NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

FULL LEGISLATURE MEETING

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HOWARD J. KOPEL, PRESIDING OFFICER

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**County Executive and Legislative Building**

**1550 Franklin Avenue**

**Mineola, New York**

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Monday, September 23, 2024

1:31 p.m.

TAKEN BY: BARBARA DANIELS, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

Presiding Officer

7th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR THOMAS MCKEVITT

Alternate Presiding Officer

13th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI,JR.

Alternate Deputy Presiding Officer

15th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SCOTT DAVIS

1st Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

2nd Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES

3rd Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR PATRICK MULLANEY

4th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR SETH KOSLOW

5th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

6th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR JOHN J. GIUFFRE

8th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SCOTT STRAUSS

9th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

10th Legislative District

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DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

Minority Leader

11th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR MICHAEL GIANGREGORIO

12th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR, III

14th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR ARNOLD W. DRUCKER

16th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE WALKER

17th Legislative District

***

LEGISLATOR SAMANTHA GOETZ

18th Legislative District

***

LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

19th Legislative District

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MICHAEL PULITZER

Clerk of the Legislature

JAMES DARCY, ESQ.

Attorney for Clerk of the Legislature

APPEARANCES:

Joseph Philbin, Sergeant at Arms, NCDA

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Meta Mereday

Jonathan Pedilla

Renee Campanile

Lauren Krueger

Donald Hudson

Sean Cirillo

Mashiat Azmi

Richard Clolery

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Let's please take your seats.

We're going to start out, as always, with the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Pledge of Allegiance today will be led by Legislator Colonel Bill Gaylor.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance is said.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

As always, we start our proceedings with Top Cops. DAI?

SERGEANT PHILBIN: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Joseph Philbin. I'm the Sergeant At Arms for the Nassau County Detectives Association. We would like to thank you for acknowledging our detective and your continued support of the hard working detectives of Nassau County.

As you can see, it's just me. The detective I'll refer to as detective "M" because he's currently in an undercover status and still working for the people

of Nassau County.

Today, the DAI would like to honor one of our outstanding undercover narcotics detectives. Due to the sensitivity of his work, I will refer to him as Detective "M". Over the past year, Detective "M" began investigating the flow of illegal narcotics into Nassau County. During this investigation, it was determined that large quantities of fentanyl were being shipped via the mail to Nassau County. He and his partners began a complex investigation, which determined that the drugs were arriving from Georgia and California to homes in Westbury and Massapequa. Through days of surveillance and investigation, they developed three suspects and two residences involved in the attempt to distribute these deadly narcotics on our streets. As a result of two successful search warrants, they arrested three individuals, took three illegal handguns off the street, seized 2.3kg of

methamphetamine and 280g of fentanyl pills and several other narcotics. We cannot even begin to fathom how many lives were saved from overdoses, and then who would have been hurt by these illegal firearms. For these reasons, we have chosen to honor Detective "M" today.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. And while we understand that you don't want to reveal identities, it's too bad we don't get to see and congratulate the detective personally. But would you convey the congratulations from all of us, please?

Legislator Strauss.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

As a former member of the NYPD, I know all too well what investigations like this are like. I think it's important that we recognize and congratulate this detective, as well as all of those who participated in this

investigation, and those who are involved in similar investigations. Illegal firearms, deadly narcotics and three drug dealers were taken off the streets in Nassau County. As you mentioned, it's immeasurable how many lives these arrests have saved.

I also think it's important to emphasize the reason why this detective isn't here receiving this award in person. Again, it's because he or she is undercover. Revealing his or her identity will not only compromise any investigation currently being worked on, but more importantly, it may literally jeopardize the detective's life and that of his or her family members.

Drug dealers can be absolutely ruthless. They'll stop at nothing to keep from getting caught, and that includes killing a police officer or going after their families. Drug dealers are some of the lowest forms of life. They prey on vulnerable people and go after our kids

trying to get them addicted because of their greed and their warped minds. The risk our officers take each and every day are tremendous. And in cases like this, the officers are also jeopardizing the lives of their loved ones to help keep us safe.

Please pass on my -- our appreciation to this detective and the members of the Nassau County Police Department for the great work all of you do. Thank you.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right. Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Yes, please convey. We've done this many times before when we haven't wanted to disclose the identity of those of you that really go beyond, especially being undercover. You really put yourselves at risk. You don't have the protection of a badge. And, in my opinion, detective work goes above and beyond. And I know why

it's hard to find detectives because it's a real special calling. You not only do the follow up, you deal with the family. You have the day to day stress, where other times you go home and it's over. Not for you. And we totally recognize that.

And I just have to take another, opportunity to stress what a crisis that opioid addiction is. And that's why we're seriously hoping that in the next couple of months or as soon as possible, we get a lot of the opioid money dispensed. Because helping people get over these addictions is really what's going to help you, because there'll be less of the need for opioid. And I really believe that we're just perpetuating crime and everything else by not getting these people the help that they need. And we have $92 million to hopefully address that.

Please convey however you can to this detective, our appreciation and our

respect and our thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Solages.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you. Good afternoon. I just want to thank you, Joe, again, product of the Fifth Precinct; we love you in Elmont.

Thank you so much for shedding light on the opioid crisis and specifically fentanyl. As you may know, and as Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton stated, it is one of the number one killers we have here in this country. Every year -- I think every day we lose 22 young people due to a fentanyl overdose. That's a classroom per day. Last year, we lost more people from fentanyl overdoses than we lost in the Iraq, Vietnam War and I think another war combined. So I thank you for shedding light on this. This is very important. Our media should be talking about this instead of talking about who's eating cats and dogs.

So again, thank you very much. We

really appreciate you and your hard work. God bless you and God bless the detectives.

SERGEANT PHILBIN: Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

Now we have two points of personal privilege. Minority Leader.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mazzy Sass, could you come up for a second, if you don't mind? And your family and your family as well.

Thank you, Presiding Officer, for giving me the opportunity. It's my pleasure to introduce Mazzy Sass of Port Washington. She is a senior at Schreiber High School who is doing tremendously important work to help people in our community and across America. In doing so, she and her family have overcome moments of adversity to become tireless advocates in a quest to raise awareness about an important issue affecting many Americans.

This family was affected by a condition that is not known by many people, and it's something that can be cured very easily with the right treatment. I just have to pay respect to

the parents because I have a daughter. The mom and dad have taken what has been a nerve-wracking, horrific experience and have turned it around to be such a positive example to their daughter and to everyone else as to how to make a positive impact with something terrible that happened to their family. It's immeasurable to see how many families and how many people they've saved.

I don't want to take up any more of your time. I'm going to have this beautiful young woman just tell you about her story.

MS. SASS: Good afternoon, members of the Nassau County Legislature, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today about Marfan syndrome and the importance of establishing a Marfan Awareness Day in New York State.

Before I begin, I want to express my gratitude to Nassau County Legislator Carrie A. Solages, Minority Leader Delia DeRiggi-Whitton and Riva Whitehead for

their guidance and support. Without them, I want to be standing here today, and for that I'm deeply thankful.

My name is Mazzy Sass, and I'm 17 year old high school student senior, living here in Nassau County. On March 24th, 2021, I went to sleep standing 5'7" and woke up the next morning at 5'11. It sounds unbelievable, but it's true. My sudden height increase wasn't a growth spurt. It was a result of skilled orthopedic surgeons who inserted a titanium rod and 28 screws into my spine to correct its severe curvature caused by my Marfan-related condition. The straightening of my spine literally made me grow four inches overnight. Some say this is one of the most painful surgeries, but in many ways, I'm one of the fortunate ones.

Marfan syndrome is a connective tissue disorder caused by a mutation in fbn1 gene, which affects the body's connective tissues, structures that

provide support to organs and other parts of the body. Over 90% of people with Marfan syndrome face serious cardiovascular complications that cause the aorta to weaken and enlarge, leading to life threatening aortic aneurysms or dissections. Thankfully, I've been spared the most severe cardiovascular issues, but I've dealt with complications affecting my eyes, joints, and skeletal system, all of which are common with this condition.

Marfan syndrome affects about 1 in 5000 people, and three out of the four with the condition inherit it from a parent. There's a 50% chance that a parent with Marfan syndrome will pass a genetic mutation onto their child.

You might be asking, why do we need a Marfan Awareness Day in New York State? The answer is simple: Because this genetic disorder can be a silent killer if undetected. The average life expectancy of someone undiagnosed with

Marfan syndrome is just 45 years. Let me repeat that: Only 45 years. But with proper diagnosis and monitoring, life expectancy for someone with Marfan syndrome is nearly the same as those without the condition.

Tragically, almost half the people who have Marfan syndrome are unaware of it. That's why I'm here today advocating for a Marfan awareness day, because awareness is the most powerful tool that we have. Nassau County is fortunate enough to be home to the Marfan Foundation, headquartered in my hometown of Port Washington. The Marfan Foundation is a nonprofit that saves and improves lives by creating a community for people affected by Marfan syndrome and related genetic conditions such Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. They've touched countless lives, and their work is a true asset to our community.

Creating a Marfan Awareness Day in New York would achieve several critical

goals:

One, it would help thousands of New Yorkers live longer, healthier lives by reaching those who are unaware and undiagnosed;

Two, it would support the important work of leading nonprofit organizations right here in Nassau County;

Three, it would demonstrate Nassau County's and New York State's commitment to improving the health and lives of all residents by reinforcing that knowledge is truly power.

Personally, I've dedicated a significant amount of time to raising awareness for Marfan syndrome and related disorders. I've served as a camp counselor at Camp Victory in Georgia, a Marfan Foundation sponsored camp; I volunteer at fundraising events for medical research on genetic disorders; I've also spoken with young people who have Marfan and related conditions, sharing my experiences so they know that

they're not alone and that someone understands what they're going through.

I've done my part and I'll continue to do so. I hope Nassau County and New York State will join me in this fight. Together we can raise awareness and save lives.

Thank you again for this platform and the opportunity to speak today.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. SASS: I just wanted to say, we're very proud of Mazzy for -- Just very proud of her. I hope you really heard what she said. I think what she's doing is really important, and I hope you all heard her. And I don't think you understand that 1 in 5000 people in this state is a lot, and half of them don't even know. There's not that much we need to do to make a difference. Simply creating awareness, that's really half the battle with this.

So thank you so much for your time. Really appreciate all the support.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: It's wonderful when you can turn a significant problem into something good. Congratulations on that.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Thank you again, Presiding Officer. And we would really like to maybe be the first -- maybe we'll try to do a dome lighting and have a dedication. So I don't even know exactly how to do that, but I'm going to try to put in for that. So it would be nice if we had everyone's support.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Next we have a presentation by Legislators Bynoe and Mule.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I'd like to ask Christopher Borzor and his family to come up to the microphone.

Christopher is a young man who, resides in my district, and Legislator Bynoe is also recognizing him because he ran for Uniondale, which is in her district.

So you may recognize the very handsome young man next to Christopher, Jonathan Prevost. He was my legislative aide for a number of years, and Jonathan is the one who brought Chris to my attention.

So Chris is just another shining example of what we do best in this country, and that is allow immigrants to come in and do what they do best and allow that to shine. And so I'm just going to tell a little bit about you,

Chris, and then I'm going to give you the opportunity to say whatever you'd like to say.

Chris came to this country from Haiti, which, as we all know, is undergoing terrible things, particularly right now. He and his family came here when he was six, and he went through the school system, and he saw his older cousin Jonathan running, and he thought, oh, boy, that looks like fun. And so Jonathan encouraged him, and he became a star on the very storied Uniondale track team. And I know that because I went to Uniondale, and it has been a powerhouse all those many years back, and it still is. So to be a success on the Uniondale team is saying something in and of itself.

But then Chris went on to college, where he ran, and then he went on to get his master's degree in gerontology, where he also ran. And sometime during all of that, he broke a record in running for

Haiti. And that's what earned him a place on the Haitian team in this summer's Olympics, which I know we all really enjoyed watching this summer.

And so I just want to say congratulations. We are so proud of you. And we know that you're going to do really wonderful things from here on in. And we look forward to to seeing what that is.

Legislator Bynoe?

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Good afternoon. Well, today is a great day that we get to celebrate all of your accolades in the sport of running. But also your academic success as well. Gerontology, there are quite a few of us that are very interested in what you might be able to do to keep us younger.

But, in all seriousness, I'm a first generation American, and I have deep, deep connections and roots to my parents home countries. And so I know that it must feel really special to be able to

have two countries that are celebrating your success. And so just know that we here in Nassau County are very, very proud of you and we wish you all the best into the future. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Just real quickly. Thank you.

I just want to say congratulations. My name is Carrie A. Solages. I'm the first Haitian American elected here in Nassau County.

You make all of us really proud. I just want to thank you. And I also want to thank your mother, if that's your mother. Give her all the credit, of course. Let's give respect to the mother. Haitian moms.

(Whereupon, applause.)

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you so much for all your sacrifices. And just want to say we're very proud of you from the Third Legislative District. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right, Chris, would you like to say a few words?

MR. BORZOR: I just want to say thank you to Nassau County. As a kid from Baldwin, being able to represent Haiti in Nassau County on the national stage was a dream come true. Being able to symbol of a hope for others to the dream of the Olympics is the highlight of my life. And I look forward to continue to represent my country. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We are now going to have a short, hopefully, Finance Committee followed by a short Rules Committee meeting. First we will start with Finance.

(Whereupon, recess for Rules and Finance Committee.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr. Pulitzer, would you call the roll for the Full Legislature?

CLERK PULITZER: Roll call.

Deputy Presiding Officer Thomas McKevitt?

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Alternate Deputy Presiding Officer John Ferretti?

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Alternate Deputy Minority Leader Siela Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Carrie A. Solages?

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Debra Mule?

LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator C. William Gaylor, III?

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

CLERK PULITZER: Thank you.

Legislator John Giuffre?

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Mazi Pilip?

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Scott Davis?

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Present.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator James Kennedy?

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Patrick Mullaney?

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Seth Koslow?

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Scott Strauss?

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Deputy Minority Leader Arnold Drucker?

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Rose

Marie Walker?

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Samantha Goetz?

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Michael Giangregorio?

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Minority Leader Delia DeRiggi-Whitton?

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Here.

Presiding Officer Howard Kopel?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: We have a quorum, sir.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

We begin as always with public comment. I remind people it is limited to three minutes per speaker, strictly limited to three minutes per speaker. And if we go for longer than an hour -- I don't think we will today, I hope not -- then we will pause public comment and

continue it after we're finished with the Full Legislature's business.

We'll start with. Sean Cirillo.

MR. CIRILLO: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here to address Nassau County's critical lack of investment in transportation alternatives.

Nassau County's 1998 and 2010 Master Plans called for the creation of a comprehensive cycling plan, and emphasized the need to expand bike routes to reduce traffic congestion, reduce auto dependance, and improve public health. Yet, as of 2024, this bicycle plan has not materialized, even though the 2010 Master Plan categorized it as a 3 to 5 year quick win goal.

According to a 2021 state inventory of cycling infrastructure, Nassau County had only 11 miles of on road bicycle routes, even though the county has over 4000 miles of paved roads within its border.

In comparison, Suffolk County has had 355 miles of on road bicycle routes. They've also implemented a hike and bike Master Plan, and have assigned a countywide coordinator to streamline the process between village, town and county.

One major issue is that Nassau County has no committee, no coordinator, or even a single person whose responsibility is cycling infrastructure and has no countywide plan to get it built. How can you expect progress when no one is leading the effort? Without a dedicated leadership, our county has missed countless opportunities to build a sustainable transportation network that provides alternatives to cars.

Our county is ideally suited for cycling, with short average travel distances, flat terrain, and a dense population. Even so, we have fallen far behind neighboring counties in offering safe and accessible bike routes. This raises key questions: Why haven't we

fulfilled the commitments of the 1998 and 2010 Master Plans, and how do we plan to move forward without a dedicated entity to oversee the implementation of cycling infrastructure?

This leads me to a greater issue with the Planning Division. In my numerous contacts with them, it seems that they are complacent, understaffed and generally neglected by this Administration. The County's overall master plan has not been updated since 2010, even while Local Law 6-2009 requires the Commission to update the plan every five years. When I spoke with the Deputy Commissioner, he told me he had never looked at the 2010 Master Plan, and was unaware of the charter law requiring his department to update it. How has a high ranking official never looked at his department's guiding document? And how are they unaware of a law that governs their duties?

Long term planning is extremely

important for the County. When we plan for the long term, we ensure sustainable growth, improved infrastructure and resilience to environmental changes. We create spaces that promote a high quality of life, protect our natural resources, support our local businesses, and foster vibrant communities. Effective planning is not just about managing today's problems, but anticipating the needs of tomorrow and ensuring that our county remains livable. It's time for us to take action. We need a comprehensive bicycle plan. We need a new master plan, and we need ambitious, forward thinking leadership in our Planning Department. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next is Donald Hudson.

MR. HUDSON: Good afternoon. I was told by the Clerk when I handed in my chit that I should start with a joke so I don't have one. But I'll paraphrase my 'Cousin Vinny' that "I wore this

ridiculous thing for you".

You may be asking yourself, why is an FDNY guy here to talk to us today? Which is absolutely a valid question. So let me explain.

My name is Donald Hudson. I'm a lifelong resident of Hicksville and Nassau County, a husband and a father of two boys. I'm a proud member of FDNY, EMS, having worked in nearly every capacity possible in the largest and busiest EMS system on the planet. In that capacity, I've also attended trainings around the world. That chapter of my story ends in 2016. So does costume change also.

Since then, lke many of you, like many of our parents and grandparents, I left the city for a better life, in my case here in the employ of Nassau County. Since then, I've been your county EMS coordinator and the administrator of your fire police EMS academy. Weighing every conceivable pro and con, I left behind a

promising career, resolved to bring my considerable experience and training to the residents of our county. I've done so diligently and tirelessly since.

A completely unforeseen factor was that I would lose health benefits for myself and for my young family upon retiring from the County of Nassau. This was never the case for anyone before and was not part of the deal when I accepted this job. The decision I made and that of many of our county employees, your county employees, which by best estimates is no less than 200, possibly many, many more at this point -- none of this was on the radar or even part of the discussion when we accepted our positions. Based on known variables that have been changed midway through our careers, I now plan or must plan on leaving county service and depriving our residents of not only mine, but many of our county employees aforementioned training and experience, which was not incidentally, achieved in

previous employment by no cost to this county -- in order to preserve something that I guarantee that my children will never be without, which is health insurance, health insurance.

Based on their father's lifetime of service, I, like you, took an oath. Our word is our bond. When we enter an agreement, we accept that the other party will uphold theirs. I ask for you to strongly consider restoring the ten year vesting for current county employees in regard to medical benefits in retirement. Without that, this county loses the current and future ability to law previously experienced and trained employees in order to guarantee a better tomorrow for our residents.

So I have copies of my commentary if anyone would like. I look forward to continued discussions on this matter. I'd be happy to take any questions.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Next is Lauren Krueger.

MS. KRUEGER: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Lauren Krueger, and I am the campaign coordinator for Long Island Water, a coalition of environmental nonprofit organizations concerned with protecting both groundwater and surface waters here on Long Island.

We live directly on top of our fresh water source. These aquifers provide our fresh water from deep underground under our streets, our schools, stores and homes. How we choose to maintain our lawns has a direct and significant effect on the water below. Two components of commonly used lawn fertilizers are a particular concern as they cause water pollution, but for both surface and ground levels. Water soluble synthetic nitrogen and PFAS are the main concerns. Water soluble high nitrogen fertilizers can lead to harmful algae blooms forming on the surface of our water resources, leading to decreased levels of dissolved

oxygen in the water, killing fish and other aquatic organisms.

Blue green algae, a cyanobacteria, forms more and more frequently on Long Island's freshwater bodies. It can cause sickness in animals, including humans, or even immediate death for dogs. The same high nitrogen fertilizers contaminating drinking water with nitrates can be harmful to infants, causing a serious condition known as blue baby syndrome.

PFAS are a collection of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances that can be found in products that are waterproof, stain proof, heat resistant and nonstick in makeup, pizza boxes, and firefighting foam. They are known as forever chemicals due to the unbreakable chemical bond of carbon and fluorine that gives them these seemingly desirable qualities.

In law and fertilizer, PFAS can be found in two places in the plastic that encapsulates slow release products and in biosolids, which are also known as sewage

sludge, the solid waste produced in sewage treatment plants. Sewage sludge, fertilizer is all over the news recently because farmers in Maine, Texas, Michigan, Tennessee and even here in New York have lost their livelihoods due to PFAS contamination of their crops and livestock.

The dangers of PFAS exposure include hormone disruption, kidney failure, low birth weight and cancers. It is clear that more PFAS, which are already in all of our bodies, is not what we're looking for. It's likely that the EPA's allowable limit of PFAS in water of four parts per trillion is even too much.

While many of us love the look of a perfect green lawn, it comes at a steep price. I doubt any of us wants to drink a cool glass of PFAS contaminated water.

So what can we do? Long Island Water has drafted legislation to address this critical issue. No fertilizer with more than 12% nitrogen or any products

containing any amount of PFAS should be allowed to be sold or used on Long Island. Protecting our water is just too important.

If you'd like more information or to contact us directly, you can visit LIWater.org Contamination of a sole source aquifer is a public health issue of the highest priority. I urge you to act on behalf of your constituents, yourselves, and future generations of Long Islanders.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Renee Campanile.

MS. CAMPANILE: Good afternoon. My name is Renee Campanile. Because of the contract change from 10 to 20 years for the vesting in health insurance, I am here again fighting for my life.

Over eight years ago, the accounting firm that I worked for, they closed their Long Island office, so my options were to work in Manhattan full time or work for

Nassau County for one third of salary. What in the world would possess a person to opt for one third of their salary? Well, I was told that as an auditor, I would be providing a service to the residents of Nassau County -- sounded noble -- and after ten years of service, I would be vested in my health insurance. So I brought over 30 years of experience in public accounting and my CPA license to the County.

On June 30th, 2026, I will be four and a half months short of ten years. I was hired by the County in November of 2016; that was before the contract expired in December of 2017. I was to be vested and now not vested. That is a broken promise. When the contract expired for six years, I went to all the Union meetings and events that we were invited to. I was told not to panic, that the Union and the County would work together to not take the health insurance away. Well, my retirement plans are now null

and void. I will be four and a half months shy of ten years on June 30th 2026. That means I would have to work an additional ten years. That would be an additional nine years past my retirement age. I will not be able to retire at retirement age because my pension, after ten years of service in Nassau County, will not cover the cost of health insurance. I had no warning and not enough income from the County over the past eight years to save up for future health insurance.

I asking the County in the Union to not abandon the employees that counted on being invested in ten years. All of us that were hired under the old contract should be grandfathered in with everyone else. It is unfair and cruel not to be included. When the contract went from five years to ten years, employees were grandfathered in.

To add insult to injury, I have worked more than ten years for Nassau

County. When I was 14 years old, I applied for my work in papers and was eligible for the Nassau County Youth Employment Program. I worked every summer and after school until I was 18. At 18, I worked for a summer and North Woodmere Park. I have pay stubs that say County of Nassau on them, but HR says that's not good enough. Cannot prove it. Paperwork is too old. No one can find it. New York State gave me nine months of past service. So right now I feel betrayed by both the Union and the County.

I'm asking you to help right this wrong and advocate for an MOU or an addendum, or to open the contract to grandfather all the employees affected by this shift, because it's the right thing to do. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

Jonathan Pedilla.

MR. PEDILLA: Hello, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I don't have a public statement,

but I just have a couple of questions. Pertaining to --

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr. Pedilla, just understand that we don't do question and answer here. We listen to your comments, but go on, please.

MR. PEDILLA: Okay. So I'm writing on behalf of the Long Island Advocate at Hofstra University. And there was a recent report by the *US News* proclaiming Nassau County as the safest community in the country. So I just wanted to ask the proper legislators, pertaining to the, Westbury, Freeport, Hempstead, Uniondale, Roosevelt and Elmont communities specific questions about the report:

Specifically, what rules and regulations do you think most likely assisted Nassau ranking in the article; how do you think Nassau County can improve in the future and any of those aspects; and are you surprised about Nassau ranking at all? And if so, why.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

Thank you. You were invited to go ahead and contact these legislators' offices directly and perhaps you can get the answers you seek. Is that it?

MR. PEDILLO: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right. Thank you. Mashiat Azmi. I hope I got that name right.

MS. AZMI: Yeah.

So I also don't have any public comment, but I'm also with the Long Island Advocate, and I want to ask questions about Nassau County safety report that was published in *US News and World*.

So my question is, how has the crime rate changed over the past few years or specifically after the news published; what are the County's emergency preparedness; and are there any programs in place to help prevent and respond to mental health crisis; and what are the challenges and opportunities for improving safety in the county?

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

Thank you. Once again, we don't do question and answer here. You are invited to contact any legislator's office, and, and ask your questions and communicate with them directly.

Richard Clolery.

MR. CLOLERY: Hi, I'm Richard Clolery, I'm sure as many of you know.

Yesterday was an interesting day for people who are trying to encourage other people to not always use their cars to get around places. I personally am hoping that maybe you, the Legislature, will recognize the importance of alternative transportation options, especially given the current circumstances of the island.

Also, August 5th, I encountered an elderly lady who's speaking who said -- I told her about Covid. Really tried to tell her about Covid 19. She didn't believe it, she said. For my mom's

death, my mom, whose name is Olga Diana Clolery, who is my mom, who I loved very much, died from Covid and complications. She said that I was misinformed about her death. Even though I have her death report and everything else. It made my blood go into a full fledged royal fest. That lady who I will now label as Empress Karen, for obvious reasons. I don't see how she can even say those words. I love my mom very much. I'm sure you have your parents that you love too. Or loved.

Anyway, I am hoping that you will be encouraged to increase funding for the busses, so that way we can create alternative transportation means on the island.

As of October 31st, the place where I worked for 20 odd years, it's going to be shutting down. I'm going to have to go to Massapequa. I'm going to be working at Stop and Shop in Massapequa. It's going to be an interesting bike ride for me. Let me tell you that much.

Anyway, have a good day.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Richard, we're all very sorry for the loss of your mom. Just so you know.

MR. CLOLERY: Thank you. What's your name again?

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, but we're all very sorry. Please accept our condolences.

MR. CLOLERY: Thank you. Look, I am not against people having their own, opinions. I respect that. That's what makes this country great. But I do have significant objection to is people seem to think that some things are an illusion when it isn't. It wasn't an illusion for my mom. I can tell you that.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Again, we're sorry. Thank you for coming. Sorry.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Meda Mereday.

MS. MEREDAY: Meday J. Mereday.

Good afternoon, one and all. As I said, it's so good that there are

actually people sitting here and raising their voices. It's very disheartening when you have to see open seats with so much money and decisions that are made by this Body that do not reflect the diversity and adversity of many of the residents in this county.

I too question when you have national publications saying that we're the safest and then you build like a fortress around this building that you have to get in on one side. I walked out to get to the bank across the street, spoke to the public safety officer, and when I came back, he said, and what are you here for? I thought that was kind of interesting.

And I'm always giving shout outs to public safety, our police officers, law enforcement. But it's very disheartening, again, when we pride ourselves in what we say and what we do and how we focus on our heroes. We run around with people who have convictions,

and I don't mean convictions in a positive way, and have called our heroes and our veterans losers. I have a problem with that when my tax dollars are expended for that.

I have a problem when our elected officials have to make decisions on information that they just got the night before, and they're basically kind of thrown under the bus. But it doesn't matter, we don't have enough busses in Nassau County for them to really be run over with any effectiveness.

I'm disappointed that, again, we're going into a budget season where most residents, particularly those of us that live on the South Shore, and we have to see slogans that Nassau County is golden from coast to coast, when the statement should be it's eroding from coast to coast. We have more sinkholes that are emerging in Baldwin, Oceanside, Island Park, Uniondale. But, you know, let's dig a bigger hole. Let's really unsettle the

waters, increase the tainted water, and let's build a casino; that's going to do it for us.

We have increasing addictions, and our addiction services are relegated to a few 20 year old pamphlets that I designed. Like the previous young lady who spoke about working for summers, I did the same thing. They can't find my records either, so not alone with that.

But I want to use my last few comments hopefully with regard to again, putting a plea out there. If we can spend millions and still don't have a report on that cricket match, still have not seen a much needed disparity study that focuses on inclusion for minority women and veteran businesses in the multibillion dollar contracts in this county -- but it's appalling, again, to see the lack of resources that we are directly pouring into our veterans and their families. It's appalling. We're going to be losing federal and state money that actually

could help to address the ten year vestment scenario that you took away from many of our hard working residents.

And I'll wrap it up, but it's time that we step up and more residents speak up, because we're not getting representation by the majority of the Body that sits before me. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We'll proceed with our agenda. We'll start out with a motion to suspend the Rules, and that is made by Legislator Strauss and seconded by Legislator Davis.

All those in favor of suspending the Rules, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Rules are suspended.

Our first item will be Calendar 30, Resolution 143, which is a resolution to confirm the County Executive's appointment of Joseph Adamo to the position of County Assessor.

Motion is made by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt and seconded by Legislative Mule.

Is Mr. Adamo here? Welcome. Well, just tell us a real short a little bit about yourself and what you hope for.

MR. ADAMO: Absolutely. Good afternoon, members of Nassau County Legislature. My name is Joseph Adamo, and I'm honored to be here today as acting assessor of Nassau County Department of Assessment.

It is both an honor and a privilege to stand before this distinguished body. As you consider my appointment for Assessor of Nassau County. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to County Executive Blakeman for considering my appointment, as well as this Legislature, for this tremendous opportunity to lead the second largest assessing jurisdiction in New York State.

I was raised in Levittown and graduated from Island Trees High School. I received both my undergraduate degrees at Nassau Community College and obtaining a Bachelor of Science from SUNY Old

Westbury and Business Administration. As well as receiving my certificate in Real Estate granted by New York State.

Throughout the course of the last 20 years, I have developed a unique skill set, one that allows me to understand the needs of Nassau County from both the micro and macro perspective.

First, as a licensed real estate agent, I learned the importance and the skill of market research to analyze local market trends, to determine property values, and advise clients of pricing strategies. Additionally, I acquired the knowledge of long respected art of communication.

From there, I began my career working in several tax certiori firms where over the course of two decades, my key responsibilities were inclusive of Residential and commercial property assessment review, where I would analyze assessments for accuracy and fairness. I was instrumental in my roles in

conducting market research and comparative analysis to support claims of assessments. I was responsible for staying well informed of all regulatory compliance, ensuring I was up to date on all impending changes to regulation that may affect property assessments.

It is my belief that these experiences make me uniquely qualified to hold the appointment of Assessor of Nassau County, having spent over 20 years in the private sector and now in the role of acting assessor, I've completed all of the requisite coursework to obtain the certification, except one exam that I intend to sit for in just a few short weeks.

I did not take this opportunity for granted, and as early as my first week in the role, I wanted to be sure that I developed, piloted, and launched initiatives within the Department. I am pleased to share with you one such success. I've expanded the Homeowner's

Exemption Liaison program since taking over as Acting Assessor. I am proud to inform you that we have attended or slated to attend no less than 50 scheduled programs throughout the county, while we have significantly expanded the outreach program to cast a wider net to ensure we reach as many citizens as in Nassau as possible. We would visit areas inclusive of, but not limited to veteran affairs programs, concerts, senior centers as well as libraries throughout Nassau County.

It is my core belief that communication, transparency and visibility are paramount to keys to success within the Department of Assessment. I'm eager to continue to progress in this role and develop and launch more initiatives within the Department. I have a strong commitment to serving our community and a diversified, unique background that I believe to be advantageous to not only the Department's

success, but the success of Nassau County.

I know I can contribute positively to our county's goals, given the opportunity to continue to do so. Thank you for your time today, and thank you to the Blakeman Administration. With that, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Good afternoon, Mr. Adamo. Thank you for coming today and congratulations also on your nomination at this point.

Just to reiterate one point, as you're aware that under the Nassau County Charter, there are requirements that you have in order for this position and just stated you've complete all coursework, but you're required one more exam to have those certifications.

MR. ADAMO: That is correct. Yes.

Since the first day I hit the ground

running and I took about six courses, completed those I have a seventh with just the exam needed October 4th and I'll be done with all of them.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Okay. And what date then will you get your certification from the State as far as the coursework is concerned?

MR. ADAMO: Well, as soon as the exam is over and I pass, knock on wood, after that I would have the certification, I would just get the transcripts from ORPS, and I would have everything I need.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: As you're aware, it has been several years that there has been an update of the reassessment system, started with the Curran Administration -- Laura Curran's Administration and continuing at this point, when do you anticipate that the numbers will be updated on the assessments?

MR. ADAMO: That's a good question.

Right now, we're still evaluating information and we will be in contact with the County Executive's office.

As far as right now, after reviewing the data, it seems to be that there is a severe market validity. We have certain aspects of the market, we have historic inflation and historic interest rate increases, as well as potential for a possible recession. So there's a lot going on right now and each of these factors distort the market, in a distorted market would could result in an assessment, an erroneous assessment roll as well.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Have you had an opportunity to go and review the primary assessment from several years ago, and make a judgment on that?

MR. ADAMO: I have. I'm sorry to cut you off, I apologize. Yes. I haven't been able to review it, and I noticed the flaws from 2021. I also noticed in 2023 the Comptroller's report that stated

these multiple flaws, whereas there was information that was not transparent, that needed to do so. And that's the thing. If I'm going to do a reassessment, I want it to be transparent. I want everybody to see what we're doing, and we can only do that through Public Relations and getting out there and seeing the public and talking to them, expanding our outreach and also having workshops so they could see what's going on.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: As you indicated before, you've tried to make some up to date with the Help Program in order to advise residents of the various programs and rebates and reductions allowed, but as you mentioned beforehand, what makes Nassau County very challenging is that besides, New York City is by far the most largest assessing unit in New York State -- so just in your few months, have you been able to evaluate whether your department is going to be able to go and do the work it needs to do for future

work?

MR. ADAMO: Can you say that last part again, I'm so sorry.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: I'm just saying, you know, it's a very large assessing unit. We have over 400,000 properties. So based upon the few months have been there, can you just tell me what you've done to familiarize with the system and why you feel the Department is ready to go and continue with the work in the future?

MR. ADAMO: Absolutely.

So what we have going in the department right now that we're really excited about is technology and what we have established with these technologies. We've really taking advantage of Nearmap. And what Nearmap gives us is three aerial flyovers of the whole county throughout the year. So we're able to collect more data, more assessment on the roll. So for instance, if somebody has a pool and they take out a permit in the pool, we're able

to look at the information through Nearmap to see when ground is broken. We get this information from right at our fingertips, instead of going out and looking at properties, which is still needed, we're at least able to get information more efficient and quickly. I think that is one of the things that we have going for us. Our technology is getting better. We also have a wholly exempt app where now people, clergy and churches can go through and renew right online instead of sending in their applications. So there's a lot of technology that we're super excited for in the Department of Assessment.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: That's all I have. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Drucker and then Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you, Presiding officer.

How are you doing, Mr. Adamo?

MR. ADAMO: Doing okay.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: All right. Good, good.

So I think it's universally recognized that when this county under two previous administrations froze the tax rolls in 2012, I believe, it resulted in a tremendous dysfunction and inaccuracy about the rolls in our county, leading to tremendous grievance refunds that were severely hampering our County's finances. The tax rolls were unfrozen by the Curran Administration, and a new reassessment plan was implemented, in a bipartisan measure, I should add. And then when Covid came, the prior administration froze the tax rolls so as not to severely additionally burden taxpayers in Nassau County with, perhaps, an increase in their assessed valuation, with market conditions continuing to flourish in Nassau County. Would you readily agree that frozen tax rolls contribute to an inaccurate assessment and a tax roll? And if so, do you plan on

unfreezing the tax rolls after you are confirmed?

MR. ADAMO: So the way I feel is the data must be reviewed. That's the first thing. And that's what we've been doing. As far as an answer, if I will unfreeze, as of right now, I'm still reviewing reviewing the data. So we still have some time to go looking at all the information. But at this point, I'm not going to commit one way or the other if we're going to freeze or -- right now we're just reviewing all the information in front of us. And if we were able to go ahead and unfreeze it and reassess, as you say, what we would have to do is make sure that all of the information would be transparent and we would have, like I said, public outreach, expanded Help workshops.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Would you recognize and admit that -- you know, real estate tax values in Nassau County, thankfully have been improving steadily

over the past few years. Would you agree that a frozen tax roll is not a good thing?

MR. ADAMO: What I can do, like I said to you before, is I've reviewed the market of what is going on and right now being where how severe it is with the interest rates and how high they've increased, I think it's hard to say what we're going to do with the market, and if it -- we have to look at all of the information.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Well, interest rates have coming down and the Federal Reserve Bank has indicated that we are on a good path. Inflation has come down from over 9% to 2.3%. And I think the economists in this country are not predicting that we're in for a recession. And if you are waiting and deliberating on the plan that you plan on implementing, just the cost of those factors, which I don't think are accurate -- for the past six months you've been on

the on the job, sir; is that right?

MR. ADAMO: Yes, yes.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: And you haven't been able to evaluate the data so far to to let you conclude that a frozen tax roll is not a healthy thing for Nassau County?

MR. ADAMO: What I've been able to do in the six months that I've been there -- eight and a half months that I've been there -- I've been looking at all of the information. Right. And so I've been reviewing every different department that I have, every division. And looking at the information, I'm still reviewing it. There's a lot. There's a lot here. And we have to go over all of the data.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Understood. But there's a fundamental rationale in that assessors all over the country have recognized that a frozen tax roll is not a good thing. So I was just looking for some sort of understanding and commitment

on your part that that's something you plan on addressing immediately.

MR. ADAMAO: What I'm looking to do is, again, I'm coming in here with a fresh set of eyes to review all the information. That's really what I'm doing at this point.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Good day, Mr. Adamo.

I had the same question, but I think I'm coming at it at a different angle. I did want to know what your policy was going to be related to unfreezing the rolls. And you've stated here just that you're not leaning toward unfreezing the rolls, correct.

MR. ADAMO: What I'm stating is I haven't made a decision yet of what I'm going to do.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: You make that decision on your own or --

MR. ADAMO: Well, it's a collaboration. It's a collective effort.

I look at all the data, I research it, make sure it's correct, and that would be the first step. But then obviously we would evaluate and see where to go from there.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay. And so by not unfreezing the rolls, do you have a good idea in terms of the data who are the affected parties when you leave it frozen?

MR. ADAMO: Right now I cannot commit what party would be affected. It's is reviewing all, every area of Nassau County and reviewing the information.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay, so back in 2018/19, there was some reassessment done, and there was a plan that was instituted. And the plan was, in an effort to create some equality where you had 40%, roughly, of Nassau County residential taxpayers that were paying more than they should have been. Then you had the balance of those folks that were paying less than they should have. It was

a shift of the property tax burden from certain individuals to others, and we clearly knew that that impacted certain communities more than it impacted others. Are you aware of that, sir?

MR. ADAMO: I have done my research.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay, so my question again is, are you clear about when you don't unfreeze the rolls, when you allow them to remain frozen, who are the impacted parties?

MR. ADAMO: I am sorry, I don't mean to cut you off.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm finished there because it's the first question as I stated it earlier, I'm restating.

MR. ADAMO: What I am aware of is in 2021, there was a reassessment and there were flaws to that situation. Me coming in here now, I still have to review all of the information that's in front of me. So I want to make sure if I do that, that I don't follow suit with all of the problems that happened in 2021 with the

reassessment. So I'm going through all of the information. And like I said, technology is key here. We have a lot going on that's going to help us getting all that information and be efficient with it.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay, so you're not answering my question. And I understand what you're stating. And I appreciate to a large extent what you're stating, because I think we all should move into these executive level leadership positions with the idea that you'll make an assessment and before making any definitive decisions. What would make me comfortable is that you understand that there is a certain segment of this population that are waiting for some action to be taken by this County to find equal ground when it comes to paying taxes. And I'm asking if you're aware of that and who are those communities?

MR. ADAMO: Like I said, I'm aware

of what I'm researching and reviewing.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So I'm going to help you. Okay. And Jericho -- and this is past data. And I'm going to suggest that given the the historic nature of this grieving process, that we can't be far from these numbers. Okay. But don't hold me to them. We're in the ballpark figure.

In Jericho and Syosset districts, 87% of the properties were grieved. Roosevelt, there were 45% of the properties that were grieved, followed by Glen Cove at 51, Uniondale at 52, Elmont at 56, Valley stream 30. That's a school district at 58%. So there are communities that are grieving at close to 90%, and then there are others that are grieving closer to the 50%. So we know that those communities, because these roles now are frozen, that they're continuing to pay more than their fair share. They are shouldering the burden of sometimes the more affluent communities. And that is

unjust; that is unfair, because there's no equality there. So for you to not to be able to come down here and tell me that you understand the impacts, you understand the communities that are impacted at the basic level of understanding, that then I could say at least there's a benchmark. I understand he understands that there's some level of urgency, there's some level of responsibility borne to me to make this right. And so what I'm hearing today is that there's not even an ability to see the issue, let alone a plan to rectify.

I could have settled if you could see the issue. A plan to rectify, I could understand if you tell me I have to wait for that to an extent. But when you can't even tell me that, you can see it, I can't in good conscience believe that you could put a plan together to fix it. And it takes courage to fix this, because you're going to find people, and we're going to find communities that are going

to be outraged because they're going to now have to pay their fair share. And so I'm concerned. I'm concerned that I think earlier there was a question asked regarding your certifications, and forgive me because I was distracted. Did you state that you did not have the qualifications or the certifications? You may think you have the qualifications. Do you have the certifications?

MR. ADAMO: I have all of the certifications, but one course that I have just finished the coursework, I'm just waiting for an exam in October. If it was offered sooner, I would have all of it, but I'm waiting on the courses.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Mule and and then Legislator Koslow.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you, Presiding officer. Hello, Mr. Adamo. I'm going to take this from a slightly different tack. What do you believe is

the most important role of the Assessment Department?

MR. ADAMO: Being transparent at what we do and making sure everybody understands what the assessment is.

LEGISLATOR MULE: I got to tell you, I think the most important role of the assessment department is having an accurate tax roll. The other stuff is good. That's important. But if you don't have an accurate tax roll, what good is being transparent. So I truly don't understand your understanding of your role. I'm sorry, I just don't.

You've taken all the courses now. That's great. That's great. So you're going to have the certifications, fantastic. In your understanding, having now received all of the education that you've gotten, can you tell me what is considered an acceptable percentage of homes that are not accurately -- what's the industry standard for an accurate tax roll?

MR. ADAMO: Can you repeat the question?

LEGISLATOR MULE: Sure. Okay. So the industry standard -- the industry that you're in has a standard that says if you have this percentage of homes that are not accurately assessed, that's still a very good tax roll.

MR. ADAMO: What I'm looking to do is make sure everybody is correctly assessed. That's what I'm looking to do.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Yes, of course, 100% would be great. But the industry standard is about 9%, and when we had the 2018 tax reassessment, do you know what our rate was?

MR. ADAMO: At the time?

LEGISLATOR MULE: Yeah.

MR. ADAMO: Not off the top of my head.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Okay. Because you said you studied it and that and that you saw problems. It was 7%. So it exceeded industry standards.

Let's move on. I'm pleased to hear you talking about technology, because I think that there are certainly some very promising ways that we can use technology in the Assessment Department. In Wade County in North Carolina. There's a program called the SAS software. Are you familiar with that?

MR. ADAMO: I'm not.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Okay. So Wade County has a very high number of new people coming in. North Carolina is a very fast growing community. But using this program, they are able to every single night, take in the new data and then issue a new, accurate roll. Is that something you'd be willing to look into? Because that's, as you said, you want 100%. So do we all. That would be amazing. I don't think it's possible, but I think that's certainly the goal. If there's a software out there -- and I'm not saying that it would necessarily have to be that one, there's probably lots of

them out there -- that can help you to achieve that, would you that be something that you are going to be looking into?

MR. ADAMO: I would. I would look into any software I could. Absolutely.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Okay. Staffing in the Department of Assessment. Where are you right now?

MR. ADAMO: We have about, I think, 114 people currently.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Okay. And what do you believe it will take to run a functioning department?

MR. ADAMO: Just like every department, I think that anyone would want more staff. However, I feel like what we have, we're able to do the job. We're able to do it. Like I said, technology. Technology is changing and the people that we have there, we're cross training in multiple different departments. So if they were in one area, I want to make sure they know another area. So I'm changing. If someone's doing

X, I want other people to learn X and then go to Y and make sure everybody knows each area, okay. That's what I'm looking to do.

LEGISLATOR MULE: You mentioned that a number of times that that you're reviewing the data. And how long will that take to finish this review?

MR. ADAMO: It's taking some time. Again, I want to go through with a fine tooth comb and make sure everything is correct or what we have is correct. In order to do so, we want to make sure we hit every permit. We want to get all the information that's out there for us for this data. So it's reviewing, it's making sure everything is there. The data has to be correct for us to make a decision of what our next step is.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Okay. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Good afternoon, Mr. Adamo.

You said that you've been reviewing

the data for about eight and a half months right now, right?

MR. ADAMO: Give or take, yes.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: I'm not asking you to commit to anything, but do you have any ideas in your mind of how we can fix this system as we sit here today?

MR. ADAMO: Well, I think the first thing we have to do is review the data and make sure it's correct. Make sure all of the information we have is correct. So I have the staff reviewing our information that we have on file, or all the information that's out there that we can get. That's how we can make sure the data or the information is correct for all properties.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. How long do you think that's going to take?

MR. ADAMO: I'd have to get back to you on that.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. You would agree with me that there are various different organizations that provide the

tax certiori services. And it's not just law firms, right?

MR. ADAMO: Yes.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: There are individuals who are not lawyers that provide the service to people, right?

MR. ADAMO: Yes.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: And they get a fee, either a percentage of the assessment reduction or a straight flat fee. Correct?

MR. ADAMO: Correct.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Would you support legislation requiring that those individuals who are not lawyers that are involved in tax certiori work be licensed through the county?

MR. ADAMO: Can you repeat that question, please? I'm sorry.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Would you support individuals who are not attorneys, being licensed or a requirement that they be licensed to perform that service for individuals in

Nassau County?

MR. ADAMO: I'd have to look at it. I'm not sure.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: You're not sure if you think people should be licensed to do this work?

MR. ADAMO: Well, I know that there are multiple people out there who do it that are not attorneys. Is that what you're asking me?

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Should those people need a license given by the County?

MR. ADAMO: I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. You said before that there's only one exam you have left to take. Correct?

MR. ADAMO: Correct.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Which exam is that?

MR. ADAMO: That is mass appraisal.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. Did you get your certification?

MR. ADAMO: No. What I did was I went through NYSAA, the New York State Assessors Association, and through ORPS. So a combination of both get you the transcript and the certification that you need.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Is that the IAO certification?

MR. ADAMO: No, IAO is different than NYSAA and also ORPS.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: It's my understanding that the charter requires an IAO certification. Is that not true?

MR. ADAMO: I do not believe that's true at all.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: And now this test you're taking on October 4th? I'm not saying you're going to fail, but things happen, like you said, if you were to fail, how soon can you take it again?

MR. ADAMO: I would have to look into it. But I don't foresee myself failing this at all.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Can you take it

once a year? Can you take it once every six months?

MR. ADAMO: It's given multiple times throughout the year. And like I said, if I was able to take it before I got in front of you today, I would have.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. But you didn't, so that doesn't make a difference. My concern is though, if you don't pass that test, we could have an assessor who's not certified, correct?

MR. ADAMO: No, I believe I have within three years to get the certification. So I have just one course. I've already taken all of the other courses. I have everything I need. And they give you -- it's for three years I've already gotten all this information.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. And you said a lot about being transparent, right? That's your big concern, right? You want to be transparent with the County. You want to be transparent with us, correct? So with that in mind, and

keeping with the theme of transparency, I think one of the biggest, if not the biggest issue facing the County and its assessment system right now are the tax certiori firms that you've worked for, for how many years now?

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Twenty.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Okay. Giving substantial donations to the Republican Party, okay, which in turn results in a system that's not being fixed, which leads to an inequitable system and nothing ever happens. It would seem to me that if we were to approve you, we'd be letting the fox into the henhouse based on your connections and relationships with the tax certiori firms. So what assurances can you give us or guarantees, for that matter, that you're not going to be beholden to political affiliations or any sort of other relationships you have, so that we know that this system is going to be resolved and fixed for these people who are struggling to pay their taxes?

MR. ADAMO: I don't understand the question at all on this. My career was in tax cert work, and I came here to to be the assessor of Nassau County. I have no, as you would say, I don't even know how to answer that question, to be honest with you. It sounds ridiculous to me.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Ferretti, and then Legislator Davis.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Good afternoon, Mr. Adamo, how are you?

MR. ADAMO: I'm well. How about yourself?

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: All right.

Just just to correct the record on a couple things. It was previously, mentioned earlier that the reassessment of 2021 had bipartisan support. I would dispute that. I would certainly dispute that adamantly, because it was, from my recollection, not a bipartisan support of that reassessment. Now, were there's some things that the Majority voted in favor

of to provide the tools for the reassessment to happen, yes. But the problem was that what we were promised wasn't what was delivered. And so while we absolutely supported the idea in 2020 of the 2021 reassessment to fix things, they weren't fixed and it was done with a lack of transparency. It was done inaccurately. And so I would dispute the idea adamantly that that was a bipartisan reassessment. Number one.

Number two, when we talk about donations, I would certainly look at both sides, aside from the fact that it's irrelevant. In fact, the previous administration, I would look closely at that if we want to talk about donations, number two.

And then I also heard -- and this will lead to a question eventually. I'm getting there. There was discussion earlier of a margin of error when it comes to assessing properties. I think Legislator Mule was correct and that the

standard is 9%. And I believe she's correct that it was reported that it was less than that. But the problem is -- and you tell me if I'm wrong -- the problem is with the reassessment that was done in 2021, the information that was used for the reassessment was inaccurate. So you can say that 7% margin of error was the case, but that's because the information plugged into the computer system used for the reassessment was wrong. So yeah, if you take a property and say there's a dormer on the second floor and no fireplace on the first floor, and you punch out an electronic number as to what that's worth. Yes, there was only 7% that were wrong. The problem is the house had a fireplace, and so the information that was plugged into the computer in that example was incorrect. So while, yeah, it may have came out as 7%, our constituents told us differently. And what was worse in that time is that there was no transparency. You mentioned earlier you

were going to have seminars and I assume that's in in areas around the county. That was one thing that the Majority called on to happen. We tried to pass a law. We had to try to pass a law for the previous administration to have those seminars. Unfortunately we didn't. It was vetoed by the previous administration. That's the kind of transparency we were looking for.

And so, Mr. Adamo, I'm going to congratulate you prematurely on your position, but also acknowledge that the current administration inherited a real mess here, and you can manipulate numbers and say margin of error is only 7%. That's not the reality. And it's because the information that was used as the basis for that reassessment was completely off. We were told otherwise when we voted to support the tools needed for it, but that was the reality. And that's why we have a mess on our hands today, because of that reassessment. And

I applaud you for not making those same mistakes. So thank you.

MR. ADAMO: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Adamo.

So I just a little clarity, if you don't mind, please. You indicated in your introduction there was a goal as a county assessor; is that correct?

MR. ADAMO: That's correct.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: What's that goal.

MR. ADAMO: To be transparent. To be front facing basically to the public to make sure to answer all the questions that need to be answered.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Okay, so in terms of your priorities as an assessor, where does equitable application of the assessment roll -- where is that in terms of priorities for you?

MR. ADAMO: It's high. Very, very high.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Would that be just below transparency? Because

transparency really doesn't mean anything if it's not equitable. Would you agree with me about that?

MR. ADAMO: I agree. But I also, as mentioned, I have to review all of the information to make this --

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Right. No, I get that. And I appreciate that you want to do that. But in terms of priorities, the idea here is as coming in as an assessor, you want to be evenhanded with everything. Is that right?

MR. ADAMO: That is right.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: And so equitable application clearly has to be one of the major priorities. Right?

MR. ADAMO: Of course.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: And it would be fair to say that the current system right now is broken, as you've characterized, right?

MR. ADAMO: It's complex and we're reviewing the information, but --

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Does it work now;

this current system, does it work?

MR. ADAMO: Again, I have to go back to the drawing board and look at all the information.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Well, you've been on the job for seven months -- eight and a half. Clearly, you should have some sense of the equity of the current system, yes?

MR. ADAMO: Yes.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Okay. And as one of my colleagues indicated earlier, the facts are clear that the more affluent areas are the ones that get the benefit of grieving to the tax firms, more so than those who aren't. Right?

MR. ADAMO: Grieving is the Assessment Review Commission. I'm the Department of Assessment.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: I understand that, but it's all predicated on an assessment system, right?

MR. ADAMO: Okay.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: So getting back

to my question, who bears the burden of the current system? It's those who don't take advantage of the grieving process. Right?

MR. ADAMO: I understand what you're saying. Yes.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: And those who don't grieve or generally in areas that are less affluent. These are facts. And as an example, I represent, part of my district is the Village of Hempstead. And I would dare to say that the number of people who grieve in Hempstead pales in comparison to a more affluent community. Would that be fair?

MR. ADAMO: Again, I'm not sure of that. I'm not sure of who is grieving.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Well, let's go with that for a minute. Let's say that what I'm saying is accurate.

MR. ADAMO: Okay.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: So the current system as it exists, really, it puts the burden on the people who can least afford

to pay it. Right?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Davis, can I just point out that he's trying to tell you that he has nothing to do with that process. His department has nothing to do with that process. That is a completely different process.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: I understand that.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: It comes out later.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: I appreciate that, but we're talking about whether or not -- what your goals are. And that's where I started my question.

MR. ADAMO: My goal is to be fair, equitable, to review the information, make sure it's correct. That's where we're at. As far as grieving, that's a different department.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Excuse me, Presiding Officer. Unless you have another speaker.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: No, I just would just want to point out, also something that's very important. That is that everyone, everyone in the county has the right to go and grieve, and nobody is stopping them. And if we're talking about these firms that that engage in assisting people and doing grievances, they're open to everyone as well. Regardless of where they live and what they do and any other factors that's open to everyone. And it should be open to everyone and will stay open to everyone.

Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Mr. Adamo, this is not a directive to you. It's for the record. It's for the record that while we understand that your role is separate from the grieving process, you cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that as others grieve, in many cases, and receive significant decreases in their share of the pie of their share of the taxes, that it creates an unbalanced situation in

terms of the payment of taxes, there's a shift. When people grieve, it's one pie. The pie slides over. Somebody else has got to take over the other parts of the pie. So the only thing that then puts this process in a just and fair balance for everyone to pay their fair share is by doing a reassessment across the board. That's the process that's required to bring equality and fairness. It is not in any way, shape, form or fashion anyone's understanding here that he is responsible for making determinations as people grieve.

So I want to set that for the record. It's being able to do the reassessment and make sure that everyone's paying their fair share is the only thing that's going to take the balance and the burden off the shoulders of the people who are not grieving. And people are not grieving for many different reasons: They don't know how to; they're intimidated by the process;

they're unaware of how to do it. It's access, awareness and the ability to to complete the process. And in many cases, they are not represented. They're trying to do it themselves. And those that are represented by these larger firms are the ones getting the larger decreases. So please, let's not play that game here today on the record.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Bynoe, I don't drill my own teeth. It should be no surprise to anyone that people who use professionals, will end up often with a better result than people who try to do it themselves. I'm a lawyer, I use one of these firms myself.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: But a lot of times you have to pay the cost of the decrease where these families are not in a position to pay that increase out of their own pocket. They're not in a position to do that. So they take on grieving. And we ourselves, this Body offers those seminars to folks for the

purpose of trying to make sure that everyone has access to grieve. But we do know the ability to get that decrease and a better decrease in your taxes is when you use a firm. I'm just saying for the record, that's a reality to which we live in, with the historical ramifications and impacts of this process of freezing rolls and letting these folks keep grieving and others don't and unjustly get pushed onto communities and people who don't have the ability to pay that money up front for the decrease.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I think there's some different -- we talk about equality, equity. There's some different ways to look at that. For example, according to a comptroller report in '23/'24, just as an example, Roosevelt non grieving homes paid $9.41 million more in county taxes. Great Neck non grieving homes paid 133.04

million more in county taxes. So, you know there's different ways.

Independent of that, Mr. Adamo, you mentioned these seminars -- and there are other ideas that that the Majority had back during the reassessment and still is today. Let's not forget we had the assessment bill of rights that we passed. It was vetoed by the previous county executive. But we were looking for transparency and to encourage people to grieve. So when you bring up those seminars, are you open to identifying which communities may need those seminars more because they're not grieving at higher levels? Are you open to having more resources in those communities with those seminars and other things to address that?

MR. ADAMO: Absolutely. Absolutely.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Is it something you'll do?

MR. ADAMO: Yes, yes I will.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. Thank

you.

MR. ADAMO: You're welcome.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Hi. And I just have a question. I know you're still reviewing the facts, but let's say that you feel that we have to address something on a countywide basis. What are you more inclined to do? A reassessment or a reevaluation? Do you know the difference?

MR. ADAMO: Well, the reassessment, what happened in '21? If I was able to roll that out --

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: That's not what happened in '21. It was a reevaluation. Do you know the difference between a reassessment and reevaluation? That's something you got to look into. Because honestly, I had an issue with how some of that happened. The reevaluation is what -- the reassessment is what we all kind of hear expected and want, which

is house by house. The reevaluation goes school district by school district. So some areas in the school district went up, some went down. But it was all awash within the school district. And they basically took like a whole neighborhood and moved it up. In Sea Cliff, I think they had it reversed because the people on the water went down and then people by DPW went up. So if when you do look at these numbers and you do think that you might need to do that, just please look at the difference. Because I really think a reassessment is what we need, not a reevaluation. And if you want to talk about it, I'm always around. It was a lot of money. I don't think it was effective the way that it came out.

The other thing is, when we did the reevaluation, a number of homes, as some legislators trying to make the point, where basically told that they were over evaluated at that time. I mean, that was a long time ago, and they're still

paying, in their minds, more than what they're supposed to be paying. And that's going to be another thing that you have to take a real close look at. I think it was what was it, a third was up, a third was down, the third stayed the same. So you have people that might have been overpaying for this much time. So there's a lot that has to be fixed. And I think the longer we leave it frozen, the worse it gets.

Again, please look into it before you agree to a difference between reevaluation and reassessment. I appreciate it.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. Legislator Koslow.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer.

I'm sitting here listening to the question and answers, and it is utterly inexcusable to me that Mr. Adamo has been on this job as Acting Assessor for over eight months, and he remains completely

oblivious to the critical issues plaguing the Assessment Department. This glaring incompetence and unpreparedness is only exacerbated by the County Executive's abysmal track record. Despite campaigning over three years ago on a promise to fix the problems with the Assessment Department, there's been zero progress or any meaningful change. It's clear that both Mr. Adamo and the County Executive are failing our community with their inaction and inability to address these pressing concerns, and I have significant concerns about voting to approve this individual when he's not prepared to do this job.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, I think we've got it.

All those in favor of this appointment, please say, "Aye".

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Aye.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Aye.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Aye.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Nay.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Nay.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Nay.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Nay.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Nay.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Nay.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Nay.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: So the vote would be 12 to 7. Congratulations, sir. Thank you.

MR. ADAMO: Thank you everyone.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next we have Resolution 144 confirming the County Executive's appointment of Jose Luis Lopez to the position of Commissioner of Social Services. Pursuant to Section 203 of the Nassau County Charter and Section 116 of the Social Services Law.

Motion on that will be made by a Legislator Mullaney. Seconded by Legislator Giuffre.

Mr. Lopez, are you here? How are you? Just tell us a little bit about yourself, please.

MR. LOPEZ: My name is Jose Lopez. I've been with the County for about four and a half years. Prior to this acting commissioner appointment, I was Director of Labor Relations.

A little bit about myself. I am married with five kids, four grandkids, an outstanding wife that totally keeps me in line. And first and foremost, I start each and every day the way I want to address all of you. That I thank Lord for

this opportunity. Because there's only one person that I answer to and that's him above.

So having said that, I believe that this opportunity that I'm here for today is something that I must say has been somewhat of a calling. Because in this short little time of about five months, I have found myself 110% engrossed in daily activities. And when I say activities, I'm talking about all you need to do is to come to the first floor at 60 Charles Lindbergh and you'll see that it's a hotbed for helping out those in need.

My education, I started out as a school teacher, which I 100% believe has been my foundation. As I tell all the kids, the ones at homes and the ones that I taught, that as long as you have an education, doors will open. So having said that, then I moved on and I was blessed on to be Commissioner of Parks here under two administrations. And then I had an awesome opportunity out in the

private sector and I took it. I was there for ten years as Director of Human Resources and Employee Relations and Community Development, and then here I am again.

I also have to say thank you very much to the County Executive for the opportunity, because of the fact that he actually saw it in me to be able to lead this department. So I'm truly honored for that. And Central HR, because quite frankly, that's another reason why I wouldn't be here, because when the opportunity existed, it wasn't until they presented the idea that I actually had the qualifications that met and exceeded to be able to become the Commissioner of Social Services.

So with that, I'm humbled. This is a great opportunity. Now, one I do not take lightly. And I must say, all you need to do is, one day, maybe come to our building so you could see what goes on and ask the employees that when you walk

in and you see what goes on each and every day, you will be affected the same way.

And before we begin, I must share with you this. This morning I come in -- I try at least every day, once again, I'm not perfect, but I try real hard to be as engaging as possible because I believe the best way to lead is to be involved, and not just to be at a desk and sort of hand out reforms or whatever is handed down from the State. You got to walk the walk -- So this morning I had an individual come over to me, actually, one of the attorneys as I was parking my car. She said, listen, there's a person in the front lobby, he's crying, he's upset, and he feels that the case worker hasn't been hearing his case. I don't know what the story was, but I knew it was the right thing to do. I put my stuff away, I walked downstairs, I engaged with this individual -- I'll give no names -- but the long and short as I heard his version

of the story. And as you know, you may hear this particular version, but then, as they always say, there's three sides to each story. So there's his side. And then what I did is I confronted and I spoke with actually Carolyn O'Brien and asked if, do you happen to know who's taking over this case? So Carolyn O'Brien happens to be a person who oversees a department.

So long story short, we get down to the nitty gritty of it. And once again, it's just an everyday occurrence at the Department of Social Services. And if you choose to sit back and watch, then I'm going to tell you you're not going to be able to make effective change. I know no other way in which to be involved, and that's to put both my feet in and to actually do the best I can to swim across the ocean.

So I'm blessed that I've had a very, gifted, athletic background. And the only reason why I share that is because I

always go back to that. I always go back to just digging a little bit deeper. And the people that I work with, regardless of what happens here today, I will tell you, I have the most profound respect for every single one of them. They are absolute. You talk about frontline workers. Those are frontline workers. These people are, without a doubt, soldiers. And each and every day they absorb all the problems that come into 60 Charles Lindbergh, that front lobby which filter out to the rest of the building. And they're expected to perform with precision and with compassion. And every once in a while, sometimes I feel like all they just need is someone to say thank you.

So with that, I believe that I want to be their cheerleader. And I'm blessed for this opportunity. And I also must say, too, that going through this budget process, I'm grateful that I feel like our voice has been heard. And the reason

why I even say that is because I can't take nothing for granted.

So with that, thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Drucker, then Legislator Mule, then Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Hi, Mr. Lopez. How are you?

MR. LOPEZ: I'm good. Thank you. Yourself?

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Good. Thank you.

We had a brief opportunity to meet you a little earlier, and I have to say, unlike the prior candidate, you are eminently qualified and very impressive. And being married to a former school teacher, I understand the the importance and significance of a teaching background and a foundation, as you call it. So I have no doubt that you're going to be successful in this job, which is a very difficult job managing empathy, but policy with the number of people and the

problems that exist is a profound challenge, but I think you're up to the task.

However, I do have one comment or question for you. Since I've been on the Legislature going on nine years, there has been a chronic problem, in my opinion, involving my district, of the County's housing of the homeless population. And it is rather sad and disappointing that even to this day, despite at least the past six years, I've been fighting to improve that situation, homeless population is still housed in several dilapidated, uninhabitable motels, and I think that's shameful. And I'm wondering if you are aware of that and if you have any ideas on how you plan on addressing that.

MR. LOPEZ: Yes. So with all due respect, it's something that I have taken on. I have been fortunate that with our housing team led by Jamie, I will tell you that the wealth of knowledge that I

have gotten by going out in the field, is only going to be obtained by actually walking the walk. So to answer the question specifically, yes, it is a problem. We have a major housing issue. It's not going to get any better with the economy that we have. And more importantly, with, I have to be very frank with you, being able to at some point, because this is how I plan on addressing it, is being able to meet with each and every one of the legislative districts so that you can tell me about what your needs are, as you're telling me now, and then I could let you know the number of people that are actually homeless within your particular district and tell you and be very specific about how we believe we can assist them.

If I put it in summary, in a nutshell, we'd like to get away from the word shelters and really start to get away with new words like purposeful housing. Unfortunately, we don't have

enough shelters; there's only 34. So the option right now is very small. And the option is basically the hotel and motels that are here in Nassau County. One of the first things I did when I came home after taking this job, after about, I'd say about 3 or 4 days, as I said, honey, you're not going to believe the number of hotels that are being used for homeless. And that was in no way, in a disparaging way, to put down any one of our homeless people. But it's just because of the fact that I had an education of realizing just how bad it is.

So I believe the answer to the question is look for purposeful housing. That means go in cooperation with all the state mandates, so that within, let's say, it was a hotel that we have a partnership with, that maybe we can put a social worker there, maybe we can put somebody there who could actually help with the means of them, actually facilitate being able to go out onto the

streets and assimilate like everybody else.

But right now I couldn't agree with you more. The hotel situation is pretty bad.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you so much. I just would like to make a little correction there. To characterize any of them as hotels is a mischaracterization. They are motels and even it's a stretch to call them a motel.

But anyway, I appreciate your commitment, your passion, and I wish you the best of luck.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

Mr. Lopez, as you and I have discussed, you know that I'm a social worker, and so this department is very, very important to me because I know that you're overseeing the how the County cares for its most vulnerable population.

And I know I've told you this

already, but I want to say it publicly. I have heard only wonderful things about the job that you've been doing since you took office. And I will be enthusiastically supporting you. And I hope that -- you seem to have a mission.

MR. LOPEZ: I'm on a mission.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Yes. And comes through. And I think it takes someone with a mission to shepherd this department. Because, as we all know, those of us who have worked in social service agencies, it can get depressing. It can get hard because you're also dealing with people who don't have the skills to make good decisions for themselves in many instances. And you're trying your best, you're trying to "here, go, go this way". But it's going to take someone who's on a mission to help shepherd the department. And I'm so pleased that you're going to be there.

That said, when you said you invite any of us to come into the Department, I

would just suggest a caveat that we saw what happened in Suffolk when a legislator decided to go unannounced visiting social service departments. It's not a good situation. So we I think we'd all be happy to make appointments so that you're aware that we're going to be coming and that's the professional and right way to do it.

MR. LOPEZ: Understood.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Mr. Lopez, good afternoon. Yeah, definitely, this is a calling for you. It's clear and obvious to me that this is hard work. I also have heard from many of the employees, over at Social Services of what great work you're doing.

But this morning -- and I'm a woman that also has a strong relationship with God and I'm led to see this as confirmation -- this morning I went to an eatery, right here in Mineola, and I was having a meeting, and I don't go in there often, but I do know the owner. And so

the owner came over to me and wanted to tell me about the fantastic encounter that she had with the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. And when I said, Jose Lopez? And she said yes. And I said, well, he's interim; he's acting. He is not the Commissioner. She says, oh, she says, I said, but that's neither here nor there, tell me what happened. And she went on to tell me how you became aware of conditions around her eatery that were unpleasant to her and to those that were seeking to have meals in her space. It was more of a concern for her that people's needs were going unmet. That you came there and you spent a considerable amount of time there. And you were addressing issues, and you identified something playing right out in front of you and you called Jamie of your staff, and she came down and she met with you, and you guys worked on this thing together until you were able to have this woman who was eager to get help, get the

help that she so desperately needed. And, so I wasn't surprised, totally, because I'd heard from others what great work you're doing.

And so I, like you believe that we when you're in leadership and you're providing direct services. You have to be out in the community. You have to understand what the needs are and find ways to make sure those needs are addressed. So I just want to say to you, even before this vote is called, Commissioner Lopez, you're doing a great job.

I do have a question, though. It's on the lines of these shelters and the the motels, as Arnie put it. I'm learning that these motels are so concerned about people being able to establish residency that when they get the card from DSS when they check in, by the end of the week or two weeks out, they're told that they have to leave, and then they move their family to another

hotel or motel only to have lived one place on Friday and been dropped off by a school bus on Friday to have to try and find transportation to get that same student to school on Monday. Because of the McKinney-Vento, we are responsible; the school districts are responsible to make sure those kids get to school. But the challenge of having these families move, it's not good for the family. It's most certainly not good when there's children involved that they're being displaced even in this motel homeless shelter provision. So I find that, to be honest with you, I find that to be discriminatory in nature that the hotels are able to make that type of decision that folks who are receiving a benefit and leveraging that supplement or rendering it as payment at the hotel, that they don't want them there anymore because they're afraid that they'll have to evict them if they don't pay over time. That is most certainly a level of

discrimination, and I'd love to see how this Body can address that. We've done we've been able to address it when you're renting that they can't discriminate based on renting, but we have not established anything that prevents hotels from discriminating against families who are using a benefit card for the purpose of renting hotel space. I know if I presented my gold Amex card at that same motel, they let me stay as long as I wanted to. So this is a problem that I think is just becoming prevalent. I want to put it on your radar if you weren't aware of it. And I'd love to work with you to find a way where we could turn a corner on that.

So, thank you for putting yourself in a position to serve this County, and I wish you well. Thank you.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

If I may, I just want to let you know about the individual that we went to, that eatery that she had complained

about. Her name was Dottie. The reason why I say it openly is because everybody in Mineola community knows of this particular homeless person. This is where I realized that I have a phenomenal team. Jamie and my staff knew who Dottie was because they've been dealing with her for a while. And if you're not aware that for you to be able to take a homeless person and either ask them or try to encourage them to either go to a shelter or hotel, that's something that they have to do on their own accord. But we were able to get, with the help of Nassau University Medical Center, someone there to evaluate her. Got her in. She is now in a position where she's clean and she's actually going to be housed. So we took an individual who's been on the streets for 25, almost 30 years. And it's interesting. So I want you to know, that conversation all happened because someone said to someone else, you have to go to this eatery. They're having so many

problems with the train station over in Mineola. And I told you, the only way I know how to lead is by doing. So I took members of my team. We went. And then we have another gentleman on our team. His name is Frank. He went out. He said, yes, this is what's happening. This is where she is. And I think that that's the part -- I'm going to go back to athletics, that when you have a team, there's no "I".

Having said that, then I do want to address what you had said. So we are aware that those things do happen. We are working with the hotels and motels. But I want you to know that that generally only happens when for some reason, we find out that they're actually out of line. And when I say out of line that they're doing something to disturb the motel itself. So what we're trying to do, one of my initiatives is, is to resurrect the Home Intervention team, to work with the police on helping identify those

individuals who have more of a need than just being housed, meaning that we can actually give them some social work background help. So, you know, we're going to do all we can to continue to mitigate that.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: I too, I just want to say thank you for all you've helped me with in the short time that you've been acting commissioner. We go back a long way. And obviously, your involvement in athletics kind of overlap my involvement in athletics. So we've seen each other over the years, even when you weren't being employed by the County.

But I want to thank you for all the things that I've reached out to you over these past few months and that you've gotten right on top of and rectified and or explain things to me and how. Things were going and what we were doing in the future, and so on and so forth. And I know we always have an issue with our caseworkers load of casework. That's

something I know every one of us up here will probably all agree on the fact that we need to rectify that, get our caseload numbers down, whether it's hiring additional caseload workers, which I know isn't always easy, but we have to continue to work on that. Hopefully, in the budget that that is provided and we can work on that too, to make a difference.

And I know in I had reached out to you regarding the Bethpage Motel and what you have done there and how you've changed that facility and, because it's located right next to Saint Joseph's Hospital. How some of those that might need services at that hospital on a daily basis, whether it be dialysis or whatever, they're right there and can do that. So I really thank you for looking into all the situations that you deal with. And I really do think your background as a teacher -- my background is education, and I really do feel that

it helps me a lot in my position here as a legislator, just dealing with people of all ages, because you deal with young people and you deal with their parents, their families. And I think that helps in the job that you do. And I really feel that it helps in the job that I do here as a legislator. So I look forward to continue working with you. And I chair the Health and Social Services Committee, we will keep in touch all the time.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you, Rose.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you to the Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. Lopez. How are you doing today, sir?

MR. LOPEZ: I'm good. All right. I'm sorry. I'm just looking for the red light.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: It's all right. Nice to see you today. I met you over almost probably 20 years ago when I was working under Tom Suozzi as A Human Rights Commissioner.

MR. LOPEZ: 2006.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes. And it looks like you haven't aged a day. What's your secret?

MR. LOPEZ: I'm going to be 62 next month.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Wow. God bless you. God bless you.

Regarding veterans, sir, Social Services will reinstate the veteran support specialists or a dedicated team to address veteran homelessness, and why, does Nassau County not have a guide resource for caregivers, especially those who do not qualify for Medicaid?

MR. LOPEZ: That's a good question. I don't have an answer to that just yet. I will tell you that I know that what has happened in the last couple of weeks was there was the initiative through Tunnels to Towers, an initiative for these homes, for the veterans. And what we would love to do is take that model and hopefully somehow make that for just our homeless

in general. So and no disrespect to the veterans, but for all the homeless. But we do know that especially for our veterans, that that's obviously a concern. And we've been told that it's actually been addressed through Tunnel to Towers. I thought that that was an awesome initiative.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you. Back in May, I visited the Safe Center, and I was inquiring a visit to learn about what they do for the community. And they have an awesome program. And I really like how they are consolidating their efforts to address not just the issues of domestic violence, but other issues relating to that. As it relates to homelessness, the City of Houston has engaged in an ambitious and tremendous effort to consolidate resources when it comes to addressing homelessness. And they actually made a dent in homelessness in the City of Houston, where they recognized that if a person had housing

insecurity, they might have also food insecurity. And so they linked him up to a food expert to help them so that when they do give them that chance of housing, and they have other resources. How can you envision the Department in engaging in an effort to consolidate resources to address a multifaceted approach to tackling these very difficult issues?

MR. LOPEZ: So I actually said it much earlier on, I believe. First of all, we'd love to get away from the word shelters -- I feel that it's a negative trigger word -- and use purposeful housing, and especially constituent based. So the idea would be, is that within each community. And that's where I would have to implore each and every one of the legislators to be involved with me to say and identify in their particular district, where the possibility is for a possibility of a building, something that we could actually utilize and put people there who are in need and in there would

provide your social worker, hopefully a recreation area. It would be highly secured so that the people who were actually housed there would be able to stay there with no issues at all. Not worried about getting in and out, and give them the tools and the resources to actually go out and be a functioning member of society. And also with that is the educational piece, which is key because it actually provides them with the opportunity to understand about job hunting and we can have our own employment division to be involved. So we do believe there's resources, but I think that all the legislators are going to have to be open to the fact that housing and homeless really go hand in hand. There's a need. People will have to be open to the opportunities that we could provide, but it's going to take a collaborative effort. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Mr. Lopez, I, as some

of my other colleagues alluded to, I've seen firsthand the impact that you've had on not only the communities that you've been engaged with, but the people that need those services. You're boots on the ground, your hands are in the dirt, and you're getting things done, and you're getting people the services they need. Hopefully they get back on a better track. I can't thank you enough for what you've done in the brief time that you've been in this position. I'm looking forward to partnering with you as we move forward. Thank you very much.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, then. All those in favor of this nomination, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL:

Congratulations. You have it unanimously.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Now we have a number of items about which the Majority and Minority have agreed and that no further debate or discussion is necessary. These are consent items and I'll read them in order:

Calendar 5, Ordinance 40; Calendar 6, Ordinance 41; Calendar 13, Ordinance 48; Calendar 14, Resolution 127; Calendar 15, Resolution 128; 16, Resolution 129; 17, Resolution 130; 18, Resolution 131; 19, Resolution 132; 20, Resolution 133; 21, Resolution 134; 22, Resolution 135; 23, Resolution 136; 24, Resolution 137; 26, Resolution 139; 28, Resolution 141; 29, Resolution 142; 35, Resolution 148; 36, Resolution 149; 37, Resolution 150; 38, Resolution 151; 39, Resolution 152; 40, Resolution 153; 41, Resolution 154; 42, Resolution 155; 43, Resolution 156.

That motion is made by Legislator Giangregorio and it is seconded by Legislator Mule.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All those

in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That is unanimous.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL:

Calendar 33 and 34, which are Resolutions 146 and 147, resolutions authorizing the the release of the surety bonds and escrow deposit covering the improvements on the map of Country Point at Plainview Condominium III and IV situated in Plainview County, Oyster Bay, County of Nassau, New York.

Legislator Drucker is recusing himself on these items, is leaving the chamber and not participating in the debate or discussion, and will not vote.

(Whereupon, Legislator Drucker leaves the chambers.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Motion on this item is by Legislator Davis and seconded by Legislator Mullaney.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature present respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That item is unanimous -- 18 to 0. Would you invite Legislator Drucker back.

(Whereupon, Legislator Drucker returns to chambers.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Calendar 27, Resolution 140. Authorizing the County Executive to execute an Inter Municipal Agreement with the Town of Oyster Bay in relation to services relative to the adjudication of the Town of Oyster Bay School Bus Arm Stop Safety program.

That is moved by Legislator Walker and it is seconded by Legislator Goetz.

Any debate, a discussion?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in

favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That's unanimous.

And I hear that we need a few moments. We are taking a brief recess, theoretically for a minute or two.

(Whereupon, recess 3:41-5:57 p.m.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, we are back. First of all, we have a motion to establish an emergency for Clerk Items number 224 through 229 of 24.

The motion is made by Minority. Leader DeRiggi-Whitton and seconded by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt.

All those in favor of establishing an emergency, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. That is unanimous.

Now for the items, Clerk Items number 224 through 229-24, all pertaining to '24-'25 school taxes.

Once again, motion by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt. Seconded by Legislator Ferretti.

All those in favor of these items, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those items are unanimous.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next. Now we have a motion to establish an emergency for Items 230 of 24 through 234 of 24 -- I'm sorry, 230 of 24 through 236 of 24. All right.

Motion by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt, seconded by Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

All those in favor of the emergency, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right. Now, on the items, calling 230 of 24 through 236 or 24. Motioned by deputy presiding over McKevitt, seconded by Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

All those in favor of these items, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of

the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those items again are unanimous.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: We're appreciative of the fact that, this ARPA funding was made available, and we appreciate the fact that some of our Hotel/Motel, which I think mark the first of the year, were brought up right now. Like any negotiation, we're not completely happy because our CRPS, many of which is over $1 million for first responders, were not moving forward and were not entertained. But we had serious conversations with the Administration, and we have their word that we're going to be meeting on it before the Capital Plan is even considered for '25, this Capital Plan coming up. And we're really serious, this is money that we need for

first responders and to have it held up for this long is unbelievable. But we agreed to, in good faith, take their word that they will have a good meeting and a discussion and move everything forward as much as possible prior to the Capitol Plan hearings.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. Now I am going to call Ordinance number 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47. That's it.

Motion by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt, seconded by Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those items are unanimous.

And we have a motion to adjourn. Who's willing to make a motion to adjourn?

Motion by Legislator Pilip, seconded by Legislator Koslow.

All those in favor of adjourning, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Now we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the Full Legislature meeting is adjourned, 6:08 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK )

: SS.:

COUNTY OF NASSAU )

I, KAREN LORENZO, a Notary Public for and within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the above is a correct transcription of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of September, 2024.

Karen Lorenzo

Karen Lorenzo

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