

**Welfare to Work Commission  
Of the Suffolk County Legislature**

**Minutes of the April 12, 2018 Meeting**

**Present:**

Richard Koubek, Chair  
Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair  
Ayesha Alleyne (Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation)  
Peggy Boyd (Family Service League)  
Barbara DeFina (Suffolk County Community College)  
Christina DeLisi (Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory)  
Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center);  
Charles Fox (EOC-LI)  
Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank)  
Karen Klafter for Legislator Tom Donnelly  
Ellen Krakow (Nassau/Suffolk Law Services)  
Richard Krebs, (SC Department of Labor)  
Christian Limbach (SC Association of Municipal Employees)  
Donna Raphael for Jeffrey Reynolds, (Family and Children's Association/LICADD)

**Excused:** Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES); Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless); Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health); Commissioner John O'Neill (SC Department of Social Services); Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental Health and Wellness); Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches)

**Absent:**

Sr. Lisa Bergeron (Catholic Charities); Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI)

**Guests:** Carmen Maquilon, Director of the Catholic Charities' Office of Migration and Refugee Services; Patrick Young, Program Director for CARECEN; Anita Halasz, Executive Director of LI Jobs with Justice.

1. **Minutes:** A motion to accept the March minutes, made by Peggy Boyd, seconded by Ayesha Alleyne, passed unanimously.
2. **Supportive Housing Work Group:** Commission Chair Richard Koubek reported that the Work Group is meeting April 30<sup>th</sup> to edit the draft report, which the Commission should receive for a vote in late spring.
3. **IDA:** Mr. Koubek reported that, thanks to the efforts of Christina DeLisi in the Presiding Officer's office, a meeting has been set for April 30<sup>th</sup> with the Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) staff to discuss the Commission's proposed IDA Scoring Tool. Agencies and Commission members that sat on the original ADA Ad Hoc Committee will be attending, including Mr. Koubek, Kim Gierasch as well as Christina DeLisi for the Presiding Officer, Christian Limbach for AME, Roger Clayman for the LI Federation of Labor and Anita Halasz for LI Jobs with Justice.
4. **Home Stability Support Program:** Don Friedman reported that a public assistance rent supplement program was included in the 2018 State budget, but in a quite different form than the originally proposed Home Stability Support program. A rent supplement program was adopted, but as a pilot program covering only New York City and

Rochester. Eligible households will be able to receive rental assistance of up to 100% of the local HUD Fair Market Rent. The original goal had been first-year funding of \$40 million, then increased by that amount annually for five years. However, the pilot program was budgeted at \$15 million over four years, and will ultimately serve only about 230 public assistance families in the two pilot cities.

5. **Child Care Summit:** Kathy Liguori shared the Save the Date flyer for the May 4<sup>th</sup> Child Care Commission's summit. The focus will be on legislative dialogue around funding child care in a time of suburban fiscal crisis. Federal, state and local officials will be participating, including Cong. Peter King, State Senator Phil Boyle, Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre; County Executive Steve Bellone; Suffolk County Legislative Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and Legislators Kara Hahn and Leslie Kennedy. Mr. Koubek and Ms. Liguori also announced that Congress reversed itself on flat funding for the CCDBG grant, adding billions of dollars to the program, which will result in a \$100 million increase for New York State.
6. **Federal Immigration Policies:** Mr. Koubek noted that the Commission decided at the March meeting to focus at this April meeting on its 2018 goal of assessing the impact that federal immigration policies are having on Suffolk County. Toward this end, he invited three guest speakers to help focus the assessment: Carmen Maquilon, Director of the Catholic Charities' Office of Migration and Refugee Services; Patrick Young, Program Director of CARECEN; Anita Halasz, Executive Director of LI Jobs with Justice. After introducing the speakers, Mr. Koubek explained the mission of the Welfare to Work Commission which is to advise the Legislature on policies related to people on Public Assistance, transitioning off public assistance as well as working-poor people who may require DSS and County supportive services such as Food Stamps (SNAP) or public buses or may be at risk of requiring Public Assistance. He stated that the Commission is empowered to hold public hearings and, over the years has done so in conjunction with releasing reports on topics such as Suffolk poverty, the need for affordable housing, the problem of unregulated sober homes and child care. Richard Krebs asked for and Mr. Koubek agreed to provide the members with the legislation that created the Commission in 2003. Each of the presenters then spoke:
  - a. **LI Jobs with Justice:** Anita Halasz stated that, while Long Island is not experiencing dragnet or roundup raids, ICE is present arresting undocumented immigrants in their homes, at their workplaces, in court or even on the streets. LI Jobs with Justice (LIJWJ) has:
    - conducted Know Your Rights trainings for about 1,000 people,
    - created a Solidarity Fund to support families whose breadwinner has been arrested by ICE,
    - trained about 300 people throughout the Island to accompany immigrants to their immigration court appearance in NYC as well as to local courts such as family, traffic or criminal courts,
    - created an Island-wide hotline to report ICE activities,
    - created community-based Rapid Response Networks in impacted communities with volunteers prepared to staff their own hotlines connected to the Island-wide hotline, corroborate and witness ICE activities and establish sanctuary congregations to shelter immigrants facing an ICE action (ICE will not make arrests in religious congregations, schools or hospitals.)

Ms. Halasz stated her concern about the increase in ICE arrests of people without a criminal record, or with minor offenses from years ago such as DUIs. She stated that these ICE arrests are relevant to the Commission's work since, when breadwinners are taken away, the families suffer from the loss of income. Mr. Koubek noted that there is evidence that undocumented parents are not recertifying their citizen children for supports such as Food Stamps for fear that the receipt of these public benefits will jeopardize their status should they apply for legalization or that the recertification could create a paper trail that leads to an ICE arrest. Ms. Halasz stated that the impact on children is particularly serious since they live in constant fear that their parents will be deported or that they themselves will be taken from their families.

- b. **CARECEN:** Patrick Young stated that his agency has seen evidence that ICE arrests in the Long Island/NYC area are up 50 percent since the Trump inauguration. Suffolk County has twice as many arrests as Nassau despite a similar number of immigrants living in each county, likely due to the MS13 gang activity in Suffolk. He stated that persons accused of misdemeanors are being detained for ICE action, even after their acquittal. With the broad guidelines disseminated by President Trump and the Department of Homeland Security in the winter of 2017, all 11 million undocumented immigrants are now in jeopardy of an ICE arrest and deportation. Mr. Koubek pointed out that the *New York Times* reported recently that ICE arrests of undocumented immigrants with no criminal record are up 200 percent in NYC. Mr. Young reported that some undocumented immigrants have been arrested while accompanying their children to school. ICE officers now act with administrative warrants signed by ICE officers rather than with judicial warrants signed by a judge that require much higher levels of evidence. Using the less restrictive administrative warrants, ICE officers sometimes arrest all the people living in a building where they are conducting a search for a specific immigrant. He further stated that this increased ICE activity is occurring despite the fact that being undocumented is not a crime but rather a civil offense. He noted that there are about 70,000 undocumented immigrants on Long Island, 15,000 Salvadorans and 5,000 mostly Hondurans and Haitians with Temporary Protective Status (TPS) that will be revoked in 2019 for Haitians, Salvadorans and other Central Americans and 10,000-15,000 DACA recipients awaiting Congressional action on a Dream Act that would legalize their status, which was revoked by President Trump in September of 2017. Ayesha Alleyne stated that the Commission should keep in mind that not all undocumented immigrants are Central American and Haitian, which she believes is becoming something of a stereotype in public conversations about immigration policy. She pointed out, as examples, that there are many Polish and Irish undocumented immigrants in the NY area.
- c. **Catholic Charities:** Carmen Maquilon stated that her office is seeing an increase in the number of immigrants not reapplying for public benefits such as Food Stamps or WIC, which are administered by her Department. In addition, her agency has witnessed an increase in the number of DACA students who are without health insurance. Ms. Maquilon also stated that there is a noticeable decrease in domestic violence reports, again due to the climate of intimidation experienced by immigrants too afraid to file formal reports. Her staff, like CARECEN, is dealing with a sharp increase in requests for assistance as the ICE arrests have mounted on Long Island. Ms. Halasz and Mr. Young spoke of reports about students being suspended in certain high schools on the suspicion of being gang members, sometimes with flimsy evidence such as wearing gang-associated

colors, and then being turned over by the local police to ICE. Ms. Maquilon stated that her agency has heard similar stories of high school students being suspended and then deported, without due process such as a legally-required parental appeal of a student's suspension.

- d. **Westchester Immigration Law:** Ms. Halasz and Mr. Young shared their concerns about both the Nassau and Suffolk County Police Departments collaborating with ICE. While each police department has a policy that forbids officers from asking immigrants to document their legal status, both departments are detaining immigrants for ICE action if there is any evidence of even minor illegal activity in their past such as driving without a license or while impaired. With this situation on the table, Mr. Koubek distributed a Westchester law adopted in March, which restricts the ability of local police departments to collaborate with ICE. Mr. Young, via his work with the New York Immigration Coalition, was familiar with the law. He stated that it has restrictions for certain serious crimes such as gang activity or the felonies. Nevertheless, the law prohibits local police departments from questioning, detecting or apprehending individuals based solely on their immigration status. The law also bars Ice from using local police facilities and requires ICE agents to produce a judicial rather than administrative warrant and provide legal counsel if they wish to interrogate an immigrant in county police custody.
  - e. **Next Steps: Next Steps:** Ellen Krakow stated that Nassau Suffolk Law Services, in partnership with the Suffolk County Bar Association, will soon launch a project in which pro bono attorneys will assist low-income immigrants with Permanent Residence status, who wish to become citizens, to complete the USCIS naturalization applications. Mr. Koubek, Peggy Boyd and several other Commission members stated that the decline in public benefits for the citizen-children of undocumented immigrants is an issue that falls within the purview of the Commission. In addition, as noted during the March meeting, a report by the Suffolk County Office of Economic Development concluded that the deportation of 15,000 TPS recipients could cost Long Island \$369 million in lost wages and might cause over 3,000 homes owned by TPS recipients to be auctioned or abandoned. Such a negative economic impact could place additional demands on Suffolk County, including DSS which might have to provide supports to the citizen children of deported TPS recipients. Lastly, Mr. Koubek noted that enactment of a law similar to the Westchester statute that restricts local police collaboration with ICE might help reduce the climate of fear that is preventing undocumented parents from recertifying their citizen children for public benefits. Mr. Koubek further stated that a Commission hearing on these matters might help legislators and the public understand the negative impacts federal deportation policies are having on Suffolk County. This topic will be discussed at the May commission meeting.
7. **Announcement:** Mr. Koubek announced that LIJwJ and the Jewish Community Relations Council are co-sponsoring a forum on federal immigration policies at the Mid-Island Y JCC in Plainview April 15<sup>th</sup> which will feature Cong. Peter King and Tom Suozzi.
  8. **Next meeting:** Friday, May 11.