

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6
TRANSPORTATION/PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 17, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:

S. AVERY
K. GURL
R. RIGOLLI

P. BLAKE
E. MCCLURE
M. SILVERMAN

B. CHANCEY
T. MISKEL
U. ZIMMERMAN

EXCUSED:

J. ARMER
J. SMITH

M. MURPHY

R. SLOANE

ABSENT:

D. DECOSTANZO
J. THOMPSON

D. GORDON

D. SCHNEIDER

*****MINUTES*****

Presentation and review of New York State Senate bill S.5988 known as Kalief's Law, an act to amend the criminal procedure law, in relation to time limits for a speedy trial.

Representing Daniel Squadron's office (District 26), Joseph Giannetto presented bill S.5988, known as Kalief's Law.

- Reforms New York State criminal procedure law in relation to time limits set for a speedy trial in 1972.
 - Violation, misdemeanor, and felony charges must go to trial within 30, 60, and 90 days respectively.
 - In New York City defendants average 594 days before going to trial.
- Current NYS statute only requires that a prosecutor be "ready" to go to trial to stop the time limit countdown.
 - This "Ready Rule" allows prosecutors to escape the time limits set by the speedy trial law using various technicalities.
- This bill amends the speedy trial law to address trial delays.
 - Prosecutors must prove they are actually ready to go to trial.
 - If the court grants adjournment, the court shall set the next court date and decide the on number of days to be counted toward the time limit.
- The bill is named in honor of Kalief Browder, who committed suicide after he was arrested at age 16 and spent three years in pre-trial detention.

Committee questions and comments in response to the presentation:

- Would like to see the similar speedy trial requirements added to Family Court Procedure.
- Enforcing the time limit more strictly may not address the root of the problem, a lack of resources in the prosecutor's office and the courts, and the number of people arrested awaiting trial.
 - The Senator's office is working to address the issue from multiple angles.
- Will the bill have support in Albany?
 - It has the support of the Democratic and Independent Democratic Caucuses but not the Republican Caucus. Cannot guarantee it will go to session.
- Is the trial delay problem particular to NYC?
 - It is exacerbated in urban areas with larger caseloads.

- The Defense is often the side seeking adjournment and delays as well. The court should have to justify adjournments.
- Will the bill have adverse effects in small towns?
 - Since they do not suffer the same overload it should not affect them.
- Does the bill have the support of Brooklyn District Attorney Kenneth Thompson?
 - DA Thompson's office has seen the bill, but has not issued a statement.
- Does the bill have the support of New York City Council?
 - Squadron's office is in discussion with NYC Council now. Mayor De Blasio's program "Justice Reboot" was launched to address the cases sitting longest.
- Will this preliminary bill change drastically by the time it is in session?
 - This is pending discussion in the senate.

Eric McClure introduced a motion in support of the bill as presented, which was duly seconded, and urges the New York State Senate to bring it to session.

MOTION APPROVED: UNANIMOUSLY

Presentation and discussion with representative for the American Red Cross on Restoring Family Links, a program which has the capacity to locate and re-establish communication between direct family members who have lost touch across international borders due to natural disasters, armed conflict, or changing political conditions.

Marie-Celine Vandenbempt from the American Red Cross presented the organization's Restoring Family Links program.

- The program exists to connect people in the United States with family members who they have lost contact with abroad.
 - The program is worldwide, leveraging the Red Cross's global network.
 - The service is free.
 - The inquiry is confidential.
 - The program is blind to your legal immigration status and will keep personal information confidential.
 - The program also traces holocaust and war victims if someone is seeking information on a past family member.
- The Red Cross is seeking ambassadors for the program, contact marie.vandenbempt@redcross.org (212)-875-2253

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.

The minutes were submitted by Bahij Chancey.