



Families Task Force

BOL Meeting Minutes - Published Draft

Task Force Co-Chairs:
Catherine Borgia & Kathy Halas

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Thursday, March 4, 2021

10:00 AM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Borgia called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM.

Pursuant to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order No. 202.1, "Continuing Temporary Suspension and Modification of Laws Relating to the Disaster Emergency," which temporarily suspends portions of the New York State Open Meetings Law.

A section of the order, "Suspension of law allowing the attendance of meetings telephonically or other similar services," provides for the suspension of "Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed."

Others in Attendance: Y. Valencia, M. Montalto, Legislator Johnson, Legislator Barr, Legislator Woodson Samuels, Legislator Walter, Legislator A. Williams, Legislator Shimsky, Legislator Maher, C. Hersh, Tom Gabriel, Kathy Halas, Jeslow, Karin Anderson Ponzer, Darlene Reda, John Befus, B. Finkelstein, Grace Kurland, Marcia Spenser, Sarah Borsody, Susan Weisman, Esmeralda Hoscoy, Carola Bracco, Cindy K, Stan Sheppard, Sonia, Luis Leon, Jan Fisher, John Nonna, D. Beckford, Jennifer Miller, Daniel Bonnet.

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Immigration Update

Guests:

Karin Anderson Ponzer, Esq. Ph.D.
Director of Legal Services
Neighbors Link Community Law Practice

Grace J. Kurland
Coordinating Attorney for the Lower Hudson Valley
Immigrant & Refugee Services
Catholic Charities Community Services
Archdiocese of New York

Sarah Borsody
Westchester Lead Immigration Attorney
Make The Road New York

Co Chiar Borgia introduced our guests, Ms. Anderson Ponzer reviewed a power point for the members on an overview on immigration for federal, state and local levels on federal legislation, immigration reform, President Biden's executive action and know your rights. Ms. Borsody introduced herself and went over a few facts; there is no new immigration legalization program. If and when there is it will likely start with a specific group of people. Any comprehensive legalization program is far in the future. Some government policies towards immigrants have changed in a favorable way. There are many bills in Congress, the US Citizenship Act of 2021- a comprehensive reform plus a general legalization program was introduced in February 18, 2021. The Dream and Promise Act (HR 6 of 2019) 2021 version is legalization for DACA-eligible and TPS holders, passed in the House in 2019 and a new version was introduced on 2/26/2021. Legalization of Essential Workers is citizenship for Essential Workers Act introduces on 2/26/ 2021 and will be inserted into the second stimulus package of 2021. The Farm Workforce Modernization Act is legislation for agricultural workers and reforms to temp. visa program; passed the House in 2020 and a new version will be introduced.

What is the US Citizenship Act of 2021, it's a comprehensive overhaul of US immigration system with broad path to citizenship for undocumented people. It includes an expedited path for DACA, TPS, essential workers and farm workers. Expansive criminal history bars for legalization are problematic, but also limits what counts as a conviction for all immigration purposes. Structural reforms to the legal immigration system, asylum no more than one year deadline, U visas increases annual cap, family based immigration increases annual caps and eliminates 3/10 year bar. This will improve adjudication, more independence to immigration judges and right to council. Funding to address root causes of migration.

ICE enforcement priorities, 100 day deportation enjoined; priorities have been narrowed to three priority groups: 1). National Security: suspected of terrorism, espionage, etc. 2). Border security: recent arrivals(post11/1/2020) 3). Public safety: convicted of an aggravated felony or offence related to gang membership. This does not bar enforcement against others outside of these priorities. There are no changes in the law as of yet, processing at the border still takes a long time for those on MPP, title 42 expulsions are still happening. ICE enforcement is still a risk for some and Public Charge Rule is still in effect. A reminder that Westchester County

residents have rights when interacting with ICE, interacting with county police, agencies and employees (IPA). For federal relief in some cases, to access public benefits for which that and their dependents are eligible, to be safe from eviction, to be vaccinated against COVID 19 and working with lawyers.

The Immigration Protection Act protects persons when interacting with County Police and agencies. When seeking services or benefits with the county, the IPA prevents DSS from sharing info about a persons immigration status. When interacting with the county police, it prevents the county police from inquiring about immigration status (except if relevant to a criminal investigation or there's a judge's warrant). The IPA does not apply to town or village police. When incarcerated in the County Jail, the IPA prevents jail from holding people past their release time at ICE's request, unless there is a judicial warrant. KYR Legal Service, fraud prevention; filing the wrong forms is a waste of money and could foreclose future immigration remedies and put people at risk for removal. Never pay a notario, travel agent, tax preparer, or form preparer to help with immigration work. Report fraud to the Office of New American Hotline at 1-800-566-7636.

Immigration court closures and court dates, for scheduling into a specific case call 1-800-898-7180 (need Alien A-Number). In person interviews are held at 26 Federal Plaza with some COVID-19 precautions are in place. To check case status and average processing times: www.uscis.gov.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

The Task Force adjourned at 11:28 AM.