

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs & Probation Officers Call on County Executive Bellone to Negotiate in Good Faith *Six Years without Contract; Bellone No Show at Bargaining Table*



(Legislator Kate Browning, center, stands with Legislator Leslie Kennedy, Legislator Kevin McCaffrey, President John Beck of the SCDSPBA, Unit President Matt Porter of the SC Probation Officers Association and over 75 Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs and Probation Officers.)

Riverhead, NY – After repeated attempts to settle a six year contract dispute have been thwarted by the Bellone administration, Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs and Probation Officers came together on June 21, 2016 in Riverhead to point out the hypocrisy of the County Executive. Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley), Legislator Leslie Kennedy (R-Smithtown) and Legislator Kevin McCaffrey (R-Lindenhurst) joined union leaders and over 75 rank and file Deputy Sheriffs and Probation Officers to call on County Executive Steve Bellone to settle the contracts and support working families in Suffolk County.

Just this past May, Bellone stood in solidarity with striking Verizon workers stating, “you’re the back bone of our County”, but refuses to personally sit at the table to negotiate a fair contract with County employees who protect and serve the public every day, and who are also the backbone of Suffolk County. Most recently, Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory sent a letter to Bellone urging him to provide critical information that has been repeatedly requested by the two bargaining units. The information would allow the unions to offer similar savings as recently agreed upon contracts with the Corrections Officers Association and the Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association. After several weeks that letter has not received a response.

“You cannot negotiate when one side refuses to bargain,” stated Legislator Kate Browning. “Our public sector law enforcement employees are no different than the private sector workers who recently fought to have a

fair contract and dignity in the workplace. The only difference is public employees do not have the ability to strike and bring a bad faith negotiator to the table. Six years without a contract is unacceptable. That is six years with no raise for employees who start out making \$30,000.”

“I am hopeful that reasonable minds can come to an agreement that is good for both the taxpayers and for the members of our law enforcement who work to protect us every day,” stated Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

Legislators and leaders in attendance shared a video of County Executive Bellone speaking to Verizon workers at a rally for a fair contract. He stated, “What is this fight about? It’s first and foremost about your families, being able to have a decent job and a decent wage. And here you are fighting for your families. We are going to be working with you. Whatever we can do to help. You’re standing up and fighting and saying no more. You’re not going to take anymore. People across the Country are watching you and what you are doing, and saying thank you. We are with you, Suffolk County is with you!”

The Deputy Sheriffs and Probation Officers are asking County Executive Bellone to treat them fairly and stand with them to make Suffolk County a better place to live.

“Steve Bellone purports himself to be pro-labor by standing with the communications workers, yet is completely unfazed that Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs are six years without a contract,” stated John Becker, President, Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs PBA. “We simply ask that he display the same enthusiasm and interest that he showed for private sector employees.”

“I am asking Steve Bellone,” stated Legislator Browning. “What is the delay? Where is Steve Bellone? I don’t want a response from his staff. He needs to respond directly to our bargaining units.”

Instead of sitting at the negotiating table, the Bellone Administration has attempted to go to binding arbitration, a move that would likely cost taxpayers more money and one that would not resolve the issue of officers working without a contract.

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