

Westchester County Board of Legislators
COMMITTEE OF GENERATIONAL, CULTURAL & ETHNIC DIVERSITY
Minutes: November 13, 2007

COMMITTEE ON GCED

MEMBERS: **Chair:** Bernice Spreckman; Legislators: Jose Alvarado, Lois Bronz and Ken Jenkins.

ATTENDANCE: **STAFF:** RVinci, NRentz, Diana Walker, Yolanda Robinson. Luther Garrison, Arthur Muhammad, Vincent Camua, Louis Conte, Commissioner Rocco Pozzi, Valerie Swan, Liz Mark and Ann Spindel.

Meeting called to order at 10:10 am.

Probation Commissioner Rocco Pozzi will speak about current programs in place for young offenders and what help is available to them when they are released from jail back into the community.

Overview:

Lou Conti, who oversees gang activity in Mt. Vernon, presented handout about **Initiatives in Probation and Corrections to deal with Youth Gang Members**. He has been working with gang's since 1994. Youths involved with gangs are 4 xs as likely to commit additional crimes as opposed to those who are not involved with a gang.

Vincent Camua: Thinks gangs have gotten more violent. At any one time there are 40-50 different gangs (most identified). We have weekly meetings that tell local law enforcement about gang members and that information goes into a system that is accessible for all individuals to view. There is a higher rate of recidivism with gang members because of the rivals that exist.

Pozzi: Over the past 18 years our state funding has been cut but Westchester County does make up for most of those cuts. Probation is generally viewed as a county function. There are lots of good programs with workable case loads but the more people that get placed into these programs the more resources we need to continue them. It is much more effective to place kids in programs (thru DSS) than into jail (unless they are violent); we have the lowest placement rate in the state. We have several new initiatives such as treating kids that are convicted as adults (on probation) as kids using new risk management/treatment instruments not adult ones. Over the past 10 years there have been a great number of programs developed by the Dept. of Corrections to help treat inmates. A mindset exists that people don't want probation in their communities thinking we are bring people into the community when in reality we are serving those already in the community.

Valerie Swan: Speaks about the importance of partnership of community and other organizations. Although the Peekskill Youth Bureau works closely with the local Police she does not have the contacts needed to know when young offenders are being released back into the community

Outcome: Meeting scheduled for December 11th at 10am with Commissioner Pozzi and Rod Quinn (to talk about the tracking of progress in relations to the success of current programs). GCED will also invite state representatives to urge for additional funding for after school programs as well as probation/corrections.

Minutes for 10/23/07 passed; motion made by Legislator Bronz and seconded by Legislator Jenkins.

Meeting ended at 11:20 am. Motion made by Legislator Jenkins and seconded by Legislator Bronz.

Items Received and Filed: 7) Motion made by Legislator Bronz and seconded by Legislator Jenkins. 8) Motion made by Legislator Bronz and seconded by Legislator Jenkins.