

**VETERANS AND SENIORS COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Veterans and Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on June 8, 2015.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Steven Stern - Chairman  
Legislator Tom Barraga - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Sarah Anker  
Legislator Al Krupski  
Legislator Tom Muratore

**Also In Attendance:**

Jason Richberg - Chief Deputy Clerk  
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Tom Ronayne - Director of Veteran's Services  
Holly Rhodes-Teague - Director of Office for the Aging  
Rick Brand - Newsday  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken and Transcribed By:**

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

*(\*The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m. \*)*

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Okay. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the committee on Vets and Seniors. I'm going to ask everybody to please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Krupski.

(\*Salutation\*)

Please remain standing and join us in a moment of silence as we keep all of our brave women and men fighting for our freedoms overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

(Moment of silence observed.)

Thank you, and again welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. Let's see. Mr. Clerk, I have this one card for us today, correct?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

Just one card, yes.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Okay. And so Pamela Burner. Ms. Burner? Oh, hello. Why don't you come and join us at the podium for three minutes?

**MS. BURNER:**

Okay.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Welcome.

**MS. BURNER:**

Thank you. My name is Pamela Burner, and I formed a company called Can-A-Lot. It started in 1997 when I saw a need for single moms to raise funds for their children to find safe havens in the summer while they were working. It wasn't a pretty program, but it also at the same time cleaned up the environment and provided for the children.

So as time went on, Legislator Ginny Fields was able to connect with me with the Long Island Ducks and I found myself, in the evenings, picking up after all the ball games. The idea was good. I got older, and I retired, and loving to serve, I joined packages for Jacob's Light, and during kinney (ph) retired last year, and I met the Blue Star Moms, and I saw that they were trying hard to raise funds for our soldiers. And so I met with them two weeks ago and told them about Can-A-Lot, and they're very interested. They're already out in Sayville using it to raise funds. There's a tremendous amount of funds that can be raised for them, and it's something that we can do on the homefront while our soldiers are working very hard to protect us. And I think it's a program that will unite the community in the good feelings of being able to do something, even though you have limited income, even though you're elderly, even though you feel you can't give anything, you can give a water bottle.

So the program now is to collect 100 water bottles in a bag and bring them to a location, a parking lot, a firehouse, and we will have a van there to pick them up and take them to our redeemer who gives us four or five cents for the bottle, and 80 percent of that goes towards the soldiers and their needs when they come home and the other 20 percent is for gas and for advertising. There are no salaries.

So what I'm asking the legislature today is if you would join me in this program, if each legislator would have a Bottles for the Brave day once a month so that everybody can join in. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Thank you.

**MS. BURNER:**

Any questions?

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Thank you. Thank you for being with us. Yes, before you go, Legislator Krupski has a question for you.

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

So you gave us your contact information?

**MS. BURNER:**

Yes.

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

I think, you know, this was a very good idea. We were just having a discussion about this recently about people not recycling because they're kind of indifferent to the nickel, and I think this would --

**MS. BURNER:**

Right.

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

And I think this has a double benefit. Not only would it benefit people who are serving our country but also it would kind of increase recycling efforts because then people would do it for the right reason and not for the nickel.

**MS. BURNER:**

Right. That's it. Thank you so much.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Hold on. Ms. Burner.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Hi, Pamela.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

You almost got away. Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Hi, Pamela. I'm very interested in your program. Where are you located?

**MS. BURNER:**

I'm located in Medford. I'm over in Mount Sinai.

**LEG. ANKER:**

I will volunteer to have one of your -- I guess it's a box and you just collect the bottles.

**MS. BURNER:**

No, no. In fact, I was at Legislator Hahn's office the other day, and she had put out that she was collecting bottles for the Sunshine Prevention Center, and when I walked into her office, there was a bin and all bags and bottles, and I said, No, no, we don't do this. You don't want them in your office. You want them in a parking lot where all the people bring them to you, and then they're taken away. So nobody's collecting in locations, just in that parking lot on that day.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Do you have a container for them to put the bags in the parking lot? Because I don't think we could just leave bags.

**MS. BURNER:**

No, no. I'll be there. I'm there with a van.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Oh, so you're there for like a day or a couple hours, whatever, and then people go there, drop off the bags --

**MS. BURNER:**

Yes, drive in.

**LEG. ANKER:**

What a great idea. Thank you so much for your work, especially for our servicemen and -women. My dad is a disabled vet, and my grandfather, my uncle, a lot of military in my family. We really appreciate it.

**MS. BURNER:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Ms. Burner. Thank you. Thank you for being with us.

Okay. We do have a presentation today, and it really is my pleasure to welcome Retired Coast Guard JAG Rosanne Trabocchi, we're going to invite up to join us. You can sit at the table. Thank you so much for being with us. I had the opportunity to meet with Rosanne and Kim Rosenblum, who is with Touro Law School, about a very important issue that is a concern to all of us and all of us who are concerned about their veterans and their families, particularly when it comes to their housing opportunities. This legislature recently passed very important legislation dealing with, among many other things as part of our human rights law, veterans housing and so we all need to be concerned about some of the issues that to this day continue to -- and the challenges that continue to face our veterans, and so welcome and thank you so much for being with us today.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Thank you, Legislator Stern. Good afternoon, Legislators. I am Rosanne Trabocchi, a licensed New York State attorney and a veteran of the United States Coast Guard. I am proud to have served for 23 years with the Coast Guard. My service was as a judge advocate, and my duties included that for several years of being a military judge. As Legislator Stern stated, I am appearing on behalf of the Touro Law Center veterans and service members' rights clinic. The clinic provides free legal services to United States military veterans with a priority to preventing homelessness and facilitating reintegration into the community. We address areas such as driver's license restoration, traffic tickets, warrant recall, debt collection, bankruptcy, landlord-tenant, child support modification and discharge upgrades.

We appreciate the efforts of Legislator Steve Stern and his commitment to ending veteran homelessness in Suffolk County. His recent bill that added veterans to the classes protected by the Suffolk County Human Rights Law is a giant step in this direction. Sadly, veterans have been and continue to be victims of discrimination, particularly in the area of housing. In April 2013, HUD estimated that there were 636,000 homeless people in the United States, and more than 67,000 of them, approximately 14 percent of homeless adults, were military veterans. This is a crucial issue for Suffolk County, home to 80,000 veterans, the largest veteran population of any county in New York State and one of the highest of any county in the nation.

We are also grateful for the efforts of the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission in publishing and circulating flyers announcing the addition of veterans to the protection of the human rights law.

I am here today to urge the county to take the next steps in protecting veterans from housing discrimination. We have begun to receive reports that discrimination both subtle and overt continue to occur. I have several examples that were sent to us by the HUD-VASH, the veterans affairs supportive housing specialist here in Northport. I have examples from him, and then I have some examples of discrimination from around the county. I don't want to bore you, so somebody flag me or yell or scream or do something to stop me if I'm boring you, but I'll give you some examples.

The local HUD-VASH housing specialist said that he received four e-mails from realtors that stated a landlord and a property owner of an advertised rental unit complex will not accept government programs even though their rent is below the HUD established market values. Two of them said they would accept the program, but then the tenants need to have their own security moneys and nothing from -- no moneys from a third party like Catholic Charities, the VASH program, supportive services for veterans families. Since veterans cannot afford these security deposits and the rental agencies are not required to accept third-party funding, the veteran's left without means to obtain housing.

He also stated that some of the advertised apartments are being rented without the various permits and legal inspections which are required to be completed before getting on a government program. Getting on a government program, of course, requires the landlord to spend moneys, and landlords do not want government oversight telling them what they can and can't do with their property that comes with accepting a government program.

One developer here in Suffolk County operates eight different complexes. Two veterans were informed that their leases will not be renewed and they must relocate. Three of these complexes that currently house veterans have refused to accept applications from veterans on the HUD-VASH program. One location is still listing apartments for rent that is under the established limits set by HUD but will not discuss showing these apartments to veterans on the VASH program.

One representative at a particular location verbally stated that she could not accept program applications. Other veterans are being denied because they get their security deposit assistance through the support services for veterans' families or through donations from Catholic Charities. And just yesterday in Newsday, there was an article that the Pine Barrens Society is opposing the development of a housing complex by the Concerned for Independent Living Projects. That's in Middle Island.

It's hard to imagine that any of this is intentional, that property owners and managers would intentionally have any part in causing veterans to live on the streets that they have defended. Much of this discrimination is subtle, some of it's overt. The outright refusal to sell or rent or lease to veterans, there's discriminatory language: "no children preference," "we prefer single

professionals," all that is kind of subtle but it eliminates a lot of these veterans; advertising that housing is available and then when the veteran inquires, housing is not available, making the conditions in terms of housing different or more burdensome if a veteran inquires, requiring them to fill out a longer application, charge more for rent than nonveterans, require more of a security deposit. That tends to be a bigger thing that is being done around the country, more security deposit if it's a veteran, not providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, inquiring only of veterans if they're handicapped and the nature and severity of such handicap.

Now, the Fair Housing Act defines "handicapped" to include substance abuse. If you're a recovering substance abuser, you are considered handicapped. If you are current, you are not, but if you are recovering, you are considered handicapped, so to inquire of veterans, especially during the Vietnam era, if they're handicapped, you are inquiring whether or not they are recovering substance abusers, especially if you probe into the nature of that handicap. Allowing veterans to obtain housing and then making it so difficult or unpleasant for them to live there that they are forced to leave. Refusing to accept the veteran's source of income when it's veteran's benefits, VASH voucher, Social Security, housing choice vouchers.

And I want to talk more about source of income. Source of income and disability are so tied to veterans that they're being -- they have overlapping civil rights' discrimination. You're a veteran but you have a source of income that they won't accept. You're a veteran but you have a disability and they don't want you in their complex. They won't make reasonable accommodation for you in their complex. And I have seen, much to my surprise, some states have protected veterans who are honorably discharged, not all veterans, and I thought that was very interesting. Some have all veterans as a protected class now and some only have veterans who are honorably discharged. Rhode Island was one of them. They had a bill that would add unlawful housing practice, protecting veterans who have an honorable discharge or an honorable or general administration discharge, so if you had an unfavorable discharge, you were not part the protected veterans.

I just want to go through some examples from around the country. From Massachusetts, we had a veteran of the Iraq war, applied for an apartment. After telling the landlady he would be paying for the apartment with his army disability benefits and taking home a rental application, the landlord told him she didn't think that would be a good place for him to live. It would represent a conflict of interest because she was a peace activist and against the war.

From Utah, we had a Gulf War-disabled veteran who allegedly required a small dog to help him cope with the effects of depression and anxiety disorder. The lawsuit alleged that the defense also refused to waive their pet fees and insurance requirements and issued multiple fines that eventually led to his leaving that apartment.

New York had a similar case. HUD filed charges against landlords in Poughkeepsie. Landlords refused the veteran to have a therapeutic service dog in his apartment.

In Florida, housing provider was charged with discrimination for making -- refusing to make one of its units accessible for a veteran who uses a wheelchair.

And still another, this veteran had difficulty leaving his apartment. The landlord required that the tenants pay rent with money orders and deliver them personally to the management office. The veterans disabilities prevented him from getting a money order or delivering it in person. A reasonable accommodation from the landlord would have been to allow the veteran to write a personal check and mail it, but that was not meeting the requirements of the landlord.

And in New Hampshire, I found a 2014 article that stated many landlords across the state of New Hampshire won't accept tenants who have rental assistance, including low income veterans receiving help from the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program. Under current state law, landlords may deny rental applications simply because a veteran receives rental assistance.

So our recommendations at this stage are for more communication and more information such as produce and circulate a more specific flier directed to property owners, managers, landlords, and brokers not only stating that discrimination against veterans is prohibited but providing specific examples of conduct that are prohibited such as you can't represent that housing is available when it is, discriminating against veterans in the initial rental agreement or lease renewal based on their source of security deposit or funding for rental payments, charging or quoting higher rental payments or security deposits for veteran tenants or applicants, setting different terms, conditions, or privileges for veterans such as requiring a higher credit score or income levels.

We also recommend conducting a live training program for property owners, managers, landlords, brokers, and local officials to inform them of their obligations under the law and create an advisory panel within the human rights commission comprised of representatives of agencies that assist veterans in obtaining housing to assure a regular two-way flow of information.

Now if you can bear with me one more second, I do want to mention that the city of Austin in Texas added "source of income," not particularly veterans, but source of income to their discrimination statute laws, and there are two apartment associations that wanted to fight that, and they sued the city of Austin, and it's all over the source of income. The petition is online if you're inclined to read it, but basically they're arguing that the ordinance that was passed necessary forces property owners to contract with the federal government under the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program. Property owners would be required to enter into a housing assistance payment contract with HUD, requiring landlords or making them involuntarily subject to a complicated administrative labyrinth. Significantly -- the lease must comply with significantly different and one-sided government mandated HAP contract terms. That's the housing program. The government-mandated terms would create a special class of residents with more rights and fewer responsibilities than other residents. The city's ordinance effectively transforms a voluntary federal program into a mandatory one for thousands of Austin property owners, many of whom have business reasons for deciding not to participate in the program.

The reason I wanted to mention that is because if you're just a veteran like I am, I'm a veteran, I'm not likely not to be discriminated against. I don't look like I have a disability. I have an income -- well, I have an income. It's my pension, but I have an income. It's usually the veteran with being a veteran and a second discrimination factor: disability or source of income, and this one is all about source of income. This lawsuit, not particularly about veterans, but it's the same for a veteran and going down this path may invite the same kind of pushback based on the information we received from the HUD specialist, the HUD-VASH specialist here in Northport, it sounds very similar that it's the source of income that these property owners have a problem with. Some cases might be disability, but the bigger one seems to be source of income, and the federal programs are voluntary, and by requiring veterans, requiring them to house veterans with a source of income that comes from one of these federal programs sounds very similar to this lawsuit forcing the landlords to participate in the federal programs when they don't want to, and so it costs them money. They have to comply with these regulations of HUD for these apartments to meet inspections, get the property up to code that HUD requires, and it costs them money and time and effort, and rather than being forced, they're just saying, No, we don't want veterans, we don't want source of income coming from these sources.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Thank you very much for coming.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Barraga.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

So based on your remarks, it seems to me the source of income most certainly is the issue. Now, if I'm a landlord and I don't want to deal with HUD and I don't want to deal with the rental aspect, among the conditions of paperwork am I also getting less money as opposed to renting it to someone who is a nonveteran?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

No. The rent should be the same. The voucher program will pay for part of it, and the veteran has to pay for the rest. The rent should be the same.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

If I'm getting the same dollar, whether it's veteran or nonveteran, why is there discrimination when it comes to things like HUD or rental assistance? Is it the paperwork? Is it the obligation that the owners now have to adhere to or certain requirements that they have to adhere to that makes it not feasible?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

My sense is, from the research I have done, is that they don't want to be bothered with the inspections, waiting for payment from HUD and --

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

How long does one have to wait to get payment from HUD?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

From what I read, the first payment usually shows up in two weeks and thereafter, it should be on the first of every month.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

So that wouldn't seem to be much of a problem from the landlord's perspective.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I think we have to engage the landlord, the rental agencies and hear them and hear their concerns. I don't know the extent if you're a nonveteran with the source of income if that's a problem; that, I don't know, and it might be because I'm a veteran and my source of income is only, say, the VASH voucher and my V.A. disability benefit, and there might be some concern from the landlords that, Oh, we'll get the voucher, the payment from the federal government, but we won't get the rest from the veteran. That could be it. I don't know.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Because when I hear about discrimination against veterans and housing, you know, my thought process is that it's very specific to an individual. You just don't want this veteran or the next veteran or the next veteran, but it seems to me that, based on your testimony, a lot of it has to do with the type of program that's already in place to help the veteran. That seems to be the issue with the landlord as opposed to the veteran per se, the individual veteran.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I think that would be true based on my -- but I also think there are misconceptions. There are misconceptions about veterans: They've all used drugs. They all have PTSD. They're all unstable. They all have trouble holding a job. I think those are misconceptions. They've been homeless, so they are just not like the rest of us.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

I don't disagree. When you take a look at, for example, PTSD, there's a tremendous amount of coverage and publicity associated with that. I can see where some other group or landlords may take a look and come to an incorrect assumption that all of these folks or most of these folks are suffering from PTSD so why do we need the problems of an individual like that in our complex. It's an unfortunate side effect with trying to deal with a very serious issue among veterans.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

And I think that's where we see the pushback from the housing developments that are affordable housing that are intended to house veterans.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

So what's your best recommendation or solution? How do we really deal with this issue?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Well, as I mentioned, we need more information out there. We need more flyers. We need to touch the realtors and the rental agencies and the landlords of these complexes, give them the benefit of the doubt right now that they truly don't understand the law or what we're dealing with and that those are misconceptions and they're generalizations across the board and then see what the reaction is, but I think we also need to hear what they're concerned about and see if there's a way we can allay their concerns.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

I agree because there's always two sides to every story. I mean, on the face of it, it looks like the landlord is the bad guy and certainly, you know, some of them are, but I'm sure they have concerns about some of these support programs from HUD and, you know, the so-called rental assistance, the paperwork associated with the requirements, and maybe the type of personnel out there from a governmental perspective are really not there to explain what these programs are all about, and if they did, it might be easier for a landlord to accept the program, and when they do that, they accept the veteran.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I think -- I personally think there's such a misconception about veterans who are homeless or veterans who have a source of income that's an assistance program and what they are, who they are, and who they might bring into the apartment. I think that's a big issue. I can't see the voucher program or Social Security or Catholic Charities being an issue. They're getting guaranteed money, so it's got to be something else in my mind, but the only way to know is to open it up, have a training session that incorporates hearing their concerns, getting information out via fliers, brochures and start listening to the other side.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Is that something a veterans agency in a county can do?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Yeah, I don't see why not.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

It has to start someplace.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Engage Tom Ronayne.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Our purview, basically, is within the county.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

You know, here there's an -- Legislator Barraga, I'm not sure if you have one -- but this is a recent outreach effort on the part of the Human Rights Commission, and clearly it's aimed to veterans wanting to raise awareness that there is a law, that there are protections, and as important as this is, this, of course, is not the kind of effort that we're speaking to now, which is to also try and raise awareness and, I could not agree more, to hear, to listen to some of the concerns from some of the communities or landlords that are working with veterans and their family members, so clearly that needs to be an additional, maybe very different, effort but every bit as important.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Thank you very much for coming.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

If I can just note that the apartment associations in Austin did get an injunction against the city and did delay the implementation of the ordinance. That was reversed by the district court, so the city of Austin did go ahead, but there was a time where they couldn't enforce that source of income.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

You know, the county just passed a discrimination law, and there was a big meeting of the realtors out in Greenport, and they were very concerned, and the concern was the source of income because they felt like as if you were the landlord, then you need to be protected. It had nothing to do with veterans or any other specific group. They just wanted to know where the source of income was coming from. Then you mention the HUD programs. Is part of the problem if they have to comply with some other federal law, if you're renting an apartment in your home, then it's going to cost you \$50,000 to comply, it's just a tenable or maybe if you have old apartment building and there's no -- you know, physically to comply, it's going to cost you a million dollars to register for the building, is that part of the problem also?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I believe so. From what I understand, HUD has certain requirements of apartments. You have to have a refrigerator suitable to the size of the apartment. You have to have two outlet as a minimum in every room. So HUD has all these requirements that a landlord has to meet, and if you're talking about a complex with X hundred apartments, there's a cost to meet not only the code but then to pay for the permits. There's a yearly inspection -- it's supposed to be a year. I don't know if they actually do it every year, but inspections to meet. You can't get on the program until your apartments are accepted that is meeting whatever HUD requires so, yeah, there's a --

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

I think that's one of the hurdles, and I think when you were speaking to Legislator Barraga about better communication between landlords, because a lot of it's smaller -- it's not just big apartment buildings. It's smaller rooms and whatnot that they rent to people, better communication so that everybody would kind of be on the same page.

**MS. TRABOCCHI :**

And the disabilities also, I don't know if they're as big as the source of income problem, but disability -- because then a landlord has to do various things to make reasonable accommodations. Many landlords don't want pets in the apartments, and so there are many veterans who have service animals.

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

But then it goes to the other side, if you're in a service animal, of course it's very legitimate, but if you're renting in a building where someone's allergic to an animal, then there'd be a conflict there for medical reason on the other side, so I've heard those things, too, mentioned.

**MS. TRABOCCHI :**

And then they just don't trust the PTSD and some of the emotional, traumatic brain injury.

**LEG. KRUPSKI :**

That's unfortunate. I've never heard that. We just spent some time with my nephew who's served in the Marines for a couple tours, and he's out of the Marines, and he's gone back to school, so I don't even think about that, what you've said, for that way because he's moving on with his life. He's served and now he's gone on. So I don't know if everyone thinks that way, you know what I'm saying, if you're a veteran. I think a lot of people in our society thank you for your service. They don't think of it as a negative. They think of it as a positive; Oh, he or she was a veteran, is a good thing.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Thank you again for your presentation. You have given some numbers, 630,000 homeless vets in the U.S. I think that was -- was that --

**MS. TRABOCCHI :**

No. HUD estimated, was April of 2013, there were 636,000 homeless people in the United States, and approximately 14 percent of homeless adults who were military veterans.

**LEG. ANKER:**

So that's in the United States, and then you said 80,000 vets in Suffolk, so what's the homeless number for Suffolk County? If not, that's okay. I was just curious.

**MS. TRABOCCHI :**

I didn't keep my papers in order here. I don't remember the numbers.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Not to worry. We can get back with you because I have that development that you're talking about that you were talking about in Middle Island, and, you know, we have a very high vets population in my district. Do you see the development working well to house a number of veterans that are in need of housing versus individual apartments that are placed throughout Suffolk County?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I don't know if I really could speak to that, but my personal feeling would be it's nice to have other veterans living in proximity because it really is a different experience than most people who are not military veterans, whether you go to war or not. For me, I was uprooted from where I was living every couple years. I've moved so many times. I've been living here in Suffolk County now for two years. I'm ready to move. I have no place to move to now, but even that, the constant uprooting, new places, new people, can't have friends because you're moving all the time, going to a war, the night and day obligations, whether you've slept or not, it doesn't matter.

**LEG. ANKER:**

So there's a whole psychology behind --

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

It's a different world and having others who have lived that that you relate to, I think, is a positive thing.

**LEG. ANKER:**

And in our Suffolk County Vets services, Tom Ronayne is the director, has done a wonderful job in creating programs and also providing guidance to so many veterans that have come back, and, again, I thank you for your service.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

I did find the numbers it was 636,000 homeless people in the U.S. More than 60,000 of them were military veterans, and we have 80,000 veterans here in Suffolk County. I don't have the number of how many of them are homeless, but it is a large population.

**LEG. ANKER:**

You're talking about the overall vets population, not just homeless vets but vets in general.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Right.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Are you sensing, though, that they're able to find housing? It's sort of like the drug addiction issue where there's just no place for these people that need rehabilitation that we have to increase those locations. Do you feel a similar situation with the vets housing? There's so many vets and there's just no housing. What's your sense on that? Are they moving in with family? How are vets finding shelter?

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Well, I don't believe there's enough affordable housing for veterans. It's affordable housing. In addition, we do have a large population of homeless veterans. The shelter, there's -- I don't know if you know, but the Salvation Army runs a homeless shelter at the V.A. in Northport. That's always full. There's always veterans there, but I think it's the affordable housing, and, you know, Concerned For Independent Living has done a lot to try to create affordable housing for veterans, but then if you if get landlords, they won't accept the assistance that veterans rely on to get the housing, what good is it?

**LEG. ANKER:**

Well, again, thank you for your advocacy. We really appreciate it.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Very difficult with statistics and numbers as well because as you point out, there were situations where someone might have housing today but are vulnerable that might lose that housing sooner rather than later unfortunately because of source of payment, and so those numbers don't necessarily show up in any study but still are veterans and their families who are vulnerable as we speak.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

That's what's happening with this developer who runs eight complexes here in Suffolk. All of a sudden these veterans now are not going to be renewed in their leases.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

First of all, let me thank you for being with us today and for all of your efforts and continuing efforts as we continue to -- we'll meet, we'll speak, we'll develop strategies on how best to continue to raise awareness, not just among veterans and their family members in our community but to those that serve them and need to be aware of rules and regulations that apply that we've passed recently that are already on the books that they need to be aware of as we all go forward together so thank you.

**MS. TRABOCCHI:**

Thank you for inviting us.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

All right. Anybody else? We have no pending legislation before us, and so with no further business, the committee is adjourned. Thank you.

***(\*The meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m. \*)***