12 looking forward to working with everyone on this
13 task force and also to see what other services
14 might be provided in the future, because Suffolk
15 County should be a great place to grow old and I
16 think we're getting there, but I think there's
17 probably more we can do.

18 WILLIAM STONER: Good morning. My name is
19 William Stoner. I'm the Associate State Director
20 for AARP. One of my responsibilities include our
21 issue area called livable communities. And I want
22 to thank Legislator Stern for creating this task
23 force. What we find at AARP, it's not staggering
24 new information, but people want to stay in their
25 home and aging place. People want to receive long

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 term care in their home, and people want to stay
3 engaged in their communities. So we need to find
4 ways to help people do just that. In a recent
5 transportation survey that we conducted called
6 good to go, and it included Suffolk County, we
7 found that 60% of respondents said they would have
8 to move from their current home if and when they
9 lost their ability to drive. It's a staggering
10 number. And beyond 50 or higher survey, 85%
11 stated clearly they wanted to stay in their own
12 home. Long term care survey that we just released
13 last week, 84% of respondents said they want to
14 receive long term care in their home. So, this
15 isn't new information, but it puts hard numbers on
16 what we've already known. So, I'm proud to be a
17 member of this task force. I'm very happy to be
18 part of this process. There are a number of
19 ongoing activities in communities across the metro
20 region to address these issues, and I'm happy that
21 Legislator Stern has started this process. We
22 need to look at transportation goals similar to
23 creating marketable communities, looking at
24 transit oriented development, traffic calming,
25 coordination of senior vans across town lines.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Housing goals; how about affordable housing with
3 the universal design principles so people can
4 actually age in place after they've found the
5 American dream. They're 45 years old, they get
6 the American dream, they finally, you know, own
7 their own home, but at 65, for whatever reason,
8 their mobility changes. Now maybe they can't make
9 that step into their tub or into the threshold of
10 their own home. How about affordable assisted
11 living, it's a lofty goal. AARP is working on the
12 state level right now to craft some legislation to
13 look at exactly that. And I would like Suffolk
14 County to be one of the first places in New York
15 State to actually do exactly that. So, once
16 again, I would like to thank Legislator Stern. I
17 would like to thank the Legislature for approving
18 the task force. Members of the task force, of
19 course, I thank you all for participating and also
20 the audience members for their words today. Thank
21 you very much.

22 KARIN BENNETT: Good morning. My name is
23 Karin Bennett and I'm from the Town of Shelter
24 Island, where for the past 4 years I've been a
25 nutrition site manager for the County Office for

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Aging program for nutrition for our seniors.
3 Before that, I was a practicing RN in home care.
4 I was a clinical care coordinator and did the
5 follow up assessments for medical facilities and
6 rehab facilities to make sure it is a safe
7 effication therapy in the home setting for those
8 people. I live on Shelter Island. It is a small
9 town on a small island surrounded by water, very
10 much so, and in that, we are a unique town on the
11 rural end of Long Island. I would say over
12 one-third of our population are now older adults
13 and seniors, and it is increasing weekly, minute
14 by minute, as people who formerly were vacationing
15 are now retiring to those homes full time, and
16 with that baby boomer affect, it's expotential.
17 We also have our existing senior population. We
18 have the same claims as all the mainland
19 communities, transportation, housing, health and
20 travel problems on Shelter Island because of the
21 very high real estate cost, and there's no room.
22 There's very little land to build anything on
23 anymore, so we have that barrier to housing as
24 well. We also are looking at safe and security
25 protection of our seniors from scams. People come

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 on that Island. There are ferries and they get on
3 there and they try to take them over. We're
4 looking at legal services, quality of mental and
5 physical health for our seniors. We want to
6 create these services and have access to services
7 both on the Island and off the Island, again, by,
8 perhaps, finding mutual resources with our
9 neighboring towns, anything from their
10 transportation and programming that they have. I
11 think that we have a wonderful opportunity today
12 and at the next 3 public meetings to gain from
13 your stories, your experiences and your foresight
14 as an audience, and coming here participating, we
15 can get a tremendous amount of information and
16 reality, what we really have to look for. I think
17 it's wonderful that you're here today, and I hope
18 we have even more people at the next meeting. I'd
19 like to thank Steve Stern and the group of
20 professionals I'm sitting here with. I think we
21 have a great group to work with, and I'd like to
22 thank Supervisor Alfred Kilt and my town board for
23 appointing me to this very good task force. Thank
24 you for coming today.

25 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Good morning. My name is

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Karen McLaughlin. I'm the Director of Human
3 Services for the Town of Southold. I've been with
4 the Town of Southold for almost, it will be 18
5 years in September. My husband drove down from
6 Albany one day, we came down to visit and then we
7 moved down here permanently. It's a wonderful
8 place to live. I'm originally from Albany, and
9 actually had the good fortune of working with the
10 Albany County Office for Aging for a couple of
11 years, so I really know when I came down here,
12 what I was looking for. Our senior program
13 started out about 33 years ago, and what I have to
14 say is just the power of community involvement and
15 support from our county and local government, what
16 it really can accomplish. When I came 33 years
17 ago, 3 volunteers and one part time paid staffer
18 opened a nutrition program at San Simone Nursing
19 Home and here we are 33 years later and I always
20 tease Holly and say that we serve probably close
21 to 2 million meals. We're not putting up the
22 golden arches, don't worry. But the nutrition
23 programs really allow us in the door of the
24 seniors. We see first hand what they need, what
25 services we can really offer to support them

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 staying independent at home and in their
3 communities. I have to really say that Suffolk
4 County Office for the Aging, I don't know the
5 towns could do the jobs we do without their
6 support and their guidance. For example, with the
7 medicare prescription drug program, when that was
8 on the wings, there was absolutely no delay in the
9 town setting up training for our town directors
10 and their programs. And I know in Southold I
11 think personally I counseled over 500 people on
12 the medicare prescription drug program, and trust
13 me, it was a maze for seniors to go through, and I
14 think that's one of the things that I would say,
15 at least on a local level we can get some messages
16 up to the federal government on some changes that
17 I really think we need to make in that program.
18 One of the other things that I think is really --
19 actually, there's a few issues, that there's so
20 many, but a few that I think really need priority,
21 particularly in the town of Southold, I share the
22 concerns about lack of transportation services and
23 the need for increased coordination. Southold
24 Town is rural in nature, and a lot of people who
25 are no longer able to drive really become very

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 isolated. I think last year we did close to
3 20,000 both demand response and regular route
4 transportation trips just in Southold Town. We do
5 go beyond Southold Town boundaries. One of the
6 biggest needs we're experiencing right now is the
7 need for chemotherapy radiation. That's a one
8 month commitment in most situations. To really
9 try to commit those resources to one or two
10 individuals has been a challenge. We're doing the
11 best we can, but I think we need help with that.
12 The other thing is affordable housing. I have to
13 say Southold Town Supervisor Scott Russell and the
14 Town Board's been very responsive to the needs of
15 seniors. We just completed our second senior
16 housing forum which we're releasing some of the
17 data to this task force. One of the things the
18 town did do with their new affordable housing
19 legislation, they actually made an amendment where
20 they removed the criteria where you could not have
21 a previous homeownership. They released that
22 hardship on seniors because many seniors, their
23 asset is their home. So that's a step in the
24 right direction. And the third thing I think we
25 need help with is really mental health services

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2 for seniors. It's kind of one of those quiet
3 things people don't want to talk about. You can't
4 touch it, you can't feel it, but it has a serious
5 impact on senior's lives. One of the most
6 effective programs we had years ago was the crisis
7 intervention team for mental health, one of the
8 best programs out there, and we used it, it was
9 effective. We need to look at the idea of
10 resurrecting something like that for our local
11 communities at the town level. Thank you for
12 inviting me here, Legislator Stern, and I'd like
13 to thank Holly for all her continued support.

14 RITA GLASHEEN: I'm Rita Glasheen, Town of
15 Smithtown Senior Citizen Department. I've been
16 with the Senior Citizen Office since 1974. When I
17 came today, I was very happy to see George Roach.
18 He was my next door neighbor when I worked for
19 SCOFA and Carolyn Gallogly when she started with
20 the advisory board, and so it's nice to see that
21 we have come a long way. I started in 1974 in the
22 senior citizen's office that was part of
23 recreation, and in 1976 I moved to SCOCA, upgraded
24 from SCOFA and stayed there to 1986. I came back
25 in 1986 as program supervisor, and in 1995 got

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 upgraded to senior citizen's director. Legislator
3 Stern said what is it like to grow old in Suffolk
4 County when you're a senior citizen. Well, I just
5 turned 76 and I think that I can tell Legislator
6 Stern that it's been a blast. I didn't know I was
7 going to stay in this career for such a long time,
8 but when I went back to the office for the aging,
9 there were an awful lot of things happening. I
10 got a real education. In the early 1980s a lot of
11 funding, lots of funding was coming down from the
12 federal and state. Federal programs were put in
13 place. Case management was put in place. The
14 state started the in home services, nutrition
15 programs, meals on wheels, and whatever. And in
16 1973 the Older American's Act was reauthorized.
17 It started in 1963 so I didn't know what the Older
18 American's Act was. They were just part of titles
19 that had subdivision A, B, C and D. And we had to
20 go through a lot of training and we went to Stony
21 Brook University and Suffolk Community College and
22 we had the experts come down from Duke University
23 and talking about this and sexuality in senior
24 citizens, and what is this man talking about. And
25 so, there were lots of things. My education, I

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2 have to thank the office for the aging because
3 when all this funding came down, I didn't
4 understand it. I said what is that, what is that?
5 It was a real eye opener. So, now as the director
6 of senior citizen's department, I'm celebrating,
7 March 23rd I'm celebrating my 34th year. And I
8 know what it is to be a senior citizen. I have a
9 husband, World War II veteran, who is now
10 handicapped and who is very Irish, and don't tell
11 me what to do or whatever, and he is doing a lot
12 on his own, but I see after his strokes that he is
13 really becoming now a little less mobile. And I
14 heard what everybody said, and I think that it was
15 a gift from Mr. Stern to start this task force
16 because we don't know where we're going to be next
17 year, we know where we were before, and we don't
18 know what's coming down the pike. I don't know
19 what's going to happen to me. My husband, as I
20 said, is disabled, so for me, it's another
21 learning experience. I'm in it because I want to
22 learn. I'm in it because I want to help to
23 provide services. I'm in it because I'm where a
24 lot of young people are going to be one day. I
25 didn't think I would get here so quickly. So I'm

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2 getting a little emotional. But I just want to
3 say thank you for inviting me, Mr. Stern and thank
4 you for this wonderful task force. Thank you
5 George and thank you Carolyn and thank you, Mr.
6 Stern. Thank you very much.

7 PAMELA GIOCIA: Good morning, everyone. I'm
8 Pam Giocia. I'm the director of senior services
9 for the Town of Southampton. I've been working in
10 senior services, community based senior services
11 more than 20 years. I'm very passionate about
12 helping seniors in their own homes and
13 communities. When we were talking, one of our
14 task force, someone said I never heard of a senior
15 who wanted to go into a nursing home. They want
16 to stay in their own homes and communities. You
17 know, that is what this is all about, the task
18 force, figuring out how we can improve the quality
19 of life and how we can help seniors to stay in
20 their own home where they want to be. In my work
21 as director of senior programs, I just want to let
22 you know that there are so many programs that the
23 Suffolk County Office for the Aging funds. The
24 towns, in my particular town, they do add to that
25 pot so we can service seniors, but again, the

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2 Suffolk County Office for the Aging, some of the
3 programs that they do provide right now are senior
4 centers, where people can come in and socialize,
5 have food, have lunch, have programs of interest,
6 things to keep them stimulated and alive and
7 feeling good. We have home delivery meals. We
8 have transportation programs. A program that, you
9 know, Holly and I talked about years ago, she
10 helped to bring that forward. It's called
11 residential repair and it's a program where
12 people, seniors that are at home, they need some
13 little thing done in the house, we can send a
14 handyman and that guy can go in and fix it. Some
15 things to you or me that might not be a big deal,
16 like changing a light bulb that's up in the
17 ceiling, they can't do it. A faucet that keeps
18 dripping, dripping dripping and they call a
19 plumber and it's, you know, a hundred dollars to
20 just come in the door. This residential repair
21 program is a small thing that makes a tremendous
22 difference in the quality of life. The ISEP
23 program. It's a home services program for the
24 elderly. Simply put, that means home care, people
25 who can't do the things that they once did, but

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2 they want to stay home. There's funding provided
3 for us for that. You know, I mentioned before the
4 senior centers; recreation, education,
5 stimulation, these are the things that are very
6 important to people and things that centers can
7 do. Again, information and referrals, I probably
8 get five to ten calls a week just in my phone from
9 family caregivers that need information and they
10 want to know how they can go about helping their
11 loved ones. Caregiver groups, again, so many
12 people are trying to take care of family members
13 and they don't know where to turn. So, in the
14 caregiver groups, whether it be an adult, children
15 meeting that are caring for their aging parents,
16 it might be seniors, and they, themselves, like
17 Rita said are caring for a spouse or an elderly
18 sister or brother. The other phenomena that we
19 have seen more and more and more of is
20 grandparents trying to raise their grandchildren.
21 We run a caregivers grandparents group. And last
22 week a women came in, she's a great grandmother
23 and she had a seven-year-old and four-year-old
24 that she's trying to raise, a great-grandmother.
25 So, we're beginning to see things that, you know,

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2 they have to be addressed, human needs. Can the
3 government do it all? No. They do a lot right
4 now. And again, I want to commend the Suffolk
5 County Office for the Aging for all of the things
6 that they have helped us provide. But again, we
7 all know the government can't do everything. So,
8 what is it? How are we going to help to empower
9 ourselves? Hopefully, everybody in the room --
10 I'm looking around and none of us are all that
11 young. Most of us have our AARP cards so we're
12 going there. And people say to me, how do you
13 keep doing this? I'm like, how do I keep doing
14 this? We're all going there. So, we got to begin
15 to think about innovative ways to handle the baby
16 boom generation, that's boomers. They are just
17 about, they're hitting, you know, they're coming
18 of age now, so we have to begin to think about, a
19 little bit more outside the box about how we're
20 going to handle it. I did ask the baby boomers,
21 people 55 and up, as well as the seniors, what do
22 you think is the most pressing needs since this
23 task force has convened. These are some of the
24 things they told me. Seniors themselves, the
25 older ones, high cost of living, taxes. You know,

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2 I heard that a million times. Shortage of aides
3 to help with home care. You might get approved
4 for home care, but then there's no one that can
5 come in and help because all the agencies are
6 short, shorthanded. Caregiving issues again. I
7 mean, we have an adult daycare program. We take
8 25 people in there a day. We got a lot of people
9 waiting. The caregivers, the stories that I hear.
10 You know, the caregivers want a little bit more
11 attention paid to them. Physical health and
12 wellness, especially from the baby boomers, they
13 want to age well. They want to stay as well as
14 they possibly can, for as long a period of time as
15 possible. They expect to live into their 100s.
16 They want to stay well. Transportation, we heard
17 about that. Better planning for retirement. I
18 had a few people say that to me, you know, I'm
19 getting ready to retire. I'm 65. What am I going
20 to do now? It's not just about the money, but the
21 rest of their life. So, they're looking for more
22 planning around retirement. What are we going to
23 do for the next 30 years? You know, again, there
24 are so many things. We have a lot of capital in
25 baby boomers that are coming up that we can begin

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 to harness and get them to help us in all these
3 things. We're already doing. So I really commend
4 Steve Stern for opening up this dialogue about
5 what's coming. What's here now is always going to
6 be old as the bulls, and then we have the younger
7 group coming up. I like the question is it good
8 to grow old in Suffolk County. That's just a
9 wonderful bottom line question that he asked. And
10 so, I think that all of us here, the group that's
11 assembled for the task force, you know, Holly,
12 Steve Stern, everybody wants to hear what you have
13 to say about what it is that will improve the
14 quality of life and how we're going to go about
15 it, and remembering that the government cannot do
16 everything. Thanks.

17 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you all. Thank you
18 all for your service, for your commitment and for
19 all your good work that we are about to do. And
20 the good work that we're about to do, of course,
21 is listening. Listening to what everybody here
22 has to say, listening to what those that will come
23 before this task force, not just during this
24 public hearing, but the three that we're going to
25 hold thereafter, and for the hard work that we're

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 all going to be putting in after because of public
3 hearings, because everybody knows it's not just
4 about listening, it's not just about gleaning
5 important information and compiling it in a
6 cohesive way. The charge of this group is to, not
7 only come up with reports at the end of this
8 process and have a report that's just going to
9 collect dust on a shelf someplace, but to come up
10 with meaningful proposals, come up with things
11 that we can do at all levels of government, but
12 certainly those initiatives that we can be a part
13 of in the private sector and bringing in really
14 safe holders at every level and coming up with
15 meaningful solutions as we go forward.

16 And to start that process, it is really my
17 pleasure to call upon our first speaker,
18 Councilwoman Glenda Jackson serving the residents
19 of the Town of Huntington, who's been just in her
20 short time in her role as Councilwoman, has really
21 played a tremendous role certainly in improving
22 the lives of seniors in the Town of Huntington.

23 And so, it is with great pleasure I call our first
24 speaker, the Honorable Glenda Jackson.

25 COUNCILWOMAN JACKSON: Thank you. Good

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 morning to you all. Legislator Stern, I thank you
3 for this wonderful, wonderful task force and for
4 all of you who are committed to doing good things
5 and positive things for our seniors. It always
6 gives me great pleasure to be able to work with
7 seniors and things that affect them the most.
8 They have given so much to us in the years they've
9 been with us, and so what better cause is there
10 than to make sure that they are taken care of as
11 they age. Supervisor Petrone was unable to be
12 here today, but he did ask me to read a letter
13 that we have provided to the task force with his
14 views, just incorporating what some of the things
15 that we've done in the Town of Huntington and some
16 of our hopes. So, again, I'm looking forward to
17 working and collaborating more with local
18 government, certainly with you, to do whatever we
19 can do to make it better for our seniors. I'm
20 going to go ahead and read this letter. Many of
21 the things that we've incorporated I've heard from
22 the dais so that tells me that we are somewhat on
23 the same page. So that's a good thing. And
24 without further ado, I will go ahead and read the
25 letter.

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2 Dear Legislator Stern, I want to commend you
3 and the Suffolk County Senior Citizen Task Force
4 for affording me the opportunity to come together
5 and share our concerns, insights and expertise
6 about the issues facing seniors and how we can
7 sustain and improve the vital services and
8 programs that the town and county level provide to
9 meet their needs. Suffolk County currently funds
10 a variety of services and programs that work
11 extremely well for Huntington. The Town Board
12 appreciates the support and the guidance that the
13 Suffolk County Office for the Aging provides and
14 assistance it gives our Department of Human
15 Services. We look forward to continuing that
16 strong bond between our two agencies for the
17 benefit of the task force. I would like to
18 briefly highlight those ongoing County funding
19 initiatives that Huntington finds so valuable.

20 The senior nutrition program; it is
21 originated 33 years ago, and our senior center has
22 since expanded to include a satellite facility and
23 our home delivered meal program. Huntington today
24 provides meals year round to over 2,000 Huntington
25 seniors.

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2 The expanded in home services for the
3 elderly program and community services for the
4 elderly in place for over 20 years, and it has
5 expanded in home and COD on light housekeeping,
6 laundry and shopping duties for eligible seniors
7 offering a total of 3600 service hours annually.

8 Our residential repair; another superb
9 County sponsored service that Huntington has
10 offered for more than 20 years. Residential
11 repair helps over 300 seniors offering
12 approximately 1900 hours of home repair work
13 annually.

14 Our adult daycare respite services; this is
15 the newest county-town partnership. In its second
16 year, this allows our adult daycare program to
17 fill in for caregivers one to two hours, to two
18 times a week for up to six months. This respite
19 gives the weary caregivers the chance to
20 rejuvenate themselves and offer to manage their
21 duties.

22 In addition, Huntington receives financial
23 assistance for educational training services,
24 transportation, purchase of vehicles and other
25 equipment ranging from tables and chairs to

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2 kitchen items.

3 It is, of course, important that the
4 aforementioned programs be continued, expanded and
5 improved. Part of the job of the senior citizen's
6 task force is about more than fine tuning past
7 expenses. The task force faces the much more
8 challenge of anticipating needs yet unrealized.

9 Our baby boomer generation has turned 60. Those
10 of us who served in government are particularly
11 aware that this single demographic will have a
12 monumental impact on every aspect of the care and
13 services we provide. And the working partners,
14 the town is ready to standby Suffolk County and
15 find the skills, knowledge and resources needed to
16 meet the future challenges. To this task force I
17 would add to federal, state, county officials
18 generally who must grapple with the design of
19 funding of the next generation of senior programs.

20 And following my opinion are those areas that must
21 be given careful consideration to.

22 Adequate facility planning; 1 in 8 residents
23 60 years of age or older is a percentage that is
24 about to increase sharply.

25 Transportation; many more seniors are

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 entering the system, and those that are already in
3 the system, have longer lives and demand
4 transportation. That demand will increase.

5 I'm ad-libbing to the letter because I do
6 know you all have it, and I want to make sure I
7 keep with the flow.

8 A carefully planned and administrated
9 coordination of programs that build on services
10 offered by our HART fund. Suffolk County transit
11 and transportation services provided by our towns
12 would increase flexibility and utility and reduce
13 the number of vehicles using our local highway
14 system, thereby relieving one of suburbia's most
15 lasting problems, which is traffic congestion.

16 So, we certainly want to contribute more to our
17 transportation system, which we're unique in,
18 because Huntington does have it's own
19 transportation system.

20 One of the things that I'm very proud of is
21 our NNORC program, which is Neighborhood Naturally
22 Occurring Retirement Community, and this is what
23 we call "hands on Huntington." We just recently
24 incorporated. It is one of a demonstration type
25 program right now, but it has worked in other

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 areas. And this will enable and empower our
3 seniors to stay home while they're aging. We will
4 bring out social workers, nurses. We'll look at
5 what their needs are and, hopefully, address them
6 because, again, it will enable them to stay home
7 therefore, not having to go out to assisted
8 living, not having to go into a nursing home. And
9 this will, again, empower them, and that's
10 something I'm looking really forward to working
11 with further on.

12 And, of course, to address the mental health
13 issues that we see in our seniors today. The
14 physical well being of our senior population has
15 always been one of our fundamental goals. As in
16 the case of the broader population, we've only
17 recently begun to fully appreciate the need to
18 attend to the mental health needs of our seniors.
19 The town has noticed an increasing number of
20 senior programs participants who appear to be
21 dealing with the manifestation of behavioral or
22 mental disability. So, our staff would otherwise
23 be sufficient to conduct programs that must divert
24 attention to counsel and defuse what could become
25 volatile exchanges between troubled seniors and

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 other staff between seniors themselves. So many
3 changes, our staff is left then fully trained to
4 experience or to experience it and to provide such
5 intervention. So, mental health training
6 referrals and onsite professionals should be
7 designed as part of our future senior center
8 program, ultimately a program that will be cost
9 effective and also routine so that we can provide
10 the services needed in the line of mental health.

11 And affordable housing is always a
12 challenge. Whatever we can continue to do in the
13 Town of Huntington to make sure that our seniors
14 that are here are able to acquire affordable
15 housing, we will certainly do, but that is not a
16 task that we can do alone. But with your help, we
17 will be able to continue it.

18 And just in closing, with respect to the
19 question that Legislator Stern left with us, is it
20 good to grow old in Suffolk, I hope that with this
21 task force and us all working together, we will be
22 one day able to hopefully address that question
23 and be able to say yes. Yes, it is good to grow
24 old in Suffolk. So, thank you all. Thank you for
25 having me. Thank you, again.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 (Applause)

3 CHAIRMAN STERN: Councilwoman Jackson, thank
4 you so much for being with us today. I guess, two
5 points. One, of course, congratulations to the
6 Town of Huntington for the beginning of
7 implementing its NNORC program, and one that we're
8 all going to be looking to with great
9 anticipation, and hopefully one day we can have
10 you come back to update, perhaps, this task force
11 and perhaps, the Legislative Committee on veterans
12 and seniors as to how that program is doing,
13 because I think we all have hopes that it is a
14 program that will meet with great success and one
15 that can be replicated throughout Suffolk County.
16 I would also, I ask a favor of you and your
17 colleagues, the Town, one of the big issues that
18 this task force will be taking a very hard look at
19 is public transportation. And because the Town
20 of Huntington does have its own successful
21 transportation system, I know I'd certainly like
22 to know as much as I can about what the Town of
23 Huntington is doing so well, and maybe how we can
24 help at this level of government and every other
25 level of government to bring that type of

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2 successful program to our towns throughout Suffolk
3 County. And so, I would ask if maybe in the
4 coming days and weeks you would be able to provide
5 this task force with as much information regarding
6 the HART system as you can so that we can all take
7 a look. Thank you for being with us.

8 Any questions for Councilwoman Jackson?

9 (No questions from the panel)

10 CHARLIE GARDNER: Good morning, members of
11 the task force. My name is Charlie Gardner. I'm
12 the director of Suffolk County Executive Office of
13 Consumer Affairs. And in lieu of formal
14 testimony, I spoke to the chairman and I will give
15 a very brief overview of our office and how we
16 work and how we operate, and hopefully take any
17 questions any of you might have.

18 The Office of Consumer Affairs, the mission
19 of the Office, quite simply, is to make sure
20 people get what they pay for, whether that might
21 be a \$200,000 home improvement contract or any of
22 the everyday purchases we make, we all make at the
23 retail level throughout Suffolk County. Our
24 director of compliance serves in my stead and
25 member of the Suffolk County Office of Aging

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2 Senior Citizen Advisory Board, and through his
3 participation on this board, we hope to keep
4 abreast of any consumer related issues that might
5 be important to our senior citizen population. At
6 the same time, he brings information that we get
7 as far as what's going on in the market place
8 relating to scams or rip offs that might be
9 targeted at senior citizens. I think that one of
10 the most important missions of our office
11 especially for senior citizens, is knowledge and
12 education, because too often once the act has gone
13 down and somebody has been ripped off, it may be
14 too late and we find that too often, again, it's
15 because our senior citizens are simply too nice
16 and they just don't want to say no. In the past,
17 we have run a seminar with Holly and the Office of
18 Aging and that was one of our messages, to borrow
19 a cliché, just say no. We would ask people, well,
20 why did you go ahead or why did you do that?
21 Well, you know, he was so nice on the phone and I
22 just didn't want to say no. It sounded like my
23 grandson or my son. We've heard that over and
24 over and over again. Of course they sound nice.
25 You're not going to do business with somebody

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2 who's an arrogant jerk over the telephone. They
3 get paid to sound nice. And it's the same when
4 people go door to door. Too often our senior
5 citizens, there are home improvement people who
6 want to possibly do a roof or do some landscaping
7 or do a drive way or whatever, and when it is
8 something that you're not looking to do and you
9 have not initiated and somebody shows up whether
10 it's over the telephone or in person, we have to
11 remind them, please just say no. Sometimes you
12 have to be kind of the bad guy and just hang up.
13 Well, you know, I really didn't want to hang up.
14 Ma, you don't even know him. Why are you worried
15 about hurting his feelings? Just hang up. So,
16 again, knowledge and education to be prepared to
17 not say yes and not have somebody come over and
18 maybe do some work that you didn't want to do, or
19 if you're baffled by your receipt or you don't
20 think that you got what you paid for in the store.
21 And again, it's just well, I didn't really want to
22 complain, or I didn't want to go back, or I didn't
23 want to ask them. Call us and we'll help you out.
24 Scott Harris, Director of Compliance, he will talk
25 with you. If you identify a caller as a senior

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2 citizen, Scott will take over. And maybe you
3 don't even have to fill out all the paperwork,
4 because, again it's important to know what we
5 don't have. There are many areas that are not in
6 our jurisdiction; cablevision complaints, you
7 know, beauty salons or auto repairs and things
8 like that, but we know where to send you and we
9 know where to direct you to get to the right
10 jurisdiction. And maybe we can explain some
11 things over the phone. It might be just a
12 misunderstanding and not something that is really
13 a deceptive trade practice. We enforce the
14 consumer division of the Suffolk County code.
15 They're all civil in nature, but we also work
16 very, very closely with the Suffolk County
17 District Attorney's Office and the Suffolk County
18 Police Department for when a complaint crosses
19 over from civil into the criminal area. I think
20 Chairman Stern mentioned about identity theft.
21 That's criminal. We don't do that. We don't do
22 the investigating of it. That's a criminal case
23 that we would work with a unit in Suffolk County
24 PD Office. So, all of those types of information
25 serve as a base for knowledge, for education of

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 our population, especially senior citizens. And
3 really if we can get our message out, we ask you
4 to come up with suggestions to how we can better
5 work with the office of aging through our
6 pamphlets, our speech engagements to get that
7 message out.

8 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thanks for being here this
9 morning. And, of course, education is key. And
10 so, you had mentioned working with the office of
11 the aging and a couple of programs. Would you or
12 your colleagues have any ideas on how we can get
13 that message out in a more comprehensive way, how
14 we can continue to get the message out to those
15 who might not otherwise be taking an affirmative
16 step to come to the seminars that the office of
17 the aging does so well throughout Suffolk County,
18 how we can get this information, the next step,
19 maybe, into their homes or into their mailbox?

20 CHARLIE GARDNER: I think that the
21 coordination and cooperation between my office of
22 consumer affairs and Holly's office, the office of
23 aging, to then work together with the towns and
24 all the different senior citizen clubs throughout
25 the county in a more public speaking engagement

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2 program, because, again, fore-armed is fore-warned
3 and it's better that people get told that over and
4 over and over again how to take care of yourself
5 or how to protect yourself before you get,
6 quote-unquote, ripped off.

7 CHAIRMAN STERN: I can make a suggestion,
8 just shooting from the hip, but I know that
9 myself, my colleagues, we are making those
10 presentations within our communities, and we have
11 periodic mailings that go out to the constituents.
12 I would suggest that maybe the department, when
13 there's a bulletin, maybe when there's news of
14 some type of scam going throughout the community
15 that maybe there can be some type of advisory sent
16 to each of the district offices of all the
17 legislators. I'm sure my colleagues, like myself,
18 would do what we can to help get that information
19 out to whoever we come across, whatever
20 organization we might be speaking with during the
21 week and do our part to help in the distribution
22 of that information.

23 CHARLIE GARDNER: Yes, sir. That's
24 something that's certainly doable.

25 WILLIAM STONER: Just a quick comment:

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 First, I want to congratulate Suffolk County for
3 the program they have for the home improvement law
4 that they have with the contractors. We actually
5 have a state legislation that we're working to
6 pass, because we feel that the same protection
7 people have in Nassau, Suffolk and New York City,
8 they should have the same protection statewide.

9 CHARLIE GARDNER: Absolutely.

10 WILLIAM STONER: We've run into some
11 barriers, but we're still plugging away and
12 advocate for that.

13 The second is, I'm sure you're aware that
14 legislation passed last year so people can
15 proactively freeze their credit reports, so
16 someone cannot give their credit report and
17 actually get credit in their name. I don't know
18 how much work you did to educate the public about
19 that but the more people know about it, that there
20 is an opportunity before they become a victim of
21 identity theft, to freeze their credit reports so
22 no one actually can get into them. It's a huge
23 benefit, because it tends to be seniors that most
24 people are now going after, because they have good
25 credit ratings, they own their home, they have

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 good equity. So, I just wanted to bring that up.

3 CHARLIE GARDNER: Yeah, that's a good point.

4 We have some information about that on our website

5 and we work with the consumer protection board and

6 also the New York City Attorney General's office,

7 and again, knowledge, to try to get that

8 information out to as many people in as broad

9 spectrum in the population as possible.

10 CHAIRMAN STERN: What would you say right

11 now throughout Suffolk County and your office is

12 saying, what are the top one or two big issues

13 that seniors are facing when it comes to consumer

14 protection?

15 CHARLIE GARDNER: Even with the do not call,

16 which, by the way, we recommend that to everybody,

17 that you know, contact through the state consumer

18 protection board or, again, the attorney general's

19 office, they can point you in the right direction.

20 That do not call registry is very, very important,

21 because, again, it's tellermarketers, and Holly can

22 attest to the repeat telephone calls that we would

23 use at seminars and they just -- because, again,

24 mostly, senior citizens will not get off the

25 phone. They just won't hang up. They're just too

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 nice to these people who just have one thought and
3 that's to rip them off. And they give out
4 information they shouldn't give out over the phone
5 or they say yes to simply get the conversation
6 over with or instead of just hanging up that
7 phone, that and the people that go door to door
8 and they get into a community. You know, there
9 are two sides to that that makes it a very
10 abominable practice. One is people who might, you
11 know, they'll say, we just did a driveway down the
12 road and we have some extra stuff leftover in the
13 truck. Well, first of all, legitimate contractors
14 don't have leftover stuff that they're looking to
15 get rid of. That's number one. But more
16 important than the fact they would probably do a
17 very lousy job, for whatever it is they're going
18 to tell you they're going to do, whether it be a
19 landscaping job or a driveway, too often, and this
20 is where we work with the police, too often there
21 are one or two or three people working together
22 and while they're doing the job, they'll say, oh
23 jeez, it's real hot out here, can we have a glass
24 of water or some lemonade and oh, sure, yeah, come
25 on in, and that's when the really bad things start

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 to happen because they'll distract the homeowner
3 and they'll go into other rooms in the house and
4 rip them off from various items in the home. So,
5 again, it starts because these people are brazen
6 enough to do it, and because our senior citizens
7 are just too nice to just shut the door in their
8 face and they don't even call the cops and they
9 just keep talking to them, get them engaged in
10 conversation. They ask about their families and
11 they're just so nice. But we have to be not so
12 nice and just either hang up or shut the door in
13 their face. But those are the tellermarketers or
14 the people who go door to door. If you haven't
15 initiated it, you're not looking to do it and this
16 person just shows up, again, whether on phone or
17 in person, you got to say no.

18 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thanks very much.

19 CHARLIE GARDNER: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN STERN: I would look forward to
21 working with you and the department as we go
22 forward.

23 ROBERT MITCHELL: My name is Robert C.
24 Mitchell. I'm the attorney in charge of the legal
25 aide society in Suffolk County. And under that,

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 we have several divisions of criminal, family
3 court and law guardian, and appeals division. In
4 addition, we have the senior citizen division,
5 which is funded partially through the county. And
6 I would like to take this opportunity to thank
7 Mr. Stern and members of the legislature for
8 funding that they were able to supply us with the
9 last year. We always had a problem with funding
10 and it appears that Mr. Stern and the legislators
11 put the money back in and to allow Mr. Roach to do
12 his job on a professional level and represent the
13 senior citizens, and I assume we'll have the same
14 problem next year, and I'm looking forward to your
15 continued support. And with that I'll turn it
16 over to Mr. Roach.

17 GEORGE ROACH: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
18 members of the committee. My name is George
19 Roach, at least it was when I got up this morning.
20 And believe it or not, for the past 28 years I've
21 worked for the legal aide society here in Suffolk
22 County. I am the chief attorney for the legal
23 aide society senior citizen division. We're under
24 contract to the office for the aging, and we
25 provide legal services for senior citizens of

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Suffolk County who are at least 60 years of age or
3 over. We're a Title 3B program. That's our
4 funding source in addition to Suffolk County
5 Legislature. And again, I would like to add my
6 thanks to the chairman's efforts. He has been a
7 real champion in the legislative sphere for making
8 sure that this program, the senior citizen's
9 division and legal aide as a whole is able to
10 continue to operate by providing additional funds
11 for us. All the programs that are out there
12 competing for funds, he has been a real champion
13 to this program, and as a result has been a real
14 champion for senior citizens of this county for
15 allowing me to continue to do this work 28 years.
16 As I said, we provide the legal advice, counsel of
17 representation to the senior citizens of Suffolk
18 County. I've been doing it 28 years and hope to
19 continue to be able to do it.

20 This task force is a long time coming. It
21 is strongly needed to get a handle on the issues
22 that affect the quality of lives of our aging
23 society. It's no secret I'm a baby boomer, all
24 right, born 1951, and we're all facing those
25 issues. My own father, he turns 80 this year, all

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 right, still lives at home in the same house in
3 Brentwood for 46 years. Thank God my sister still
4 lives with him and keeps an eye on him. But
5 again, he's getting up there, he's getting frail.
6 We watch how he drives. So, we're all dealing
7 with those issues. To answer that question that
8 the chairman posed, is it good to grow old here in
9 Suffolk County, I think it depends on really two
10 things; your health and your finances. If you
11 have your health, it makes it a lot easier to grow
12 old. Your finances, if you're not so healthy, it
13 can certainly put your finances in jeopardy and
14 jeopardize your style of living. What we were
15 able to do, I handed out a packet of information
16 for each and every member of the committee. Jim
17 Karr, by the way, is the other gentleman to my
18 right, your left. When I came to this legal aide
19 society 28 years ago as a new attorney in the
20 senior citizen division, Jim was already here,
21 okay, so Jim has got 30 years of experience with
22 the legal aide society, and I have 28. So,
23 together we have one other part-time attorney, a
24 women named Loret Moley, who's a graduate of Touro
25 Law School. She's been with us about four or five

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 years now. Loret is a law review from Touro.
3 She's also an adjunct professor of law at Touro,
4 and she's just simply brilliant. The part-time
5 attorney thing has worked out for her and her
6 children because as a young woman, she has a young
7 family, three children and there are child care
8 issues that she has to face. So, the two and a
9 half of us really, we provide the legal services
10 to, we figure, approximately 250,000 people.
11 Think about that. That's a quarter of a million
12 people who live here in Suffolk County alone that
13 are at least 60 years of age or older. And as you
14 know, the demographic show from the charts, it's
15 getting larger and larger by the day.

16 The packet of information we handed out, Jim
17 was kind enough to pull all the files and put it
18 together. Two of the major areas that we see
19 affecting the lives of senior citizens as far as
20 legal problems they experience have to do with the
21 two largest economic situations seniors find
22 themselves in. One, if you own your own home and
23 property and sometimes in the process of
24 refinancing it, okay, and the perils they're at
25 when they try to refinance it and they do not

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 understand what's going on. You've seen those
3 stories in the newspaper, especially involving a
4 couple in Deer Park losing their house. And the
5 second one has to do with automobile purchases.
6 We all purchase automobiles and we don't give it a
7 thought, the price of cars is probably the second
8 largest purchase most people will ever make after
9 their home, their residence and you can't make
10 this stuff up. As you read through the material,
11 I ask you to digest it, read it and digest it at
12 your leisure. You can't make this stuff up, some
13 of the horrible scenarios that we're faced with as
14 far as automobile dealers, essentially as the
15 consumer affairs commissioner said, ripping older
16 people off, taking advantage of their good nature,
17 their lack of understanding as to the process.
18 Most people think because I'm purchasing an
19 automobile, I have a three day right to cancel my
20 sale, but you don't. You don't. If you refinance
21 your house, they give you three days to cancel the
22 sale and come back and decide to get your money
23 back if you change your mind, if you cancel. But
24 if you purchase an automobile, you don't have a
25 three day right, and they know this and they take

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 advantage of these people left and right. So,
3 those are the two major areas we see seniors at
4 economic risk with their home and the purchase of
5 an automobile. In addition to that, the other
6 difficulties they have for everything else that
7 they deal with on a daily basis is healthcare, all
8 right, and medicaid and all that other madness
9 that we deal with on a daily basis. As a matter
10 of fact, if you read yesterday's newspaper, page
11 7, call to reign in the loans, all right, it was
12 right there. You read those numbers based on what
13 the chairman has put up there, and they figure
14 between Nassau and Suffolk County 19,000 people
15 will be in foreclosure next year, all right, and
16 just divide that in half, saying half of Nassau
17 and half of Suffolk then take the percentage of
18 senior population that's out there and we're
19 looking at, if you do the math, conservatively
20 3-5% of those people, you're talking 300, 400
21 foreclosures that are going to be occurring here
22 in Suffolk County. We just handled a situation on
23 a referral from the chairman's legislative office.
24 One of his constituents came to us and she was in
25 foreclosure. And again, they wait too long. The

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 chairman's office, by the way, the district office
3 had given this women, given this women, this
4 constituent our name and phone number two months
5 prior to her contacting us. All you can do is
6 give the information and referral, you can't force
7 these people. And it was a week, she came to our
8 office a week before her house was up for sale on
9 the steps of Town Hall in Huntington, a week. We
10 had one week to stop that foreclosure. And you've
11 got to sit down with the client, they're losing
12 their home, they have a very convoluted story.
13 You have to peel away the layers and find out
14 exactly -- she was unclear as to what bank was
15 exactly foreclosing. There had been a litigation
16 history on this for the past several years that we
17 were unaware of. Once we peeled away that the
18 house was in foreclosure, she didn't know what
19 bank was foreclosing. So as hard as it is to
20 believe, you require a title search, all right.
21 The client, I was able to contact a local title
22 company, the attorney of who I happen to know
23 personally, he was able to intercede for me, order
24 an immediate mortgage search so we could find out
25 what mortgage was being foreclosed. Once we got

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 that back over the weekend, that was on Monday,
3 the house is being sold on Wednesday. Monday Jim
4 Karr went and got together and put together the
5 order to show cause to stay the foreclosure,
6 passed the ball off to me. I took it out and I
7 got it signed on Tuesday. Jim and I both served
8 the order and the referee, the foreclosure was off
9 on Wednesday. Now, what do we do at that point?
10 At this point we referred the woman onto a reverse
11 mortgage company so she could get a reverse
12 mortgage to replace that mortgage that's in
13 foreclosure, and hopefully that will be the end of
14 the situation. Right now we're waiting for the
15 reverse mortgage to be made in this case. But
16 it's the point of saying when you have to stop
17 everything else and gear up to a litigation
18 situation like that, and that's what we do, and it
19 gives you a good feeling. Like I said, I'm just
20 trying to get in heaven like everybody else. But
21 sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. So
22 that's the type of thing we do to sort of snatch
23 victory from the jaws of defeat.
24 Any questions from the task force? Jim just
25 reminded me this task force has authority and it

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 has power. A lot of times we will see a situation
3 occur where we need your effort in asking other
4 government agencies to create task forces to deal
5 with this. We can send the information out to the
6 attorney general's office about car leasing fraud
7 and purchase fraud. We can send it on to the
8 district attorney's office. Their resources are
9 somewhat limited. But we put the power of the
10 Suffolk County government behind a request for a
11 task force. And you'll see in the materials it
12 carries a lot of weight, and I would ask you to
13 consider that as you read through those materials
14 as to those problems that we highlighted.

15 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you for your
16 commitment and dedication. A great success story.
17 I guess my question is, it's yourself and there's
18 a part-time attorney. I guess for lack of a
19 better term, your clientele is only going to
20 increase. How would you characterize your current
21 ability to do all of the important work that you
22 do and what do you think your needs are going to
23 be in the future?

24 GEORGE ROACH: As far as the future goes, I
25 don't consider myself like Davey Crockett at the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Alamo. We're not taking any prisoners. At this
3 point, the senior citizen population is growing
4 larger and larger. A lot of these cases involve
5 some very sophisticated litigation. I've been an
6 attorney for 32 years and I've been at this senior
7 citizen stuff for 28. It's getting more and more
8 involved sometimes. There's always a need --
9 again, whether we could get the funding to keep
10 the program running now as it is, it would be
11 simply gravy to be able to say hey, I wish I had a
12 staff of six attorneys that could go out and do
13 what we call impact litigation, class action type
14 of stuff, where you pick up a stone and throw a
15 stone at Goliath. You sue the government over
16 something and you've got to be real careful what
17 you do. We're unable to do that type of
18 litigation because we simply don't have the
19 manpower. So we just sort of stick our finger in
20 the dyke and plug the holes where we can. And
21 I've been doing that and it seems to work. So,
22 it's a struggle. But again, hey, anything worth
23 doing is worth doing well.

24 GENE PRITZ: You mentioned you've been doing
25 this for 28 years. I just did a little math and

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 I've only been working with you for 23 years but

3 my question is this, all of these services are

4 free to people that come to you?

5 GEORGE ROACH: Oh, correct. These services

6 are free of charge. And people a lot of times

7 don't realize that. They hear legal aide and

8 right away they think you have to be poor enough

9 to qualify for it. Congress under the Old

10 American's Act mandated this. This is a mandated

11 service, Title 3B mandated services that legal

12 services are to be made available to the elderly

13 portion of your population solely by virtue of

14 their age. We don't send out bills, we don't ask

15 people how much money they have in the bank and

16 this is one of the problems with senior citizens

17 when you get involved with litigation. Litigation

18 gets very expensive. There are costs that senior

19 citizens sometimes have to bear. In the

20 particular case I gave with the woman who was in

21 foreclosure, we were able to go over to the county

22 clerk's office and get an exempt index number.

23 There is a provision in the law for an exempt

24 index number. So it didn't cost her the \$248 it

25 usually costs for an exempt index number.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 However, we don't have investigators or manpower
3 to go out and start researching the county
4 records, nor do we have the time. So the senior
5 citizen was required to pay. And this is where
6 the relationship came in when the person, the
7 counsel from the title company who I know had a
8 minimal cost of about a couple hundred dollars.
9 She was able to get a title report done on a rush,
10 that they were able to get back to me so we could
11 see exactly what mortgage was in foreclosure. She
12 was not sure what mortgage was in foreclosure, and
13 essentially, she had to write a check out for
14 that. We try to keep the cost at a minimal, but
15 when you get involved in any kind of litigation,
16 litigation gets very, very expensive; expert
17 witnesses. You make a motion in a case nowadays,
18 there's a fee. These are all called user fees for
19 the court system. You don't realize it until you
20 need to use the system and then you get hit with
21 those user fees. We try to keep it -- the service
22 is free, but sometimes in litigation there's a
23 cost involved.

24 GENE PRITZ: Thank you.

25 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Just to clarify on the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 3B programs, which is what the legal aide services
3 are provided through, there has to be an
4 opportunity for volunteering donations. So, even
5 though the service is free, the person who has
6 received the service must be allowed the
7 opportunity to provide a donation. The donations
8 are used to expand services, and it goes to reduce
9 what we give out and it's really to expand
10 services. The other thing, George, I don't think
11 you mentioned, one of the things you do and you do
12 very well throughout Suffolk County is that you do
13 presentations all over the place, and I guess as
14 much as you're not practicing law at that
15 particular moment, you are providing an enormous
16 benefit for seniors. I've seen your presentation
17 and it is a great, great public service that you
18 provide, and I just want to thank you for that.

19 GEORGE ROACH: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN STERN: In fact, I would probably
21 just reiterate what I asked Councilwoman Jackson
22 and also the commissioner, and that is perhaps
23 going forward. There could be a greater synergy
24 between yourself and your office and the
25 legislators who can take advantage of your

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 knowledge and willingness to come out and educate
3 the public and kind of drag you along to speak in
4 front of some of the organizations to help get
5 that message out to get the senior citizens and
6 their families the important information that they
7 need.

8 GEORGE ROACH: We're always ready, willing
9 and able. Part of our mandate of the Old
10 American's Act is community outreach, and people
11 can call up, libraries call up. I think I'm in
12 every library in Suffolk County in May day after
13 day. But certainly it's part of the outreach.
14 Knowledge is power, and I have no problem going
15 out to speak to any senior citizen group about the
16 program and what they should be aware of. So, I'm
17 happy to do those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 KARIN BENNETT: I have a question. Just a
19 quick question in terms of your experience with
20 the seniors that have trouble with the mortgage
21 industry and foreclosures. Do they share with
22 you, and possibly they do, what are the reasons
23 for the mortgages in the first place, the
24 refinancing? Is it predominantly for healthcare?
25 Is it predominantly for housing costs?

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2 GEORGE ROACH: The question very simply, I
3 don't know what the reasons are for the
4 refinancing. You have this equity, and you all
5 see the adds on TV, you know, tap into the equity,
6 cash back, cash out. And, again, advertising and
7 marketing, it's too slick, they make it too
8 attractive. Many times it is for healthcare
9 reasons if you ask them. I don't ask that
10 question, well, what did you do with the money. I
11 don't want to know what you did with the money,
12 whether you gave it away to your grandchildren.
13 My concern is that your house is in foreclosure
14 and I want to get you this reverse mortgage to get
15 out of it, and then my problem is solved. As
16 human beings, we all make our own judgments and I
17 don't make judgments on the clients. Whatever it
18 was, let's deal with the problem we have now.
19 That might be a good source of inquiry for the
20 committee to find out why people are refinancing
21 their houses.

22 CHAIRMAN STERN: George, thank you.

23 GEORGE ROACH: Members of the committee,
24 thank you again.

25 LISA TYSON: My name is Lisa Tyson, director

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 of the Long Island Progressive Coalition. I want
3 to thank the commission, as well as thank you for
4 the public hearing. We're here today to talk
5 about home sharing. Home sharing is a program
6 that matches the needs of people who need
7 affordable housing, for people who possibly need
8 to stay in their homes and need your support.
9 Paul Arfin has been an amazing advocate in this
10 program. And we think of this as a win/win
11 situation for Long Island. We have so many people
12 around Long Island that do not have affordable
13 housing not just seniors, all ages, do not have a
14 way to stay on Long Island and cannot find
15 affordable housing. We also have a population,
16 mostly a senior population, but there's also other
17 people in the population who are having a hard
18 time staying in their home, paying their property
19 tax, which are going up 5 to 7% every year, that
20 are really just saying, I don't know if I can stay
21 in my home anymore. Home sharing is a program
22 that you don't need to build new houses for. So,
23 this is an affordable housing program. It does
24 not require years ahead of time in order to
25 develop maybe a hundred homes. If there was a

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2 broad, deep program in Suffolk County which really
3 matched people up who need affordable housing for
4 people who need to stay in their homes, a check of
5 you know, their background check would be done by
6 the department, or an outside agency can always
7 run a program as well. And it could really create
8 a lot of new solutions for many people. So, there
9 are a lot of excellent examples of how this is
10 working. There are several places on Long Island
11 which are doing this program due to Paul Arfin.
12 We believe that this is a solution that the
13 commission really needs to look at more seriously.
14 If we were to put \$500,000 in this special
15 program, it might seem like a lot of money, but we
16 build a lot of matches for people, and you would
17 be saving people, the government money in medicaid
18 funding. You know, people are just on that very
19 scary level of not being able to pay what they
20 have. Having someone come in and pay three to
21 five hundred dollars in rent every month really
22 could be a huge solution for that family. It
23 could do so much for a person who needs affordable
24 housing. I mean, to think someone who needs
25 affordable housing could pay two to five hundred

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 dollars per month in housing costs on Long Island
3 is a huge solution for people who need affordable
4 housing. We're talking market rents \$1100 and up
5 for a one bedroom apartment. What's also great
6 about this program is, we've heard so much from
7 the panel today that you see the need for people
8 who need home care. Well, part of this agreement
9 could be partial home care. So, just to give an
10 example, you know, there is a senior who needs
11 help going to the supermarket, who needs help
12 going to a doctor's appointment, who just needs
13 tidying up around the house, maybe cooking some
14 meals, maybe there's a single mom with a few
15 children who has a car but she needs an affordable
16 place to live. She can take the senior to the
17 doctor's office, to the supermarket, she can do
18 the cooking, she can do the cleaning. You might
19 have an agreement where there's no money passed
20 between the two of them, or there could be a rent
21 involved in it. But, there's so many different
22 ways for this program to work. So many of the
23 problems you guys were talking about this program
24 can solve. We need more than a small amount of
25 funding for this program. We need a lot of money

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 to really advertise and publicize the program and
3 we need to be able to make adequate matches. We
4 want to make thousands of matches in Suffolk
5 County. There are thousands and thousands of
6 people who need this service right now, and this
7 commission can lobby in order to make this service
8 possible. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Just a couple
10 quick questions. This type of program, which, of
11 course, is happening now on probably a too small
12 of a scale, and I think my task force members
13 recognize that. When you talk about a bigger,
14 grander program to make a real impact, how do you
15 see the maximum effectiveness of that? Do you see
16 it as a not-for-profit organization that receives
17 funding to best be able to administer that
18 program? Is it a government run program? How
19 would you see that kind of a program working
20 better?

21 LISA TYSON: We see it working either way.
22 We support whichever one the government chooses to
23 use with their money. You know, nonprofits can do
24 a great job at it, as well as the government
25 department, you know, creating or having a few

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 people really dedicated towards such a thing in
3 the government would be a great thing to do, as
4 well. So either way we feel is our option. We
5 are not opposed to either option. You know,
6 currently there are nonprofits doing it, so I
7 could assume that they've already had those
8 expertise, so it would probably save money and
9 time to just having somebody who can do it, but to
10 really give a lot more money for such a thing.
11 The amount of money going into the programs right
12 now are really a small amount, and you know, the
13 smaller the amount, the fewer matches. And so, of
14 course, the dollars you put into it, the more
15 matches. And then as you have a larger amount of
16 the programs, you also have a climb in the scale
17 of the program as well. And we're also doing the
18 same in Nassau County as well.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: This is slightly off the
20 main topic you spoke about, but you did mention
21 taxes, certainly property taxes for seniors. Have
22 you or the coalition given any thought to, or come
23 up with any position as to property taxes and how
24 it affects seniors and what, in all levels of
25 government, we should be looking at, what we

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 should be considering when it comes to the amount
3 of property taxes that our seniors pay?

4 LISA TYSON: Definitely. One solution that
5 we've come up with in Nassau County is their tax
6 plan which basically takes the county property tax
7 and replaces that with a county income tax and
8 what that does is it makes county taxes based on
9 ability to pay. Right now our school taxes are
10 what's killing us. Unfortunately, we do not see
11 the state making any large changes in the near
12 future. I was on the tax commission in Suffolk
13 County recently and, you know, we came up with a
14 report not to replace school taxes with a level
15 income tax, because how you distribute that money,
16 it was just a nightmare, and we're really unclear
17 what school districts would get that. But having
18 an income on a county level is a much different
19 situation. And we've also always advocated for
20 apportionedly leaving some of the property tax
21 like they have in New York City, because that
22 creates a stable tax system in times of a
23 recession or something, you know, exactly how much
24 money was coming in. But the larger of that tax,
25 you know, just turn that into an income tax which

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 was based on the income, so most seniors are on a
3 fixed income and would not be paying that tax.

4 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: The home sharing program,
5 have you found that there's any source of funding
6 through, like, housing and urban development?

7 LISA TYSON: That, from my understanding,
8 that's where the money has been coming from at
9 this point. We think that there is additional
10 government funds that need to be part of that
11 program.

12 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: It seems like it should
13 be kind of a national effort because it does exist
14 around the country.

15 LISA TYSON: It does and so many success
16 stories in so many different areas, so we want to
17 be another area with a success story.
18 Unfortunately, we are \$50,000, \$100,000 and it's
19 just not enough for this program. The program is
20 a win/win situation. It immediately helps people.

21 The other solution is legalizing accessory
22 apartments. Right now it's illegal to have any
23 accessory apartment in your home. There is an
24 underground economy, a lot of people are doing it.
25 But the seniors I have spoken to are in fear of

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 getting in trouble because it is illegal. So,
3 legalizing accessory apartments, makes it so that
4 people can have a legal apartment in their home.
5 It would be great if we could make it an
6 affordable apartment which would be wonderful so
7 you could have a legal apartment. The Town of
8 Huntington does have a program that they do
9 legalize accessory apartments for seniors
10 specifically and I believe they expanded that, but
11 originally it started just for seniors. So, let's
12 say Island wide we can have legalized accessory
13 apartments town by town, you would find a lot of
14 seniors doing this. I had a woman who worked with
15 me who recently passed away. She was 76 years
16 old. And she had to transfer her house into an
17 apartment to stay in her home. She wanted to stay
18 in her home. This was her solution to stay in her
19 home and she did it very well. It was illegal,
20 though, and it really bothered her and scared the
21 hell out of her.

22 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: Years ago Michael
23 LaGrande was pushing that as part of, it's called
24 housing initiative, I think in the early 80s.
25 Does anyone else remember that? It was meant to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 assist and support shared housing. So, maybe that
3 is something that we could look at.

4 CHAIRMAN STERN: You bring up a very
5 important example, and that is, we could work
6 together to come up with great, broad policy here
7 at the county level of government, but also the
8 implementation comes down to the individual towns
9 and their land use powers and their zoning
10 authority and local ordinances, and that,
11 hopefully is one of the things to come out of this
12 exercise to come up with these initiatives that
13 can really work across these arbitrary town lines,
14 you know, for our entire region or entire
15 community. But, yeah, as I go door to door in my
16 community, I see it. I see it every day with this
17 situation where there are already younger people,
18 older people living down in basements, up in
19 attics as part of this underground economy. And
20 more often than not, seniors do share with me
21 those feelings that they feel like they are
22 criminals. They're made to feel that way because
23 we've been slow to react to what's very clear.

24 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: I would just like to say
25 that, you know, one of the things that I see in my

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 business in the township is that there are many
3 seniors that are house-rich, cash-poor and this is
4 an idea whose time has come. I agree with you.

5 LISA TYSON: You know, I've heard of many
6 seniors, unfortunately, who work on the medicare
7 issue and are trying to have a good prescription
8 drug program. We have just heard it from so many
9 seniors that, you know, it really comes down to
10 their prescription drugs versus their property
11 taxes and that's where we're at. And those are
12 the two highest things. I have people who are
13 going to die if they don't take their prescription
14 drugs. They're cutting them in half. This is the
15 two biggest things that people are finding and
16 unfortunately, the medicare prescription drug
17 program has not solved that. So, they're looking
18 at their property taxes as being their biggest
19 burden of their life, because that's what it's
20 about. And when that tax bill comes in, you know,
21 they know it's coming in, but they're horrified
22 how to pay it. And it's constantly going up. How
23 do we resolve that issue? Home sharing and
24 accessory apartments is a way to do that.

25 CHAIRMAN STERN: Maybe without going into

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 great depth, maybe you can share with all of us
3 maybe some of the reasons why the commission that
4 you are serving on felt that switching our method
5 of taxation here in Suffolk County wouldn't be a
6 good move, wouldn't work for us.

7 LISA TYSON: Well, we all agree that if the
8 state decided to change -- if the state decided to
9 pay more for schools, which is what they should be
10 doing, and this is separate from what's going on
11 right now with Governor Spitzer's budget with the
12 state aid formula for education, but if the state
13 would pay a larger chunk of the education funding,
14 which right now they pay less than 40%, much less
15 than that in many districts on Long Island, they
16 have to pay over 50%. So, what's happening is the
17 state is historically taking the money away from
18 public education which means that property tax
19 burden is continuing. So, whenever there's an
20 increase in the school budget, which there has to
21 be because of cost of living increases. I'm the
22 director of a nonprofit and every year we have
23 cost of living increases. It happens. Not that
24 the schools are, you know, having Cadillac
25 education, they're just trying to keep up what

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 they have. So, you know, their costs continually
3 go up and it's our property taxes that's paying
4 for that, where the state could pay more of the
5 percentage for education for everyone, which would
6 make it so property taxes are not the burden.
7 Property tax is a regressive tax. It's not based
8 on your income and your ability to pay it. So, we
9 are having a regressive tax, which means that the
10 lower income people, which tend to be seniors, are
11 the ones who are paying a much larger percentage
12 of their income, and that's where the problem is.
13 You know, you talk about the \$10,000 property tax
14 bill for someone who makes \$50,000 as opposed to
15 someone who makes \$200,000, it's a huge impact on
16 their life in what those differences are. And
17 unfortunately, seniors are really the group that's
18 being hurt the most, because they have the lowest
19 income, they're retired, they're on the fixed
20 income. Meanwhile, their costs are going up just
21 as much as everyone else. We are not advocating
22 for seniors not to pay taxes or not to pay
23 property taxes, but we think taxes should be based
24 on people's ability to pay. The commission worked
25 very hard to figure out how to distribute the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 money between the school system, and where would
3 the money go, and we just saw, almost like
4 consolidating the school districts. You know, the
5 problem is consolidating any services, who's going
6 to get the services, and what's going to be the
7 decision making process that that school is going
8 to get a pool and that school is going to get
9 books. So we found at the commission we could not
10 come up with a way for this to work on the local
11 level, but on the statewide level, we definitely
12 all agreed, and that was in the beginning of the
13 report, that the state should pay more for
14 education and that that should be distributed
15 fairly, as well.

16 CHAIRMAN STERN: So, you're saying then that
17 the issue was not necessarily one of fundamental
18 fairness or the amount of money that can be
19 raised, it was more of an issue on implementation
20 and how it would be distributed?

21 LISA TYSON: Exactly. Exactly. And there
22 was a big issue of how it would be collected and
23 whether or not we would have all of the school
24 funds being collected or you know, keep some of
25 the property taxes. When you're talking about an

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 income tax to pay for schools, you're talking
3 about a very large percentage of income tax. New
4 York City has 4% on average, a 4% income to pay
5 for government services. We chose to do locally
6 just a property tax. You know, they have 4%, but
7 when you're looking at the numbers, you're looking
8 at more than 4%. So, it's kind of scary to look
9 at how we could do that on Long Island. I think
10 the numbers just do not come together. I'm also
11 on another commission to evaluate schools, and
12 we're kind of in the same place where there's a
13 lot of stuff going on. We're in the middle of
14 writing a report right now. But looking at all of
15 the different issues, these things are just huge
16 issues, and everything comes back to the state.
17 So, the question is what can we do locally that we
18 do not need New York State for, that we can really
19 make a difference? And when it comes to
20 affordable housing, you were right, it's the town.
21 That is our biggest problem. And you know we here
22 all across Long Island might be having this thing,
23 we need more affordable housing. Well, the towns
24 are not saying that, and if they're saying it,
25 they're not doing it. It's interesting, because

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2 most people having projects on Long Island are for
3 seniors because they don't have kids being put
4 into school. So that's why it's a project to get
5 through a planning process, because there are
6 people in the community and it's probably one of
7 the least things the community comes out to oppose
8 which is wonderful. But still, we've estimated
9 there's not even a fraction of senior housing
10 being built right now that we need. It's just not
11 going to happen in the next 30 years when people
12 really need it, and then in 30 years will we need
13 it. We don't know. So, are we going to build
14 Long Island up and build all this housing where
15 maybe it's just temporarily that we need that and
16 that's why accessory apartments and home sharing
17 is a greater solution. And you know, why do
18 people come to Long Island. People move away from
19 the city, you know, to have a different type of
20 lifestyle. So we want to make sure that our
21 downtowns are grownup, you know, we build our
22 downtowns, we build in the appropriate areas but
23 the rest of Long Island needs to stay like Long
24 Island.

25 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

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2

3 MYRA WALLACH: My name is Myra Wallach, and
4 I live at a senior citizen residence for
5 independent living in Melville. I pay
6 approximately \$70,000 a year for a two bedroom
7 apartment and two meals a day, plus housecleaning
8 and certain other small services. My rent has
9 been increased by 5% a year in the two and a half
10 years that I've been living there.

11 The reason I am here today is that I do not
12 think we are getting value for our money. We need
13 some kind of a forum where we can present our
14 problems and our concerns to an arbitrator or a
15 referee without the formality of a formal lawsuit,
16 and the referee could determine whether or not we
17 were getting what we have contracted for, or if we
18 were, okay and if not, that some kind of a
19 monetary damages can be assessed. If we complain
20 or express any concerns, nothing is done about it.
21 Now, we have been told that this is a private
22 contract made by freely contracting parties, and
23 if we don't like the services we're getting, we
24 can leave. Well, that is not an option. The 50
25 or so residents who are living at this facility

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2 are within the ages of 75 to 97. Only one of them
3 as far as I know, still works. Some of them still
4 drive their cars, some of them have walkers or
5 canes and some have personal aides to help them.
6 So, looking for another place to live, if they
7 weren't satisfied, is not something they can
8 easily do. First of all, there aren't enough
9 other facilities within the area that are
10 available. Secondly, most of them have come to
11 this spot that they're at because either it's
12 familiar to them or have children or relatives or
13 somebody who are there to help them in an
14 emergency, and they have established a network of
15 doctors which they go to very frequently, and so
16 any kind of a change for them to make, would be
17 quite traumatic for them. They have frailties or
18 they have limitations and to pick themselves up
19 and move to another place is not something they
20 can do. But, furthermore, if they move to another
21 place, what assurance do they have that the other
22 place would be any better or they wouldn't be
23 meeting the same difficulties, and what if the
24 person who took over the residence that they left,
25 he or she would be in the same position of not

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2 being able to assure themselves that he was
3 getting the service that he contracted for. So, I
4 believe that we need a law to compel the owner to
5 live up to the agreement and representations that
6 they have made in their contract. In other words,
7 to level the playing field. I could list some of
8 the complaints that we have, but I don't want to
9 take the time of the group today to do it. But,
10 the other thing that I think we need to consider
11 is that the question of a rent control, legal way
12 to limit the rent that we have to pay, because
13 those owners can charge us any kind of rent they
14 want and there's nothing that we can do about it
15 and we either have to pay it or leave. And most
16 of the people who are at these facilities have a
17 limited amount of money that they acquired in one
18 way or another through the years and they hope it
19 will last them for the rest of their lives. And
20 if they are made to pay excessive rent, then
21 obviously, they can end up as public charges.

22 So in conclusion, we need a law that will
23 help, that will help us have some meaning of
24 assurance that we get what we pay for, and are not
25 subjected to unreasonable rent for what we do get.

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2 And I might point out, just as a possibility, they
3 have such a law, as the lemon law for cars where
4 if you don't get the car you agreed to purchase,
5 you have a means of recovering it. So, we need a
6 law to provide for getting the home service that
7 we are paying for. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you, and thanks so
9 much for being here today. Maybe you can share
10 with us maybe the top two or three --

11 MYRA WALLACH: Oh, okay. I have a list here
12 I will mention it.

13 CHAIRMAN STERN: The three, the three
14 biggest.

15 MYRA WALLACH: Well, one of the things, for
16 example, you have a refrigerator, the refrigerator
17 goes bad, some of the people have had to wait for
18 days or weeks before a new refrigerator was
19 provided for them or some repair. And the other
20 thing with regard to the heating system, during
21 the coldest weather, we had no heat. They were
22 fixing it and it was weeks before we got proper
23 heat again. But, the biggest problem is with
24 regard to food and in the dining room, the way the
25 service is provided, the way the food is

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2 presented, they run out of food, the food is too
3 salty, and they don't have adequate choices for
4 people who might be diabetic or have some other
5 food limitation, and the tables aren't cleared
6 satisfactorily before they serve the dessert, so
7 forth. So, they talk about, they present it as
8 elegant dining, but the fact of the matter is,
9 much less than elegant, and people are constantly
10 displeased over the way the food is served. Most
11 of the time it's cold and not hot, so on and so
12 forth. The chairs aren't always clean, and
13 various things about the manner in which the food
14 is provided and other things in the apartment,
15 also, are constantly coming up, and when you
16 complain and tell them that, you know, this isn't
17 what we expected, sometimes it improves for a
18 moment or two and then the same thing continues.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: I apologize if I didn't
20 hear you mention it before, but is there a
21 resident's association?

22 MYRA WALLACH: I am part of the resident's
23 association. I am on the board, and I have
24 brought with me the president of our resident's
25 association, but we talk and we talk and we talk

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2 and we talk and we get nowhere. They say yes, and
3 as I said, sometimes they get improvements for a
4 day or a week or two and then the same thing goes
5 on. We have no power. We have no clout.

6 CHAIRMAN STERN: Holly.

7 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: I guess there are two
8 things I want to mention. If the food is not
9 being served at the correct temperatures, by that
10 I mean that they are not within the range, the
11 Suffolk County Health Department, I believe would
12 have something to do with that. The other part I
13 wanted to ask you is, you talked about rent
14 increases. What was the percentage increase that
15 they went up over the past couple of years?

16 MYRA WALLACH: I personally have had two 5%
17 rent increases, one each year. The point is, I
18 personally, would not feel so bad about the rent
19 increase if I felt that what they were giving us
20 was commensurate with the increases that they were
21 requesting. But the fact is, I feel they raise
22 the rent and cut down as much as they can on the
23 service they give us.

24 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Again, with the meals,
25 it might be that they're not meals that you want,

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2 but I guess, the meals are not being served in the
3 proper range, is that what you're saying?

4 MYRA WALLACH: If you went to a diner, you
5 would get better than what we get. They run out,
6 they have shortages. Like last night, for
7 instance, three things that they had on the menu,
8 they ran out, so people couldn't get what they
9 wanted.

10 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: But is the food being
11 served hot when it's supposed to be hot?

12 MYRA WALLACH: It's not served hot.

13 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: There's a chairman
14 from the health department in the audience that
15 you may want to speak to just to talk about it.
16 He's sitting over there. He may be able to help
17 you a little better. He's the one with glasses
18 and dark hair.

19 MYRA WALLACH: Well, we've indicated to them
20 it's against the health laws for the food not to
21 be served hot, but so what, they don't do
22 anything. I mean, I don't know if I'm supposed to
23 report them to the health department and see
24 whether --

25 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: I think you just did.

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2 I think John might be able to help you a little
3 bit.

4 MYRA WALLACH: Thank you.

5 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Could I just ask you,
6 what did you say your annual rent was?

7 MYRA WALLACH: \$70,000.

8 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. I just wanted her
9 to mention that one more time.

10 MYRA WALLACH: Which, in my opinion, ought
11 to get us some very nice service.

12 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: I guess I just wanted to
13 say, I think this is really a national issue, this
14 particular issue, and I guess we're referring to
15 assisted living here. And we certainly need to
16 look at some ways they maybe even locally we can
17 extend the service that we offer in our nursing
18 homes to the assisted living. That might be a
19 first start, and give you a little more ammunition
20 when you make your complaints.

21 CHAIRMAN STERN: And, of course, expanding
22 the mandate for, at least here in New York, the
23 relatively new assisted living law to actually
24 cover those facilities out there that are
25 providing these kinds of service. I know that we

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2 were all so excited when New York finally came up
3 with the law or regulation regarding assisted
4 living facilities, but then the question was, what
5 is an assisted living facility, and this great new
6 law, unfortunately, doesn't apply to so many
7 facilities out there. And Carolyn, that's a great
8 suggestion, and hopefully, we can work on ensuring
9 that the laws that are out there actually apply to
10 those facilities that are providing those
11 services.

12 BRUCE BLOWER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For
13 the record, I'm Bruce Blower. I'm the director of
14 Suffolk County office of handicap services, which
15 is part of the human services division of county
16 executive offices. I want to congratulate
17 Chairman Stern for convening this task force and I
18 see a lot of people up here that some of which
19 I've known over the years. Rita, nice to see you
20 back. I'm looking forward to participating in any
21 way that I or my office can.

22 Since we deal with disability issues for
23 seniors and non-seniors alike, there's a common
24 thread of issues that we are concerned with, much
25 as this task force is. We deal with people who

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2 are disabled, who are not seniors, and two of the
3 biggest needs that we have are housing, which is
4 one that faces seniors, and also use of public
5 transportation. One of the problems, as pointed
6 out here, is senior citizen transportation
7 provided by towns that does not cross town lines.
8 So, you have essential transportation services, a
9 person wants to go to the doctor for a medical
10 visit, lives in the Town of Islip but is going to
11 Stony Brook, which is in the Town of Brookhaven.
12 Essentially transportation does not carry them
13 outside of the town. We have an agreement through
14 the county paratransit system, known as SCAT, with
15 the Town of Huntington paratransit system, which
16 is known as HART, Huntington Area Rapid Transit,
17 that the Councilwoman was speaking about before,
18 where if the trip originates within Huntington
19 Township and a person is eligible for paratransit,
20 the county paratransit system will go into the
21 town, pick up the individual and take them to a
22 designation outside of the Town of Huntington
23 where the HART system does not service it, and in
24 return for that, if we have a person who is
25 eligible for Suffolk County paratransit that lives

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2 within the Town of Huntington and is requesting
3 transportation only within the Town of Huntington,
4 then instead of the county paratransit going in
5 and doing it, the town HART paratransit does that
6 trip. So, this is one example of how towns and
7 county transportation systems can work together to
8 provide the services that are needed. And I would
9 urge the chairman to invite Bob Shinick, who is
10 the director of county transportation operation
11 division of the Suffolk County Department of
12 public works to a future task force meeting, and
13 he would probably have a much better handle on
14 transportation issues that I think are a prime
15 concern to both senior citizens as well as all
16 people with disabilities.

17 On the area of housing, there is presently
18 in US Congress a bill going through and it's
19 actually stalled at the moment, but it's something
20 that senior citizens should be looking at as well
21 as us, and that's called a visitability bill, and
22 what that simply means is that all new
23 construction, even single family housing, would
24 have to be constructed under the federal
25 regulation of visitability, which simply means

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2 that a disabled person, a person in a wheelchair
3 would be able to get in and out of one entrance
4 for that house, and also would have a bathroom on
5 the main level that's accessible by a wheelchair,
6 that's large enough in space to accommodate a
7 wheelchair, if one is needed in the future, and
8 also the person would be able to move around the
9 kitchen. Even though you do not have to construct
10 the handicap facilities, such as grab bars and so
11 forth, at this time, the layout would be such that
12 a person, when grandpa has a stroke, comes home
13 from the hospital and is using a walker or a
14 wheelchair, would be able to get in and out of
15 their own house without going through major
16 modifications. All you would have to do would be
17 to install grab bars in certain areas, raise or
18 lower the sink and probably put in a handicap
19 accessible toilet which is higher to facilitate
20 transfer from a wheelchair to that toilet. We've
21 worked with New York State Legislature to try and
22 get a visitability bill in New York State, and we
23 will be continuing to make that push, but it's
24 going to take a long time, even if that law was
25 passed tomorrow, to change over all the housing

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2 stock, because it would apply only to new
3 construction. Presently, the laws, the American's
4 with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Amendment
5 Act, both federal laws, only affect apartments or
6 condominiums that have 15 or more housing units in
7 them. So, when you get down to the smaller unit
8 townhouses and single family houses which are
9 predominant here in Suffolk County, there's no
10 existing law to make access a requirement. So,
11 this is where we get into trouble. Everybody
12 aspires to be a senior citizen. I've gotten that
13 AARP card a number of years ago, happy birthday.
14 What a shock that was how they get my birth date
15 and name, but they come through. So, that was the
16 first notice I had that I'm getting into the
17 senior years. I can hardly remember when that
18 came, so I'm well up there with you folks, as
19 well. But the point is, we all aspire to be
20 senior citizens, but nobody is aspiring to have
21 bad health and become a disabled person. It 's
22 one of those issues that nobody thinks about until
23 suddenly it happens and then you say, hey, how
24 come? How come there's no facilities? How come I
25 can't get into a public building? How come when I

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2 come home from the hospital, I can't get up the
3 three steps to get into my house? These are
4 things that we don't like to look at, but these
5 are things that I'm sure this task force is going
6 to look at, and we would be more than happy to
7 provide any support and information that you would
8 like. On another token, we could work closely
9 with the office for aging and Holly and the other
10 county departments, consumer affairs, which you
11 heard, the health department, which is going to
12 check into the problem of poor food and meal
13 temperatures and so forth. And I think what we
14 really need, there are a lot of programs out there
15 and different departments of government, both on a
16 county level, state level and federal level and we
17 need more collaboration among the departments, and
18 that's an initiative that's being pushed by the
19 federal government and the state with the single
20 point of entry, which I'm sure you're familiar
21 about, and Holly's been working with it, and
22 Holly's the lead agency in the county on that
23 state and federal initiative. And ultimately,
24 when that thing is active, what it's going to be
25 is one phone number, one place where anybody can

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2 call, whether you're a senior or not and get the
3 information of who's doing what, what services are
4 available and how do you contact them. It isn't
5 here yet. It's going to be a ways down the road,
6 but I think that would go a long way to help both
7 our respective constituents.

8 So, I'll stop there, Mr. Chairman. I thank
9 you for the privilege of being here and being able
10 to speak. If anybody has any questions, I'll be
11 happy to answer them.

12 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you, and thanks so
13 much for being with us. I'm familiar with the
14 proposed federal law. Are you familiar with any
15 ordinances and any other laws in other
16 municipalities of the state that have this
17 requirement, and maybe how it's working there?

18 BRUCE BLOWER: Right. There are a few
19 states. It actually started in cities in the
20 Midwest and it has been in existence in a couple
21 of places. I can get the task force information.
22 I don't have it off the top of my head. But we've
23 been working not only with the state, but with my
24 counterpart in the Nassau County government on
25 this, to try and get it here to Long Island. And

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2 it needs a modification, really. It's state
3 legislation. All towns on Long Island use the New
4 York State fire prevention building code as a
5 requirement for a new home start. So, we think
6 that's the way to go to get it on state level.
7 There was a draft of a bill that was considered by
8 a coalition that we're involved with about 40
9 agencies of people with disabilities in Nassau and
10 Suffolk Counties, and that was one we were working
11 on the state level. But as I say, it's not been
12 introduced yet, but I'll get the background on
13 other places where it is in existence. And it's
14 such a practical thing, that it doesn't cost a lot
15 when it's built in the beginning. It's much more
16 expensive to go back and retrofit. If you build a
17 handicap access from the get go, it costs about
18 one percent of the total cost of the building,
19 where as, if you have to go back and modify a
20 bathroom, widen doorways, put in a ramp, you're
21 talking \$50,000 to \$100,000 worth of money to
22 modify an existing single family home. So it's a
23 favor, quite considerable savings. It also gives
24 the person the ability to stay in their own home
25 when a disability happens. And I think you said

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2 yourself, Mr. Chairman, none of us want to be in a
3 nursing home. And the other thing I would say is,
4 like a lot of us, I don't want my kids to pick my
5 nursing home. I'm going to pick my own way of
6 going when that time comes, if it comes. I hope
7 that answers your question.

8 GENE PRITZ: As a follow up, you mentioned
9 there's a bill before the United States Senate?

10 BRUCE BLOWER: It's in the Congress, sir,
11 it's not in the Senate.

12 GENE PRITZ: Would you have the bill number
13 by any chance?

14 BRUCE BLOWER: I would have it in the
15 office, and I could get that to you, sure.

16 GENE PRITZ: Would you please?

17 BRUCE BLOWER: Sure.

18 GENE PRITZ: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: Anybody else? Thank you.

20 BRUCE BLOWER: Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRMAN STERN: Tara Purcell.

22 TARA PURCELL: Good morning, and thank you
23 for inviting me to participate in the senior
24 citizen task force. I am a geriatric social
25 worker, and have worked with for seniors for over

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2 20 years. I presently work at Broadlawn Manor
3 Adult Day Health Program. This is a medical day
4 care program for frail, elderly adults located on
5 the campus of South Oaks Hospital in Amityville.
6 I have been working with these seniors for over
7 ten years. Prior to this employment, I worked in
8 both home care and nursing homes. I am also the
9 co-chair for Suffolk SUN. Suffolk SUN or senior
10 umbrella network is a group of professionals which
11 meet on a monthly basis to discuss senior citizens
12 issues and concerns. We have guest speakers and
13 it is also an opportunity for professionals to
14 network with others in the field of gerontology.
15 Given my expertise in working with the elderly and
16 as a primary caregiver of my own very independent
17 76 year old mom, I believe that there are three
18 important issues, or as I like to think of it,
19 quality life issues affecting Suffolk County
20 seniors today.

21 The first significant issue is
22 transportation. So many of our seniors would like
23 to continue to live independently and be able to
24 attend to doctors' appointments, food shopping,
25 etc. But due to the lack of transportation

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2 services, many have to ask others for assistance.
3 Many seniors do not keep regular doctors'
4 appointments because of the unavailability of
5 transportation to meet their needs. Many seniors
6 do not want to ask their children for help, and as
7 one senior expressed to me, I feel like a prisoner
8 in my own house. Seniors feel isolated and alone.
9 Transportation must be made more affordable and
10 easily accessed by all seniors.

11 The second issue is affordable housing for
12 our seniors. Our economy has caused property
13 values and housing costs to rise, and that makes
14 it more difficult for many seniors to continue to
15 afford to live in Suffolk County. Many seniors
16 express concerns about their tax bill and their
17 rent. Priority should be given to acquiring
18 property for affordable housing in areas where
19 transportation and shopping are accessible. Most
20 feel there is no money at the end of the month and
21 feel their quality of life has diminished.

22 The third significant issue I feel seniors
23 face in Suffolk County is the lack of awareness of
24 services available to them. Most seniors are
25 unaware of financial entitlements or community

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2 programs that are available to assist them to live
3 independently. Many seniors who are interviewed
4 for our medical daycare program often state they
5 were unaware of daycare programs in Suffolk
6 County. Seniors must have tools available to them
7 to access services and a process to inform them of
8 available programs which they are entitled to
9 have. So, in answer to this question, is it good
10 to grow old in Suffolk County, most of my seniors
11 would say it is truly a struggle.

12 Thank you for this time.

13 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

14 WILLIAM STONER: Just a quick comment. You
15 mentioned you're from the senior umbrella network
16 in Suffolk County.

17 TARA PURCELL: Yes.

18 WILLIAM STONER: I can't miss the
19 opportunity to mention that we are working
20 currently with the senior umbrella network of
21 Nassau and Suffolk counties, Suffolk County, the
22 metropolitan transportation counsel to put on a
23 conference of sorts where we look at issues,
24 specifically of transportation concerns of the
25 aging population and come up with solutions.

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2 We're looking to put together a panel of speakers,
3 expert speakers, and then create work groups
4 afterwards to make some priorities and some
5 legislative proposals and other policy changes.
6 So, I'm encouraged that we have this task force,
7 but with that effort I'm hoping that we can make
8 some great headway on addressing some of the major
9 concerns we have in Suffolk County. And we're
10 doing the same in Nassau and in Rockland County
11 also.

12 TARA PURCELL: Thank you.

13 PAM GIOCIA: I have a question too, Tara.

14 TARA PURCELL: Sure.

15 PAM GIOCIA: With transportation, now, you
16 know, that all ten of the towns do run
17 transportation programs. And like where I am in
18 the Town of Southampton, I think all of the towns
19 have a pretty extensive program where we transport
20 seniors and the disabled to wherever they need to
21 go. So, is the problem that you see not enough of
22 this, or is it more of the problem of, as I see
23 it, not being able to get people from like, maybe
24 way out east into Stony Brook crossing those town
25 lines?

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2 TARA PURCELL: Well, actually crossing town
3 lines is an issue. Also, like crossing into like,
4 Suffolk County into Nassau County. Like, for
5 example, quality of life issue, wanting to visit a
6 relative who may live on the border of Nassau and
7 Suffolk that they can't go to see because they
8 don't have available transportation.

9 PAM GIOCIA: So, you would think that it's
10 more coordination, more of a coordination effort
11 between everyone?

12 TARA PURCELL: A coordination effort, and
13 inability to have more services. You know, many
14 seniors live in their private homes on dead end
15 streets that are not near a big cross
16 intersection, so they, you know, can't walk to get
17 to the bus. So, it's difficult for them.

18 PAM GIOCIA: Well, with the public
19 transportation, I think, again, I'm speaking from
20 the east end, most seniors can't use public
21 transportation just for that reason, you know,
22 they can't walk. But the town service is door to
23 door. The town service is, and I think that's
24 pretty much true in all the towns.

25 TARA PURCELL: But it's mostly for essential

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2 transportation such as doctors' appointments,
3 shopping. Some of them would love to visit a
4 grandchild or somebody else that doesn't live, you
5 know, that close.

6 PAM GIOCIA: That type of expansion?

7 TARA PURCELL: Yes.

8 PAM GIOCIA: Okay. Good.

9 TARA PURCELL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN STERN: Anyone else?

11 JOHN SEATON: Good morning and thank you for
12 the invitation to the Moriches Nutrition Program.
13 I stand before you as president and CEO of the
14 Moriches Nutrition Program, which has been
15 providing meals for over 20 years at the rate of
16 about 35,000 meals a year. We have a program
17 involving 70 volunteers that deliver food everyday
18 on nine routes. I also wear another hat. I'm
19 also an employee of the County Health Department.
20 I'll be finishing 40 years June the 6th. I am
21 responsible for the folks that do the inspections
22 at the nutrition programs to make sure the health
23 requirements are being met and, of course, our
24 focus when we talk about the health department, is
25 on food. So, I empathize with the woman who spoke

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2 before about having these food issues, and I would
3 be more than upset. I'd be in that kitchen
4 finding out what's going on if I was a member of
5 that home. And we will find out who is
6 responsible and get somebody to take care of that.

7 When you invited me, I really didn't have a
8 thought in mind. I thought maybe you were going
9 to ask me some questions, so I kind of left my
10 mind open as to whatever was needed at this point.

11 But as I hear, there are many different facets
12 involving senior issues, and since I just reached
13 62, I think it's becoming a crisis in my own mind
14 here. Reality stinks but I'm here. I think one
15 of the things that I would address is the issue of
16 volunteerism. I think the new generation of
17 seniors coming up are not the frail people type.
18 They've been active all this time and they're
19 going to look for activity. I don't know if
20 there's a clearing house for volunteers and
21 organizations, but maybe that is something that
22 could be used county wide. So, if somebody wakes
23 up one morning and says, I would really like to do
24 this, and yeah, they're going to go out for the
25 bird walk, but maybe there's a person I can help

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2 in some capacity, whether it's in a nutrition
3 program, whether it's transportation, whether it's
4 going to get prescription drugs for somebody,
5 there's always a need, if we can connect the need
6 to the people who can fulfill the needs. And I
7 have to tell you, I'm constantly amazed at our 70
8 volunteers. If gas price is up \$3 a gallon and
9 nobody says boo. You know, they come once a day,
10 an hour a day with a smile on their face and they
11 leave with a bigger smile because they brought joy
12 to the person they served. And I don't need to
13 tell you, but maybe I should, this particular type
14 of program actually saves lives. We have saved
15 about 20 people's lives between strokes, between
16 accidents that happened where people couldn't get
17 up, always contacting the next caregiver who's on
18 the list and saying, hey, we had this issue, if
19 you want to look into your family member. And you
20 can go to our file in any nutrition program and
21 there are stacks of letters, but thank you is just
22 indescribable and you can say I'm glad I got up
23 this morning and I could do this. And so I'm glad
24 you got up this morning so you could do this,
25 because not only are we helping others, we are

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2 eventually going to help ourselves. So, I don't
3 know if I can be a resource for you. I would like
4 to if you ask specific questions. I do know the
5 department takes it very seriously, that we bring
6 hot food and safe cold food to seniors, because
7 the last thing the seniors need, with all the
8 other things is to get sick from the food that
9 they eat that's provided by others. And I teach
10 our food managers course. I actually teach all of
11 the owner-operators, the managers in restaurants
12 on how to prepare food so we don't get sick in our
13 restaurant. There are also other people who
14 operate our nutrition programs. So, if there are
15 issues in that nature, I would be happy to serve
16 and do presentations and speak to the senior
17 public as to how they can prepare their food.
18 They need to read those labels and when it says
19 keep hot foods hot, mean it. You know, we do have
20 issues when we travel and visit these seniors
21 where they leave food out all the time and then
22 they want to go back and pick at it, you know, and
23 that's about the worst thing you can do, because
24 people can get sick that way. So, we're all about
25 keeping them healthy for as long as we can.

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2 That's about it.

3 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you very much for
4 being here. Maybe just a follow up on the issue
5 that you raised. In these types of facilities,
6 whether it's nursing homes, assisted living
7 facilities, adult homes, is food preparation that
8 kind of issue that the department has run across
9 with any kind of frequency?

10 JOHN SEATON: It's kind of interesting that
11 you asked that question, because we just had to
12 deal with the state as to who's responsible for
13 what. And in the senior housing industry, if you
14 will, there's many different levels and
15 breakdowns. And when you deal with the state with
16 multi agencies and the county with multi agencies,
17 it's who's responsible for what. I can tell you,
18 we don't issue permits to nursing homes in Suffolk
19 County, the state does, okay? But we also have a
20 person's name I can call and say, hey, you need an
21 inspector down there to check on what's going on,
22 and that's what we'll do. As far as getting
23 complaints from senior homes is concerned, at this
24 point, very few, but we're not the office that
25 should receive them. They should be received at

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2 the state level. I can see to it that that issue
3 gets reviewed anyway, and we can find out what the
4 story is. And I don't understand why there's not
5 a nutritionist in there doing those special meals,
6 you know, the saltless meals for the people, you
7 know, and so on. That should be part of that
8 program automatically, I would think.

9 GENE PRITZ: You mentioned the department of
10 health is responsible for food. What other areas
11 are the department of health responsible for?

12 JOHN SEATON: I think there are some nursing
13 units in the department that address some of the
14 nursing issues and in home treatment issues that
15 are still required. I do know, my experience is,
16 the department used to have a lot of visiting home
17 nurses. They contracted some. I think there are
18 some available. It's probably first come, first
19 served. Most immediate gets the treatment first.
20 And I used to work with some of these nurses who
21 did this and they were 8 in the morning, 6 clock
22 at night, sometimes 6 or 7 days a week just
23 because they were worried about their clients and
24 their patients. And they do the home nursing care
25 to help keep them out of the hospital. So I know,

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2 the department does that. I would suggest maybe
3 you contact the administration office and have one
4 of those officials come in and talk about the
5 broad scope of our agency, because there are a lot
6 of people in it doing a lot of things.

7 GENE PRITZ: As long as you offered, can we
8 have your phone number?

9 JOHN SEATON: My office number, 852-4852.

10 GENE PRITZ: Would you repeat that?

11 JOHN SEATON: 852-4852. In reference to
12 food complaints, food training, and anyone who
13 wants to speak to any organization who wants to
14 know how to prepare and serve food safely in their
15 home of seniors, I would love to talk before a
16 group. I'm not afraid of 200 people. I'm not
17 afraid of 20 people. You decide who you want to
18 speak with and I'm there. I've been in libraries,
19 also. I heard a gentleman refer to, he goes to
20 libraries. I've been to half a dozen myself.
21 People are always amazed as we read the paper, and
22 we don't know what's going to be next. You know,
23 we had the spinach issue, the green onion issue,
24 white onion issue, and the lettuce issue, and
25 where is it going to end, we don't know. But

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2 there are things we can do to protect ourselves.

3 GENE PRITZ: Thank you.

4 PAMELA GIOCIA: Just to go back to your,
5 what you started with volunteerism. There are a
6 couple of places that people can go. One would be
7 RSVP, which gets funding from the Suffolk County
8 Office for the aging, retired senior volunteer
9 program. And now the Peconic community counsel
10 has started a clearinghouse. So, I'm thinking the
11 challenge is going to be to get the word out, you
12 know, among providers that could use the
13 volunteers as well as getting to people who might
14 want to volunteer an hour a week or whatever like
15 you have, to get on board with those
16 clearinghouses.

17 JOHN SEATON: Now, they're posted on the
18 web?

19 PAMELA GIOCIA: Yes. And you can call RSVP,
20 Peggy Arseno, and she'll talk to you, as well.
21 But yes, get right on the web and the site is up
22 now, just newly up, and you could post what your
23 needs are, you know, about your program, and then
24 ultimately, people will hopefully answer. It's
25 starting to happen.

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2 JOHN SEATON: That's great.

3 PAMELA GIOCIA: It's starting to happen, but
4 we need to do a lot more.

5 JOHN SEATON: There are a lot of dedicated
6 people looking for something to do out there.

7 ELIZABETH LORENZ: It covers all of Suffolk
8 and it links in with the volunteer center in
9 Nassau County. Then there's a national one. You
10 can go to that site. There are a lot of
11 resources. I don't have it at my fingertips to
12 tell you the website, but there's also a local
13 phone number.

14 JOHN SEATON: Thank you all for listening to
15 me. Have a good day.

16 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Mr. Paul Arfin.

17 PAUL ARFIN: Thank you. Good morning. I
18 know it's five after 12, and in reference to the
19 future hearings that you will hold, I ask you to
20 give consideration to the folks who were told that
21 they would be recognized in the order of their
22 first come, first serve basis, and that hasn't
23 been the case. Secondly, some of us, like myself,
24 spent an hour holding their remarks down to five
25 minutes because that was the charge to us. So,

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2 apparently, that is not the case.

3 My name is Paul Arfin. I'm president of
4 intergenerational strategies, an organization that
5 promotes intergenerational understanding, civic
6 engagement of older adults and programs that meet
7 the needs of older people. Formerly I was
8 chairman of the county's executive commission on
9 creative retirement. After many public hearings,
10 the commission produced a 32 page report with 14
11 carefully thought out recommendations. The report
12 received high praise from county planners, aging
13 experts and elected appointed officials. The
14 report has been downloaded from our website over
15 1400 times. Nevertheless, little has been done to
16 implement the commission's recommendations. And
17 as a side, home share on Long Island was one of
18 those recommendations. And we pointed to the fact
19 that in 5 suburban counties in Atlanta, Georgia
20 there are over 700 matches. But nothing from the
21 county perspective has been done about that along
22 with other recommendations. Time today doesn't
23 permit me to discuss all of the commission's
24 recommendations, so I'll just discuss three at
25 this time.

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2 First, if the current employment rates
3 persist, there will be fewer workers to produce
4 the goods and services that Suffolk's economy
5 needs. But if people were to work longer, much of
6 that decline in the number of workers could be
7 eliminated. Therefore, county government should
8 establish a program to encourage older people to
9 remain in the work force. The program would also
10 assist employers to recognize the value of
11 retraining, recruiting and retaining older people
12 and assist employers to design and implement
13 employment recruitment and retention programs like
14 the ones that AARP points to every year, where it
15 gives awards for best practices among employers
16 who recreate and retain older workers. The
17 program should also assist businesses to develop
18 strategies to reduce workplace stress and anxiety.
19 I draw your attention to a new report. It's
20 called are you experienced. How boomers can help
21 our government meet its talent needs. This 2007
22 report describes how the federal government is
23 planning to tap older adults to build critical
24 skill gaps in the work force. We pointed in the
25 commission that a modest 1% increase of older

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2 adult employees through the above initiatives
3 produces 565 new workers. If these workers were
4 paid in quarter time, ten hours a week at a modest
5 hourly rate of \$20 an hour, this would produce
6 over 4.4 million dollars new payroll every year.

7 The secondary area to be discussed is civic
8 engagement or volunteerism. The commission
9 reported that placing 1000 new volunteers in
10 public service work could produce over 2 million
11 dollars worth of human services. Therefore, the
12 Suffolk County Committee counsel registry of
13 volunteerism and community service should be
14 expanded with county support. Also, each county
15 department should evaluate how to better utilize
16 older adults and volunteers and employees. Many
17 American localities are recognizing the economic
18 and social capital of older adults. One example
19 is the New York City department of aging that
20 recently established a 1 million dollar program
21 providing stipends to older adults with
22 professional skills who volunteer in agencies.
23 Also in relationship to volunteerism, the task
24 force should recommend establishment of a senior
25 property tax work off program for older adult

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2 homeowners who volunteer in county departments and
3 contract agencies doing work that otherwise
4 wouldn't get done. It's been modeled upon a
5 program that's been in existence for several years
6 in Massachusetts. A small reduction in county
7 property tax revenues would be more than offset by
8 the value of the services provided. Thanks to
9 Assemblyman Steve Engelbright and Senator Howard
10 Golden, this legislation would more than likely
11 pass in this state's legislative session
12 permitting Suffolk County to implement this
13 program.

14 The last issue is a rising number of
15 residents who take care of aging parents enabling
16 them to age in place, an issue that has been
17 talked a lot about today. We need to develop more
18 programs to assist the frail and elderly to remain
19 at home as long as possible. And I recommend that
20 this task force propose that the 2008 county
21 budget show support for home share Long Island,
22 view safe at home, natural occurring retirement
23 communities and other such programs.

24 In closing, I ask the task force to
25 recommend that the Suffolk County office for the

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2 aging be reformed from a department whose primary
3 role is administering federal, state and local
4 funding to one that is also an advocate on behalf
5 of the needs of its older citizens. The office
6 does a great deal, but should be doing a lot more
7 in light of growth projections. Just as a side
8 there, New York City spends ten times more per
9 person over the age of 60, spends ten times more
10 per head from local taxes than Suffolk County
11 does. It's time for old creative thinking in
12 which resources are found in the assets of older
13 adults and are tapped to address the challenges of
14 the future. That's why the association of area
15 agencies on aging and the national association of
16 counties, not exactly radical groups, recently
17 studied how cities and counties are meeting the
18 needs of their aging population. They found that
19 46% of American communities have begun to
20 address -- I'm sorry, this is a negative-- have
21 not begun to address the rapidly growing aging
22 population. I'm afraid that Suffolk County is
23 among this group. And as I said before, we should
24 be embarrassed that we spend ten times less per
25 person on services for our older adults compared

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2 to New York City. Is it good to get old in
3 Suffolk County, as one of the persons previously
4 said, it depends on your wealth, your health and
5 your family ties, you know, if you live with
6 somebody who can take care of you, or down the
7 block or whatever. So, it's a definite maybe, is
8 it good to get old in Suffolk County. I,
9 fortunately, am one of the ones that can say I'm
10 really glad to grow old in Suffolk County, and
11 continue and plan to spend another 40 years here.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. You had
14 mentioned, of course, the important issue of
15 volunteerism and be able to harness the power and
16 the invaluable experience of our seniors. You had
17 also mentioned that there's certainly a proposal
18 at the state level and a program that had been
19 implemented somewhere else. Are you familiar with
20 any of the numbers associated with that program?
21 What kind of a tax benefit to an individual senior
22 there is in terms of dollars? What kind of a
23 deficit in tax revenue that produces from the
24 state --

25 PAUL ARFIN: It all depends on the locality.

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2 The way the state enabling legislation in New York
3 City is written is that the individual home owner
4 can get up to a \$750 property tax credit. But
5 that is left up to the local, village, town and
6 county to decide. So they decide how many hours
7 of service. Let's say at \$750, \$10 an hour, so
8 you have to work 75,000 a year to earn the
9 property tax credit. Another related question is
10 left to locality. What kind of work can you do,
11 must it be within the village hall or can it be
12 working for the Red Cross or Boy Scouts. All
13 those divisions are local, but the only framework
14 is minimum of \$60 and \$750 maximum. So, in
15 Massachusetts it varies. They have legislation
16 like that, so in one township they give a \$500 tax
17 credit, you know, property tax credit and another
18 they've gone up to \$750. We're not talking about
19 this being major, you know, that 50% of older
20 people are going to take advantage of this. It
21 really has been small numbers in Massachusetts.
22 It's in the hundreds of people who took advantage
23 of it. The way it would work is that locality
24 would say for the sake of discussion, we're going
25 to try this out for a hundred people, and so we're

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2 going to put in to the operating budget of a
3 county or a town or a village, \$75,000. And let's
4 assume they decide to, you know, go up to the \$750
5 maximum times 100, that's, you know, \$75,000.
6 Assume that that all gets spent because people
7 take advantage of it, that's \$7,000 less than
8 operating it from the county, but it would produce
9 about ten times that much in services, you know,
10 provided by the older adults.

11 CHAIRMAN STERN: For one of the things that
12 you didn't go into, but I know you have an awful
13 lot of experience with, both here and nationally,
14 is the issue of senior housing. I'm wondering if
15 you can take just a couple of moments to kind of
16 share with us the experiences that you have had in
17 other jurisdictions and, maybe, what can and
18 possibly what cannot --

19 PAUL ARFIN: Lisa did a fine job on home
20 sharing. Just for those who don't know it, this
21 program that the family service league operates
22 has produced 40 matches on barebone budget. And
23 what we did was, I helped them create the program.
24 It is a replication of a program in Atlanta,
25 Georgia in 5 suburban counties not unlike Suffolk

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2 County suburban counties, and they have over 700
3 matches. The program has been around for 20 years
4 and it works. So, we brought the director of the
5 program up here to pick our brains and learn how
6 to do it. I know there are skeptics around the
7 horseshoe and out there in key decision making
8 positions in Suffolk County and Nassau that fear,
9 you know, elder abuse. The Atlanta program has
10 never had a lawsuit and never been in litigation
11 around these things because of the careful
12 scrutinies, criminal background checks, reference
13 checks, requirement that people visit with one
14 another before making a match, the written
15 agreement they must go through. So it's a
16 wonderful program. There's another program there
17 I just want to touch on that is begging to come
18 here to Long Island and it's just not happening,
19 and that is I call it the Beacon Hill model. It's
20 a variation on the NORCS, which are, we need
21 NORCS. This is just a variation on a NORC, which
22 brings the services to the people. Instead of
23 having these transportation issues, to bring the
24 people to the service. Simply put. Village of
25 Bellport, a group of seniors get together and they

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2 say, we want to age in place. You know, we're all
3 getting into our late 70s, our 80s, what can we
4 do? You know, we can't expect our county, our
5 town, our village, they're not going to provide
6 the services we need. We're not poor. Some of us
7 are poor, but most of us are middle class. Well,
8 create an association, a nonprofit association.
9 Beacon Hill, Massachusetts, yes, it's a wealthy
10 community. Yes, they can afford this more than
11 they can in Huntington Station, but it can be done
12 in Huntington Station, Riverhead or anywhere else.
13 They created an association. The individual
14 residents in the community contributed and agreed
15 upon amount per person and with that money, let's
16 make it 25,000 among 200 people for the sake of
17 discussion and all of a sudden, they have \$25,000
18 to hire a case manager who's responsible to them
19 to tend to a lot of the affairs that they need
20 like a handyman, a plumber, an electrician,
21 someone familiar with medicaid and medicare and
22 familiar with all the services provided by the
23 towns and counties. Let's rely on government,
24 community responsibility, self government, and if
25 they don't want to create a new nonprofit

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2 organization themselves, then contract with
3 Catholic Charities or Family Service League to be
4 their agent. This is thinking outside the box.
5 This is not business as usual. And this is what
6 we need. And there are other models like that and
7 other examples of helping people age in place
8 by -- you know, it's a critical issue and it's
9 only going to grow. If we're just going to wait
10 for federal and state aid, then we're not going to
11 meet anywhere near the needs, the percent of the
12 needs that are out there and are going to continue
13 to grow.

14 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: The money that you
15 talk about that the city puts in per person, is
16 that from -- can you tell me where that's from?

17 PAUL ARFIN: Tax levy.

18 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: From what?

19 PAUL ARFIN: Tax levy dollars. Local tax.

20 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Did you use, what, the
21 census numbers on how many people and divide how
22 much --

23 PAUL ARFIN: I checked with the New York
24 City department of aging as to how much they spend
25 in nonfederal and state dollars, in local New York

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 City tax levy dollars, and it was about 33 million
3 dollars. So, I took the population of New York
4 City, age 60 and above, and divided it into the 33
5 million dollars and it came out to the 3 hundred
6 some what dollars per person over the age of 60.
7 And in Suffolk County, we put in 3 million dollars
8 in local tax levy dollars for that number and I
9 divided that number into 1.3 million and it came
10 out to be \$16 or \$17 per person.

11 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: I would think that
12 number might be fewer only because you're also
13 putting an awful lot of funds --

14 PAUL ARFIN: Absolutely. Your point is well
15 taken.

16 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: I only say that
17 because the way Suffolk's programs have evolved
18 over the last 30 years, that the towns have had a
19 great partnership together. Where we don't have
20 senior centers they have senior centers and they
21 provide that to the programs, so that's why I'm
22 not so sure that forum would work.

23 PAUL ARFIN: You know, I'm going to go back,
24 and I'm just curious to see, maybe it won't be 10%
25 or 10 times, it will probably be five times.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 CHAIRMAN STERN: Just real quick. You
3 mentioned the Beacon Hill model. We're currently
4 working on Staten Island with nursing services,
5 JCC to recreate that model on Staten Island. So,
6 as it goes forward, I'll be sure to share the
7 bumps and bruises and the successes.

8 PAUL ARFIN: What the Beacon Hill group is
9 doing is that at the end of April, they're having
10 a two-day conference where they're inviting folks
11 from around the country that are implementing
12 programs like the Beacon Hill model so they're not
13 alone. In Washington DC, there's a program. So,
14 they're bringing in people representing all of
15 these programs to help people come back to their
16 localities with the savvy in how to help implement
17 these programs. These are investments in city
18 dollars that have multiplier affects, really with
19 money to staff the capacity to create these
20 programs.

21 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Well, I just have a quick
22 question. You mentioned that the county should
23 really look at funding more programs, like home
24 share. We just went to a presentation at the
25 office for aging and home sharing, Karin, I

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 believe, she did a wonderful job. So, we are
3 definitely in Southold Town pursuing that as one
4 of the senior housing options. The other thing
5 you bring up is the be safe at home program.
6 Right now the county funds a program residential
7 repair, and Pam mentioned it before, and I do
8 believe it's in most of the ten towns. How does
9 that differ from be safe at home?

10 PAUL ARFIN: I'd have to know more about the
11 program you just described. I think the critical
12 difference would be this; that be safe at home
13 offers 365 day, 24 hour, 7 day a week access to a
14 handyman, electrician, a plumber. The person who
15 comes into the house is capable of putting in grab
16 bars if necessary, is going to do a certified home
17 inspection, regardless of whether he's a plumber,
18 an electrician. Whatever he's there for, he's
19 going to do these other things as well. So, on
20 the surface of it, that's what my answer would be.

21 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. Just one other
22 thing; is there a cost to join that program?

23 PAUL ARFIN: Be safe at home?

24 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Yes.

25 PAUL ARFIN: The answer is no. In other

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 words, if Mrs. Jones from Babylon calls and wants
3 to enroll in the program, she would get a
4 newsletter on a monthly basis, kind of an
5 information newsletter. She would get a 10%
6 discount on goods and services in her locality for
7 the merchants who are participating in the
8 program. If she needs a personal emergency
9 response system, she would get a discounted rate
10 and if she can't afford it, then the scholarship
11 money that the merchants have put into the program
12 would be used to help her buy the personal
13 emergency response system. If she needs a
14 plumber, she would pay the plumber 50% of the
15 merchant rate in the area. If she needs a handy
16 person, it would be \$14 an hour. Again, if she
17 can't afford it, she can pay \$5 and the balance
18 would be, you know, subsidized through, you know,
19 the charitable efforts of the organization.

20 KAREN MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you, Paul.

21 CHAIRMAN STERN: Paul, thank you. Carmen
22 Sanchez? Carmen Sanchez, going once.

23 Cathy Rosenthal.

24 CATHY ROSENTHAL: Good morning, members of
25 the Suffolk County task force and Legislator

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Stern. My name is Cathy Rosenthal. I am the vice
3 president of Long Island regional operations for
4 FEGS, which, for those of you who don't know, it's
5 one of the largest health and human services
6 organizations in the county. We serve the New
7 York metropolitan area reaching 120,000 people --
8 persons each day with a broad network of
9 education, behavioral health, residential, family,
10 youth and volunteer services. Across Suffolk
11 County and Nassau it's approximately 35,000 people
12 each year. Excuse my voice, I have a cold. I'm
13 here today on behalf of FEGS and the clients that
14 we serve to talk about what has been mentioned
15 today, nationally occurring retirement
16 communities, also known as NORCs, and a model of
17 service delivery that is designed to meet the
18 diverse needs of people who are aging in place and
19 want to stay in their homes. As I'm sure you
20 know, this has been mentioned many times today,
21 the population of individuals aging on Long Island
22 is growing exponentially. There are literally
23 hundreds of communities more than 40% of its
24 residents over the age of 60 which is New York
25 State's criteria for designating a NORC, and

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 therefore, making that area eligible for the
3 development of neighborhood NORCs, supportive
4 service programs, or NNORC SSPs. Since May 2005,
5 FECS has been working in partnership with local
6 government and others to bring to Long Island a
7 tailored version of what has been known for the
8 last 20 years as NORC SSPs, primarily developed in
9 the City of New York and some upstate rural
10 communities. We began in Nassau County with
11 project independence working with the town of
12 North Hempstead, North Shore LIJ healthy system
13 and other human service providers, local civil and
14 community groups, merchants, houses of worship and
15 others. Our most important partners in these NORC
16 programs is the residents themselves. And they
17 participate in government, priority settings,
18 volunteerism and much, much more. We have served
19 nearly 200 seniors in New Hyde Park with home
20 based case assessment, needs assessment, care
21 management, health screening and monitoring. One
22 of them is Sara, this is not her real name, who is
23 an 80 year old widow. Her husband died last year.
24 Her daughter lives out of state and has a sick
25 child. In the last year, Sara has become more

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 frail to the extent that she actually rigged
3 herself a pulley system to go up and down her
4 basement stairs so she could continue to do
5 laundry. She had not recently been to see her
6 doctor because she no longer drives and didn't
7 know how to access the system. Sara heard about
8 project independence with broad scale press and
9 mailings over the last year and a half, but she
10 was encouraged by a neighbor to reach out, and she
11 ultimately called us. Our social worker and the
12 nurse from LIJ have been out to visit her. She's
13 connected now with a case manager from another
14 agency, one of our partners and a volunteer. She
15 is now seeing her physician regularly through a
16 program that is founded by a private foundation
17 that provides taxi service to and from all her
18 doctor appointments. The town itself does provide
19 shopping assistance, but didn't have the service
20 to and from doctor appointments, which was a need
21 articulated by our advisory committee. Oscar is
22 another volunteer. He's a retired marketing
23 professional and now volunteers on the project
24 independence advisory committee with more than 30
25 of its neighbors, and he leads our newsletter.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Several hundred others have been reached through
3 educational, social, recreational, volunteer
4 programming and more. We are now replicating this
5 model, as the Councilwoman said this morning, in
6 Suffolk County in partnership with the Town of
7 Huntington. Sue Harty is a phenomenal partner at
8 the senior citizen services. Also, the North
9 Shore LIJ is our health partner and the Suffolk Y.
10 Hands on Huntington also has its mission to work
11 with seniors to keep them in their homes as long
12 and as safely as possible with the greatest degree
13 of independence and dignity. There are, by the
14 way, 1200 potential seniors in the designated area
15 that we define for this NORC, which we defined on
16 the basis of meeting the New York State criteria
17 for being a NORC based on the number of residents
18 in the concentrated area over the age of 60.
19 Funding for these projects to date has come from
20 the townships, New York State Legislative funding,
21 and a foundation, with the bulk of support coming
22 from grants that FEGS was able to secure through
23 the New York State office for the aging. While
24 there is no one panacea to address the emerging
25 needs and interests of this population, we must

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 begin to work together to develop a variety of
3 responses. I think all of this has been said, but
4 I'll reiterate; Long Island's suburban landscape
5 creates a very compelling case for the development
6 of programs like these, even more compelling than
7 the city, which, as you know, has much more
8 accessibility. There is significant isolation for
9 individuals living in single family homes often
10 without relatives in close proximity or the
11 available time to assist. There are additional
12 barriers to accessing care, particularly
13 accessible transportation, which we all know
14 there's a severe lack of. And maintenance of
15 property and homes, which typically becomes more
16 and more challenging as individuals age and become
17 more frail. There are more than 30 NORC SSPs in
18 New York State who demonstrated success. FECS and
19 its partners are just beginning to see the impact
20 of programs that we're developing on suburban Long
21 Island. We believe strongly that the need for a
22 response such as this one, is growing as
23 exponentially as the population of aging adults
24 particularly those aging at home. We hope at some
25 point to gain support from the counties and other

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 sources to help us secure and grow these programs.
3 I do have just two flyers, which are hot off the
4 press for our Hands on Huntington program.

5 CHAIRMAN STERN: You mentioned the number, I
6 believe, was 1200. Twelve hundred make up the
7 geographic area, the residents within that area.
8 Any idea as to how much of those 1200 will utilize
9 the services being provided?

10 CATHY ROSENTHAL: We've only just begun the
11 Huntington program. I can tell you that we bit
12 off a smaller piece in Huntington than we did in
13 New Hyde Park, knowing that we were already pretty
14 much maxed out on the number of people. We've
15 reached 200 people individually. That's a lot of
16 people in one year. You know, it depends on -- I
17 feel very strongly we'll be able to access other
18 dollars to grow the program, and that's my hope.
19 It's unlimited in terms of our capacity once we
20 start to secure dollars. I think a lot of people
21 will take advantage of it. The records have shown
22 from these programs that I run in the city and in
23 Queens and more suburban communities that the
24 majority of people will take advantage of these
25 programs, once they understand what it is, once

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 you broached the barrier of trust, once you show
3 them that you can be of assistance. And the
4 beauty of it, too, and I've spoken before the
5 Legislature, as you know, that it's not a crisis
6 model. It's a model in which you're creating a
7 safety net, but won't include the safety net of
8 the seniors themselves who are not frail. We have
9 this advisory committee that is advising us on the
10 needs, then directing us which way to go. They're
11 phenomenal, they're interested, they're active.
12 That's what we hope to recreate here in Huntington
13 and other towns throughout Suffolk County.

14 CHAIRMAN STERN: As part of the process when
15 you're looking at a particular area that might be
16 a good area to go into, are there any procedures
17 in place, or are there any analysis done or
18 questionnaires distributed to area residents? Are
19 you able to glean what the interests would be in a
20 particular area before you go through the process?

21 CATHY ROSENTHAL: It's actually a process
22 that happens after you get the funding started.
23 It probably should precede. We based our chosen
24 catchment areas on census data that shows us the
25 concentration of seniors in a particular area.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 And then the first step, and actually in the city
3 model, classic NORC model, the funding that comes
4 from the state and city government gave them an
5 area of community organizing which involves this
6 need assessment process. When they defined NORC
7 dollars and criteria for those dollars, they
8 didn't do that. You immediately go in there and
9 you're doing simultaneously this need assessment
10 with service delivery. So, we're doing that. We
11 have a four page survey. Tina Brock is our
12 director, our brand new director in Huntington.
13 Is the survey about four pages there? We go in
14 and we ask them a whole array of questions about
15 their needs, do they have relatives in the area,
16 are they involved socially, recreationally, do
17 they have a doctor that they see regularly, do
18 they need someone to maintain their home. Just a
19 whole array of questions about their health and
20 their well being and who they're connected to.
21 And also about their interest in volunteering in
22 the programs. And you get them in on that level
23 as well.

24 CHAIRMAN STERN: Cathy, I wish you every
25 success with the program, and looking forward to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 learning a lot more about your successes in the
3 future.

4 CATHY ROSENTHAL: And Frank Petrone has been
5 terrific, and Holly supported our grant
6 application.

7 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: I just want to ask you
8 a question, Cathy. How was your turn out on the
9 survey? Did you get a big turn out?

10 CATHY ROSENTHAL: Everyone that we have been
11 able to go in and meet with did the survey with
12 us.

13 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Great.

14 CATHY ROSENTHAL: There's been a couple of
15 people that have been reluctant. And there are
16 questions on there that we say, listen, if you
17 don't feel comfortable. We ask about their
18 economic situation, because the state wants us to
19 give that demographic information. The state also
20 recognizes through the office of the aging that
21 they're not going to get a lot of that
22 information. What we're able to do is, of the 200
23 we surveyed, 10% answered that question, and of
24 the 10% that answered that question, this is what
25 they said. So we'll be able to file it down to

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 this sort of level of demographic data.

3 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Great.

4 CATHY ROSENTHAL: Thanks to Ira, too. He's
5 been a great partner in the town.

6 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Faith Vallante?

7 AUDIENCE: She had to leave.

8 CHAIRMAN STERN: Ellen. Ellen Katz.

9 ELLEN KATZ: Thank you. Thank you very
10 much, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to speak. And
11 I see a lot of friendly faces and familiar faces.

12 My name is Ellen Katz and I'm the project
13 director of the senior center for JASA at the
14 Suffolk Y in Commack. The Suffolk County office
15 for the aging is our sponsored agency and I'm
16 known to them as a nutrition site manager. And I
17 was trained very well by John over there as a
18 licensed food service manager. So, I want to
19 thank John for not retiring, because the last
20 course I took from you was three years ago and he
21 threatened to retire, and someone else would be
22 teaching the course, so thank you. And thanks all
23 of you. This is such a wonderful, exciting
24 committee and it's like preaching to the choir,
25 even to speak to you, but I'm honored to be here,

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 and I wish you all the best of luck, because as
3 people have said, you are us and we are you and
4 this is our future.

5 As we know, older residents in Suffolk
6 County face many challenges. Access to affordable
7 housing continues to be one of the most urgent
8 issues faced by seniors. Rents for apartments in
9 Suffolk County continue to soar while the number
10 of available apartment units continues to decline.
11 Zoning restrictions forbidding two family housing
12 contributes to the severe shortage, as does the
13 limited number of apartment complexes in
14 assistance. The average waiting list for Section
15 8 housing developments is between 2 and 5 years.
16 In an effort to maintain their independence and
17 dignity, too often an aging resident gives up
18 their long time homes at the urging of their adult
19 children. They move in with their extended
20 family, only to find the arrangement not working,
21 either due to personality conflicts or unrealistic
22 expectations on both sides. Imagine the
23 frustration and despair felt when there are
24 limited resources available in the community, and
25 a 5 year wait for subsidized senior housing and

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 exorbitant rents on the few private apartments
3 that are available. During 2006, the department
4 of housing and urban development presented Suffolk
5 County with the Robert L. Woodson Jr. Award for
6 reducing burdensome regulations that unnecessarily
7 inflate the cost of housing. Suffolk County has
8 been commended as a national role model in its
9 efforts to reduce unnecessary, outdated and
10 duplicative regulations that inflate the cost of
11 housing for the middle class. I hope that Suffolk
12 County can continue that exemplary role in
13 offering more affordable housing to our aging and
14 poor population. If million dollar McMansions are
15 sprouting like mushrooms throughout Suffolk
16 County, why can't we build more affordable housing
17 for our greatest generation?

18 Thank you all.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN STERN: Very good. I don't have
22 any more cards. Is there anybody else in the
23 audience that would like to speak? If you could
24 just state your name for the record.

25 JIM GALLAGHER: My name is Jim Gallagher.

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 Like Bob Kern on the horseshoe, there, I'm a
3 member of SAD. We're volunteers. We don't get
4 paid, no money. And SAD's involved with several
5 senior issues. Today, I'm prepared to focus on
6 school taxes. I know Suffolk's legislature
7 doesn't have the power to change state law. I
8 would think you would need to know what we've been
9 up to. For the past two years and more, SAD's
10 been following the progress of legislation in
11 Albany, which provides for a tax cap on school tax
12 increases when taxpayers qualify for the STAR
13 program. STAR seems to have a good reputation for
14 not causing an issue on taxpayers elsewhere.
15 Under this legislation, the tax payer would
16 continue to pay a school tax in effect at the time
17 he or she turned 70, but would no longer be
18 burdened with the worry of dealing with school tax
19 increases. Before the age 70 billing because it's
20 easier to remember. It's been going on for more
21 than two years. These bills were introduced by
22 Senator Ken LaValle of the First Senatorial
23 District and Senator Steve Engelbright, the Fourth
24 Assembly District. During the 2006 session, the
25 bills were sent to the Senate Finance Committee

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee when the
3 issue died at the end of the session. And in 2005
4 it had a similar fate. That's why I didn't bother
5 to mention the bill numbers. Now, the legislation
6 has been reintroduced and new numbers apply. The
7 way it's been explained to me, and many people
8 don't know, in New York State each chamber of the
9 legislature must have identical bills, same text.
10 An issue for you to be considered. Generally they
11 must be introduced by a majority member of each
12 chamber, and these bills were. They appear to
13 have the support of many law makers, so SAD was
14 pushing for passing this legislation. When SAD
15 originally checked the Senate bill on the
16 legislature website, it came up the same as the
17 assembly bill and vice versa. That was a good
18 sign. When the bills were amended, as with all
19 bills, they were given a Suffolk letter following
20 the number of each bill; A for the first time, B
21 for the second time and so on. However, during
22 the last legislative session, another amendment
23 was made to the senate bill giving it the letter C
24 but not the assembly bill. First change has made
25 the senate bill different text from the assembly

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 bill leaving it about the same as in the senate, a
3 one house bill. They have little or no chance of
4 passing it by the capital system, because they
5 obviously, have no support in the other chamber.
6 The 2006 legislative session closed and the age 70
7 issue died. Why? Not enough pressure? I guess
8 so. Upon learning about the change, SAD contacted
9 Senator LaValle's office and was told the Senator
10 would most likely introduce an age 70 bill in the
11 new session. SAD requested its members to contact
12 LaValle's office to ask that he work with
13 Engelbright to create another same as the union
14 bill from the Senate to be certain the age 70
15 issue does not get buried. In mid-January and
16 during the 2007 session, Mr. Engelbright
17 reintroduced the age 70 tax cap to the assembly,
18 and is now assigned bill number A1894. In the
19 Senate Mr. LaValle has recently introduced a same
20 as bill S3533. For the last several minutes I've
21 been going on about this bill to let you know that
22 we've been busy at SAD. We've been doing our
23 homework. But, to continue, in the Connetquot
24 School District during the five year period, 2001
25 through 2005, according to my tax bills, the

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 school tax increase averaged 8.06%, while social
3 security averaged 2.46%. That's over 5 1/2% more
4 going out of pocket then coming in. That's a
5 heavy burden for anyone, especially seniors on a
6 fixed income. Here's another interesting thing.
7 Same period, same tax bills, my enhanced STAR
8 reduction benefit dropped from 45% to 35%. That
9 10% reduction equals 22% loss in my STAR benefit.
10 That's almost a quarter of my benefit. They give
11 you something, then they chip away at it and hope
12 you're too dumb to notice. I want to let you know
13 what I've been going through for years and trying
14 to get some relief from a problem that's been
15 festering me for years. We've been dealing with
16 this for years, and today we appear to be back at
17 square one. We give Engelbright and LaValle
18 credit and thanks for creating and reducing these
19 bills, but we think somebody in Albany is dragging
20 their feet, trying to discourage us and hoping
21 we'll quit. We wont quit. Quitters never win.
22 Winners never quit. That's why we try to continue
23 to recruit people to support this cause. Many
24 seniors don't even know about this. Furthermore,
25 some of them do have no idea that this is a

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 statewide issue and surprised to find out this
3 goes beyond Long Island. SAD doesn't make a lot
4 of money to spread the word with. But we'll tell
5 anyone who will listen. Anybody with relatives
6 and friends anywhere in New York State from
7 Montauk to Buffalo and points in between should
8 tell them to call their legislators and ask them
9 to support these bills. You folk up there in the
10 dais, you can do that, right away. That will
11 help. We need to get the foot-draggers in Albany
12 out of our way. Admittedly, SAD is trying to get
13 baby boomers interested in senior issues so their
14 great numbers will help me get relief from today's
15 seniors. Unfortunately, too many boomers seem to
16 be looking the other way. We try to stress the
17 importance of getting involved now so the boomers
18 will have a chance to put these problems to rest
19 before they become the seniors and have to deal
20 with them. Too many folks in our generation
21 didn't see them coming, these issues that are
22 causing so much grief for us, these unaffordable
23 taxes, among other things. Now we old-timers are
24 forced to play catch up and it's an uphill battle.
25 We're giving the boomers the head's up. We're

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 saying deal with the problems now before you have
3 to face the grief we old-timers are burdened with
4 today. These problems are forcing seniors from
5 their homes. If boomers don't learn from us and
6 exercise control now, these problems can and will
7 make their lives miserable as they have for many
8 of us.

9 I hope this task force will be effective in
10 getting Albany to give us the tax help we so
11 desperately need. Please help us to pass this age
12 70 legislation as part of STAR. It's been a task
13 for this task force. And everybody here is
14 invited to join SAD. I happen to have a few
15 applications with me.

16 CHAIRMAN STERN: Very good. So, I thank you
17 so much for your comments and for your input and I
18 assure you that this task force is listening.

19 JIM GALLAGHER: Thank you.

20 DONALD CLARK: My name is Donald Clark. I'm
21 on the board of directors of the senior nutrition
22 center in Huntington, and also president of the
23 counsel of the satellite nutrition center. And we
24 have nutrition centers, some 17 senior members and
25 I'm a member of one, Laurel. And I think there's

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 a lot of valuable information presented here today
3 and I would love to be able to bring it back in a
4 form that seniors can appreciate. And I missed
5 many cases, the names and the last names, the
6 organizations because they were rapidly stated,
7 any websites, email addresses and such, and also
8 all the members of the panel. I would appreciate
9 having such a list, and I'm sure many others, so
10 that I have contacts that we can get back to in a
11 written form that is usable. I found it extremely
12 valuable here and I learned a great deal, and I
13 appreciate all the efforts of all the people here.
14 How would I contact you to get their information?

15 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you for your
16 comments. And not only at the end, but certainly
17 as we go through this process and we take back all
18 the information, which is all being recorded here
19 officially, we'll have updates and we'll be
20 listing everybody who spoke and the organizations
21 they're associated with and their contact
22 information as well as all of the pertinent
23 information regarding all the members of the task
24 force. So, that's going to be an ongoing effort,
25 and we'll be happy to provide you with that

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 information. And so, yeah, you can help get the
3 word out and ask those that you come into contact
4 with to help participate, to share their views and
5 maybe to help us formulate the kind of ideas that
6 we know our senior community needs as we go
7 forward. And so, that's really going to be an
8 ongoing effort, and we look forward to that kind
9 of back and forth and that kind of partnership.

10 DONALD CLARK: Would I be able to now get
11 the names of some of the websites that were
12 mentioned that were very valuable to contact?

13 CHAIRMAN STERN: I'm sure that anybody that
14 came forward to talk about their organization,
15 certainly the ones that are still here, and
16 willing to bet that most of us are familiar with
17 some of the organizations that have been
18 represented by speakers today and would be happy
19 to get you that information.

20 CAROLYN GALLOGLY: Would you leave your name
21 and address somewhere.

22 DONALD CLARK: I would, yes. Is there a
23 card or something?

24 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Actually, Carolyn, I
25 know Donald as a wonderful member of our, as he

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 mentioned, our satellite of one of our clubs, so
3 I'll be sure -- I can hand deliver to you, Donald,
4 any information that we do ultimately put
5 together.

6 DONALD CLARK: Thank you. I was late to get
7 here, so that's great.

8 HOLLY RHODES-TEAGUE: Thank you so much.

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: Any other speakers?

10 IRVING TOLIVER: Good afternoon, everyone.
11 My name is Irving Toliver. I'm the director of
12 human services for the Town of Huntington, and as
13 Sue Harty knows, I really don't like to speak that
14 much, but I guess since I've been sitting here so
15 long, I do have a few things I would like to share
16 with you. Glenda Jackson did a very good job
17 explaining the Town of Huntington's position. And
18 first of all, Steve, I just want to thank you and
19 the entire task force for coming together. I
20 think this is very, very important, and I think
21 it's gonna really benefit all of Suffolk County
22 because there's a lot of issues out there, and
23 Steve, in your presentation I don't think you left
24 anything out. But there was something I just
25 wanted to share with everybody. This morning when

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 I was watching television, I was looking at Good

3 Morning America and on it was a company that paid

4 people for losing weight and it worked. People

5 really started participating. And I don't have

6 the whole story together because I was dressing

7 and running back and forth and in between, but on

8 the back end of it, was a savings in their health

9 cost, which is approximately \$60,000. And not

10 that many people participated within the whole

11 entire company, but it was a savings. One of the

12 issues that was brought up this morning was the

13 number of people that are coming to our center.

14 We're busting at the seams facility wise and a lot

15 of people are coming in and have a lot of mental

16 health issues and we can't keep up with them

17 because we don't have, what I consider, a trained

18 staff to really address that particular problem.

19 People have depression, paranoia, they may have

20 lost somebody and they sink further and further

21 into their mental positions or illnesses. And my

22 feeling is that we should really try to address

23 that problem and get people when we see them start

24 slipping, you know, try and pick them up, because

25 they're only going to be a burden on the taxpayer,

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 medicare or medicaid or whatever it might be. And
3 I guess what I'm really saying is, I think we
4 really need training of staff people to recognize
5 those people that are having problems and address
6 those problems as quickly as possible, and I think
7 it will save on the back end, which is further
8 doctors' expenses and things like that. It was
9 just a thought and I figured let me throw it out
10 here since I'm here. But again, I want to thank
11 everybody for the opportunity to be in front of
12 you, and if there's anything I can do, I'll be
13 glad to help out in any way I can.

14 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Very good. For
15 the record, I will make the announcement for the
16 next meeting of the Suffolk County Wide Senior
17 Citizen's Task Force, which will be held on
18 Thursday, April 26th. There will be two sessions.
19 The first in the morning at 9:30 going to 12:30,
20 and an evening session beginning at 5:30 and going
21 through 8:30. That's going to be held at the
22 Riverhead County Center in the Griffing Building,
23 300 Center Drive in Riverhead. And I didn't point
24 out before, but I'm sure everybody here would
25 agree that not only are we facing tremendous

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force
2 issues regionally, but there are those issues and
3 those challenges that seniors and their families
4 face depending on where they live throughout
5 Suffolk County, and so one of the main goals of
6 this task force was not just to get as much
7 information as we could, give out as much
8 information as we could, but to do it in a way
9 that was geographically diverse. And so, our
10 first meeting is here in Hauppauge and the next
11 meeting will be held in Riverhead. And in May
12 we'll look forward to holding our meeting at the
13 Suffolk Community College, the Selden campus, with
14 our last meeting to be held in June in West Islip
15 on the South Shore. So, I think we did a pretty
16 good job in our planning process of ensuring that
17 these meetings are accessible to seniors, to their
18 families, to professionals, who are elected
19 officials, all throughout Suffolk County.

20 With that, thank you everybody, for
21 everybody's input, and we look forward to
22 continuing our process next month. I guess I'll
23 entertain a motion to adjourn. Motion by Holly.

24 ROBERT KERN: I'll second it.

25 CHAIRMAN STERN: Second by Bob and we are

1 Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's Task Force

2 adjourned. Thank you.

3 (Time noted: 1:05 p.m.)

4

5

6 C E R T I F I C A T I O N
7 I, Andrea Mikalsen, a Notary Public of the State
8 Of New York do hereby certify:

8 THAT the testimony in the within proceeding was
9 held before me at the aforesaid time and place. That
10 said witness was duly sworn before the commencement of the
11 testimony, and that the testimony was taken stenographically
12 by me, then transcribed under my supervision, and that
13 the within transcript is a true record of the testimony
14 of said witness.

15 I further certify that I am not related to any of the
16 parties to this action by blood or marriage, that I am not
17 interested directly or indirectly in the matter in
18 controversy, nor am I in the employ of any of the counsel.

19 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
20 _____ day of _____ 2007.

21

22

23

24

25

Andrea Mikalsen