



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NASSAU COUNTY**

Dear Nassau County Neighbors:

The horrific murder of George Floyd has moved millions of Americans to action seeking to end systemic racism, mistreatment by law enforcement, and a fairer criminal justice system. These issues are not new to our country, our community, or to me as District Attorney.

We have seen large, peaceful protests across Nassau County that showcase the diversity of our communities dedicated to justice, alongside the professionalism of our law enforcement agencies, working under challenging circumstances.

As Nassau's chief law enforcement official, I believe that this is an important moment to listen to those voices in our community calling for change, to reflect on how we can improve, and to affirm our commitment to do better.

I wanted to share with you what action we're taking in the District Attorney's office, how we are working with our law enforcement partners to better serve the public, to announce my support for legislation pending to promote trust and accountability, and to remind every Nassau resident that our doors and our hearts are open to all those we serve.

Please continue to share your ideas with me. I'm listening.



Madeline Singas
District Attorney

Our Actions:

- We will partner with Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University Law to analyze comprehensive charging and case disposition data to identify racial disparity and bias and publicly report the findings of that review as well as any corrective action warranted.
- To address the appearance of a conflict, we will seek the appointment of a special prosecutor for all new cases in which a police officer is credibly accused of criminal conduct in the course of their duties and encourage the State Legislature to codify

Executive Order 147 and expand its provisions to create a Special Prosecutor's Office within the Office of the Attorney General to investigate these cases.

- We will expand and enhance annual mandatory implicit bias training for all staff and review our training curriculum to ensure that anti-bias education is an ongoing component.
- We will continue our work to recruit and promote prosecutors, investigators and staff that reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
- We will expand our Community Councils, which already include our African American Advisory Council, Asian American Advisory Council, Hispanic American Advisory Council, South Asian American Advisory Council, Faith Leaders Advisory Council, Student Advisory Council, and Community Partnership Program Advisory Council to ensure broader geographic representation of Nassau's communities.

We Call for the Establishment of Civilian Oversight for Police Complaints

Many jurisdictions, including New York City, have established civilian oversight boards to provide independent review of complaints against police officers. These boards investigate and recommend discipline for officers accused of misconduct, refer potential criminal conduct for possible prosecution, and they utilize tools like mediation to help improve relationships and trust between law enforcement and the public. To promote transparency and independence, we encourage Nassau County to establish a civilian police review agency.

We Encourage the Legislature to Increase Juror Pay to Increase Diversity

We encourage the Legislature to increase juror pay from the antiquated rate of \$40/day to \$150/day to promote more diverse and representative juries. For those who are self-employed, rely on tips, or who hold multiple part-time jobs, the cost to serve is simply too high.

We Support Greater Transparency Regarding Police Misconduct with Protections for Officers' Personal Information

Legislation is pending to repeal section 50-a of the New York State Civil Rights Law which shields the personnel records of police from disclosure. Greater transparency regarding police misconduct and discipline is important to improve policies and oversight and to promote public confidence. I support significant reform to Section 50(a), however, police officers do dangerous work, the overwhelming majority do their jobs with courage and integrity, and repeal that does not afford protection to officers' personal information could endanger officers and their families.

We Encourage Lawmakers to Safeguard and Expand Mental Health Services for Police Officers

As we work to address police misconduct, it is important to be mindful of the essential role law enforcement plays protecting our communities, and the difficult and often dangerous situations officers face. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse and other conditions, exacerbated by work stresses, necessitate the ready availability of mental health services to ensure officers can continue to safely perform their jobs. Officer suicides have occurred at an alarming rate in recent years, and widespread protests and broad-based criticism will undoubtedly compromise morale. It is important that policy makers engage with law enforcement leaders and rank and file officers to ensure that as we move forward to address wrongdoing, we create an environment that supports the good work of the thousands of police officers who serve the people of Nassau County with professionalism and integrity every day.

Our Position on Pending Legislation:

Bill	Position
Adds the offense of falsely reporting an incident as a specified offense for a hate crime. (A.3566)	 SUPPORT
Establishes the Office of Special Investigation for deaths following a police encounter. (A.1601a/S.2574a)	 SUPPORT
Allows the Chief Administrator of the Courts to release data to evaluate criminal justice policies. (A.5472/S.1083b)	 SUPPORT
Affirms the right to record police activity. (A.1360a/S.3253)	 SUPPORT
Repeals limitations on the removal of police officers. (S.7527)	 SUPPORT
Requires law enforcement to provide needed medical attention to those in custody. (A.8226/S.6601)	 SUPPORT
Bans racial and ethnic profiling by police. (A.3056b/S.4076)	 SUPPORT
Expands the use of body cameras to all New York State Troopers & MTA Police Officers (A.8674/S.6686 & A.8493a/S.06793a) ¹	 SUPPORT We encourage the use of body cameras by all police agencies.

For more information, please visit our web site, www.nassauda.org. Follow us on Twitter or Instagram at @nassauda. Email us at info@nassauda.org or call (516) 571-3800.

¹ The Nassau County District Attorney's Office has sponsored a successful body camera pilot program with local police and found bodycams to be a valuable tool that protects officers and the public. However, storage and review of body camera footage requires significant and costly technological capacity and human labor. We encourage the Legislature to provide police, prosecutors, and public defenders with the funding needed to more broadly utilize body cameras.

NCCA Program Spotlight

Restorative Justice with Offender Accountability and Transformative Community Engagement



In December 2018, the NCCA opened the Community Partnership Program, a resource and referral office that provides social services in English and Spanish, with a focus on the re-entry population and other justice-involved individuals. CPP's goal is reduce recidivism and build a safer community and our approach is unique in that the District Attorney's office has invested in a safe space to provide many services on-site, rather than simply referring individuals to other CBOs and NGOs.

The program, located at 9 Centre Street in Hempstead, provides community members with necessary resources, including job readiness programs, a clothing closet, food pantry, medical insurance and health care assistance, mental health and substance treatment rereferrals, educational and vocational training and social service benefit assistance including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

CPP staff also facilitates a group called 'Response Restructuring,' a 15-week gang intervention and prevention meeting for parolees and probationers; and weekly meetings at Hempstead Middle and High Schools focusing on gang prevention and consequential thinking.

NCCA's Office of Alternative Prosecution and Resources (PHOENIX)

We believe in second chances. Phoenix oversees the NCCA's diversion programs, including drug treatment. Our office collaborates with 68 agencies to place justice-involved individuals in programs – inpatient and outpatient – that will help them recover and avoid future contacts with the criminal justice system. Our office's emphasis on treatment has resulted in more than a 300% increase in Treatment Court assessments. According to the Diversion Court, 25% of the pending felony case load resided in that court.

Phoenix collaborates with both crime victims and defendants whose cases are well-suited to alternative prosecution programs.

Additionally, the NCCA collaborates with Nassau County's Veterans Service Agency to assist veterans in the criminal justice system. The Nassau County Veteran's Treatment Court is a dedicated court that provides alternative dispositions to appropriate defendants who have served in any branch of the U.S. Armed forces, including the

reserves. The alternative dispositions include connections to veteran mentors and targeted services for the unique needs of our former military members.

Office of Immigrant Affairs



In March 2015, then Acting District Attorney Singas established the Office of Immigrant Affairs. The office addresses the victimization of immigrants who are often targeted for criminal schemes related to legal services, employment, wages, and housing. Many immigrants are not familiar with the legal system of the United States and may have difficulty with the English language – making them especially vulnerable to criminals.

This program is meant to encourage both victims and witnesses to seek help. The District Attorney’s Office treats a victim’s immigration status with confidentiality. Our goal is to protect all residents of Nassau County and support them when they seek justice.

To date, the office has processed more than 700 U-Visa certifications. These visas are issued to undocumented immigrants who are the victims of crime.

In 2018, the Office of Immigrant Affairs created the Pathways program to provide mentorship, anti-gang education, support groups, cultural competence, critical thinking and emotional intelligence for newly arrived students.

Many of these students arrived through challenging circumstances, often separated from family and other support networks and they may be in danger of gang involvement due to feelings of fear and isolation.

The support and guidance they receive from the program’s staff, who are also immigrants, helps to instill feelings of worthiness, belonging and self-respect. Approximately 30 students participated in the program in Hempstead and Westbury middle schools.

Community Engagement, Victim & Witness Support Services

Support services for victims and witnesses, as well as NCDA’s broad range of educational and programming, falls under the umbrella of our CORE Service Offices.

Established in 2018, CORE centralizes NCDA’s various support, community and educational outreach functions, to ensure that every victim and witness receives the help they need, and that school districts, senior centers, group homes, and faith-based institutions have access to NCDA’s broad range of programming.

CORE also houses our staff of Crime Victim Advocates who assist victims as they seek justice. The Office is also coordinating the launch of the forthcoming Nassau County Family Justice Center, which will provide on-site services and support to victims and their families. Finally, CORE complements the vital quality assurance efforts of our offender-focused Phoenix program by measuring program effectiveness and metrics.

For more information on these programs please visit www.nassauda.org.
Email info@nassauda.org or call (516) 571-3800.