

Establishing A Hotline Helpline To Provide Support And Referral Information For Individuals Who Believe They Have Been Discriminated Against In The Ulster County Criminal Justice System

Referred to: The Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee (Chairwoman Walter and Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner and Parete), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, Ronk, and Walter)

Chairwoman of the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee, Eve Walter, and Legislator Donaldson offer the following:

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 410 of October 15, 2019 established the Ulster County Criminal Justice Reform Task Force (UC-CJRTF) which has set forth to evaluate existing and potential criminal justice programs, to ensure the best and most cost-effective delivery of services, and to explore opportunities for program expansion to help the greatest number of county residents who may be in need of services; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature is in receipt of, and has reviewed the report of the UC-CJRTF; and

WHEREAS, the report finds that based on the 2019 arrest and conviction data collected by the New York Department of Criminal Justice, the rate of arrest of Black individuals in Ulster County is 39% higher than that of Whites; this jumps to 101% higher for felonies and 238% higher for drug felonies; further, while 51% of arrests for Whites resulted in a sentence conviction, the rate is 72% for Blacks; and

WHEREAS, as socio-demographics such as disability, income, sexuality etc. are not collected in arrest data potential discrimination based on these factors cannot be enumerated but likely exist; and

WHEREAS, measuring the true extent of discrimination experienced by individuals from police, attorneys, judges, probation and corrections officers is not possible; and

WHEREAS, while there are complaint processes in place for each area of the criminal justice system, most individuals are unaware of how to issue their complaints, should any arise; and

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force identified the need for the county to provide assistance to individuals who believe they have been discriminated against by an employee of the criminal justice system including law enforcement, attorneys, judges, and corrections officers and seek to properly report the incident; now, therefore be it

Resolution No. 429 September 14, 2021

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RESOLVED, that it is the policy of Ulster County to provide a ~~hotline~~ **helpline** for community members who believe they have been discriminated against in our criminal justice system to call to receive support and referral information as to the appropriate place and method to report the discriminatory treatment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature calls upon the Ulster County Human Rights Commission to administer and promote the ~~hotline~~ **helpline**, and that it be dedicated solely for this purpose,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED AS AMENDED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 22 NOES: 0
(Absent: Legislator Fabiano)

Passed Committee: Law Enforcement and Public Safety on September 1, 2021

Postponed in Committee: Ways and Means on September 7, 2021 for one week

Passed Committee: Ways and Means as amended on September 14, 2021

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

TBD

Legislator Walter motioned, seconded by Legislator Ronk, to replace the word “hotline” with the word “helpline” throughout the resolution.

MOTION ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 22 NOES: 0
(Absent: Legislator Fabiano)

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STATE OF NEW YORK

ss:

COUNTY OF ULSTER

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is the original resolution adopted by the Ulster County Legislature on the 14th Day of September in the year Two Thousand Twenty-One, and said resolution shall remain on file in the office of said clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 16th Day of September in the year Two Thousand Twenty-One.

[s] Victoria A. Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

Submitted to the County Executive this
16th Day of September 2021.

Approved by the County Executive this
21st Day of September 2021.

[s] Victoria A. Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

[s] Patrick K. Ryan
Patrick K. Ryan, County Executive