

PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPTS

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TRANSCRIPTS OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME
COURT COMMITTEE ON
RACIAL AND GENDER BIAS
IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

PHILADELPHIA
WILKES-BARRE
HARRISBURG



**Wilkes-Barre
Public Hearing
Transcript**

COMMITTEE ON RACIAL AND GENDER BIAS
IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

WILKES-BARRE PUBLIC HEARING
WEDNESDAY JUNE 13, 2001

LOCATION: Kings College
The McGowan School of
Business
West Union Street and
River Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

REPORTER: KENNETH D. O'HEARN

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PANEL MEMBERS:

1
2
3 Nicholas P. Cafardi, Chairman

4 Lisette M. McCormick,

5 Executive Director

6 Jane Louik, Associate Director

7 Danielle Williams, Esquire

8 Staff Counsel

9 Ingrid Cronin, Member

10 Juan Laureda, Member

11 Robert Lostenber, Member

12 Phoebe A. Haddon, Member

13 Christine Laugin

14 Fred Pierantoni

15 Sharon Seaborough

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WITNESSES:

1
2 Bernie Ingrinhowser
3 Beata Peck Little
4 Judy Ariola
5 Kathlene Russell
6 Ronald Felton
7 Rena Harth
8 Dr. Stephanie Bressler
9 Anna Arias
10 James Minella
11 Michael Muth
12 Father Tom Sokoloski
13 Carl Romanelli
14 Judge Mark Ciavarella, Jr.
15 Albert Flora
16 Carolee Medico
17 Dr. Stan Hamilton
18 Rev. Elijah Turner
19 Michael Keslosky, III
20 Bernie Raskaowitz
21 Arthur Weatherbee
22
23
24
25

1 public trust and confidence in the
2 judicial system and for creating this
3 committee to gather data and
4 testimony on these issues.

5 I thank the individuals
6 for taking the time out of their
7 schedules to offer testimony here
8 today. It is my hope that the
9 information gathered here will help
10 improve and strengthen the system
11 that works to protect all. Thank you
12 for bringing this important
13 discussion to Wilkes-Barre and for
14 your work to ensure our system of
15 justice continues to serve everybody.

16 MR. CAFARDI:

17 Thank you very much.
18 Please thank the mayor for us. The
19 first group to testify will be from
20 the Women's Resource Center of Monroe
21 County. They are Beata Peck Little,
22 Judy Ariola and Gloria Finch. Good
23 afternoon.

24 MS. LITTLE:

25 Good afternoon. Gloria

1 Finch is not able to join us at this
2 time.

3 My name is Beata Peck
4 Little and I am the executive
5 director of Women's Resources of
6 Monroe County. I am pleased to have
7 this opportunity to share some of the
8 situations that occur in Monroe
9 County as they pertain to racial and
10 gender bias. I know your staff and
11 others have shared the statistics
12 regarding the impact of sexual and
13 domestic violence on the lives of
14 people across the Commonwealth.

15 Monroe County numbers
16 are similar so I won't spend much
17 time reiterating many of those
18 details. Last year we saw 212
19 individuals who had been directly
20 impacted as victims of sexual
21 violence and 1,076 who were victims
22 of domestic violence. Women's
23 Resources has been serving the Monroe
24 County community for over 21 years.
25 And in that time, many changes have

1 occurred in the basic demographics of
2 our county.

3 At this time, Monroe is
4 the fastest growing county in the
5 Commonwealth, in terms of the people
6 moving here. Many of these folks are
7 from out of state, as we border New
8 Jersey and are considered a bedroom
9 community for New York City. The
10 influx of new residence has changed
11 the composition of the county, but
12 not much change has occurred in the
13 infrastructure, including law
14 enforcement and the judicial system.

15 According to a recently
16 completed assessment of the county
17 conducted by the United Way, Monroe
18 has the fastest growing Hispanic
19 population of any county in
20 Pennsylvania, a 348 percent increase
21 since 1990. Monroe's
22 African-American community grew 383
23 percent in the same period of time.
24 Yet, when my staff and I sat down to
25 prepare testimony, we were unable to

1 identify any person of color in the
2 judiciary, including magistrates, nor
3 in the court administration. Law
4 enforcement officers are also
5 predominantly Caucasian and male.

6 While your
7 correspondence indicates the purpose
8 of this hearing is not to discuss the
9 general societal problems, they so
10 deeply impact access to the judicial
11 system, it is impossible not to do
12 so. There is a pervasive fear about
13 accessing the judicial and law
14 enforcement system. Every person I
15 spoke to, victims and staff members,
16 related stories of verbal harassment,
17 being followed and confronted
18 physically just because they were a
19 person of color. These stories did
20 not just involve behavior by random
21 individuals but included people in
22 authority such as the police. How
23 can these situations still exist
24 almost 40 years after the enactment
25 of the 14th Amendment?

1 When you translate
2 these common experiences that occur
3 when you are doing nothing but
4 existing in your own skin to a
5 situation such as domestic violence
6 or sexual assault, it becomes even
7 more difficult. These are times in
8 which you most need to have the
9 support of the system. But what can
10 you do if your only experiences have
11 been negative? How much higher is
12 the barrier? How much deeper is the
13 fear?

14 Now, add to that
15 knowledge the fact that almost
16 everyone you have to share your story
17 with is Caucasian and knows little
18 about the cultural aspects of your
19 life, how you interact and
20 communicate with others, or the
21 social mores which govern your
22 behavior. Add in also the fact that
23 domestic and sexual violence are
24 rooted in issues of power and control
25 and you can begin to see the

1 difficulties faced by people of color
2 who need assistance. For many, these
3 facts translate into not seeking
4 assistance at all. You need to hear
5 that again. They don't come to
6 anyone for help. This is the direct
7 result of racial bias.

8 I would like to share
9 several stories with you to
10 illustrate how subtle and complex
11 these situations can be. While the
12 specifics must be concealed to
13 protect program participant
14 confidentiality, these stories are
15 real and contain threads that we see
16 commonly in many situations.

17 Tom is a young man with
18 limited mental capacity. He is in
19 his early 20s but looks as if he's
20 15. He wants to belong so he goes to
21 a local bar and has a conversation
22 with a known gang leader and drug
23 dealer. Tom was told that if he goes
24 upstairs and has sex with this man,
25 he can join the gang and have some

1 drugs. He goes upstairs but changes
2 his mind and says no. They return to
3 the bar where the older man buys him
4 drinks until he is inebriated. Tom
5 is then taken back upstairs and
6 raped. When he tells his mother, she
7 takes him to the hospital for medical
8 treatment. The emergency room nurses
9 have no real experience with male
10 rape and do not complete a rape kit.
11 The responding police officer says it
12 was consensual because Tom went to
13 the bar and initially sought the man
14 out so no further action was taken.

15 If that same scenario
16 had occurred with a young woman,
17 there would have been additional
18 follow-up. But because the victim
19 was male, the situation was treated
20 differently. This is gender bias.

21 Louisa is a Latino with
22 a husband who has political standing
23 in the community. He physically,
24 mentally and sexually abuses her.
25 She is devoutly Catholic and her

1 religious beliefs are that she is
2 married and must do everything in her
3 power to save the marriage. She
4 dresses flamboyantly and is not
5 fluent in English, as it is her
6 second language. She was told by the
7 court and the attorneys that she was
8 manipulating the system, lying and
9 pretending not to speak well. Her
10 frustration with the circumstances
11 and anger created the situation in
12 which she spoke out and out of turn.
13 She was coerced into having sex with
14 her husband because he told her she
15 had to do that in order to see her
16 own children and because her deeply
17 held religious beliefs were that she
18 was married to this man and it was
19 her responsibility to do so. Yet the
20 courts looked at the situation and
21 said, how can you request a
22 Protection From Abuse order on one
23 hand and have sex with the man on the
24 other? You are irrational. And the
25 PFA was denied.

1 Susan has been labeled
2 a liar, a non-credible witness, an
3 alcoholic and a drug addict. She has
4 been portrayed as unstable. Her
5 story represents that of women who
6 lie to maintain their safety or
7 because their experience with the
8 judicial system tells them there is
9 no hope, no matter what they do.
10 Despite having been severely beaten
11 to the point that she has a brain
12 injury, slashed across the face so
13 that she is disfigured for life,
14 repeatedly raped and then run down
15 with a car because she is a woman who
16 has used drugs and alcohol the
17 judicial system acted as if she had
18 no value and treated her with great
19 disrespect. The court dismissed the
20 case and labeled it as street
21 violence. In the end, her abuser got
22 off without penalty and she has to
23 face her scars in the mirror every
24 single morning.

25 In both of these cases,

1 the court and the officers did not
2 have enough information or were
3 unwilling to look at the situation
4 from the perspective of a different
5 culture. This is racial and cultural
6 violence.

7 The stories go on and
8 on with new ones almost daily. Our
9 goal must be to ensure that all
10 victims are treated with respect,
11 that their actions are looked at
12 within the culture they live in, not
13 just the culture of middle-class
14 white America, and that we take the
15 greatest of care not to re-victimize
16 people. We must realize how
17 difficult it is for anyone to seek
18 assistance from a system over which
19 they have no control and cannot
20 predict the outcome. How much more
21 difficult is it to seek help if you
22 know that there is no one in that
23 system who knows about you, nor do
24 they care to learn?

25 I was asked by Lisette

1 to make some recommendations. There
2 are two I most strongly come to.

3 First is that the
4 judicial and law enforcement systems
5 must reflect the community they
6 serve. In a county like Monroe, this
7 means actively working to recruit and
8 train people of color to be police
9 officers, lawyers and court
10 administrators. It means working on
11 recruitment for both registration and
12 publicly sharing information so
13 elected positions such as magistrate
14 and judges are representative of the
15 community they serve. In a community
16 that has increased its population of
17 Latinos and African-Americans by well
18 over 300 percent. There are surely
19 individuals interested in doing this
20 kind of work.

21 Secondly, while we
22 undertake the first, we must make
23 sure that those who are currently
24 representing the court know and
25 understand life experiences outside

1 their own. They must receive
2 training, have access to information
3 and be willing to assess the
4 situation, not just react to the
5 surface. This training and
6 information sharing should not be
7 optional but required of everyone,
8 from judges and magistrates to clerks
9 in the administrative offices.

10 While this might seem
11 like pie in the sky, our experience
12 in Monroe County is that it can work.

13 Our Prothonotary, George Warden, has
14 taken the time to learn about the
15 dynamics of sexual and domestic
16 violence and he has made sure his
17 staff also has that information. As
18 a result, there is a greatly improved
19 process for applying for PFAs and
20 more women are willing to step
21 forward and engage the system in
22 helping them.

23 It can be done.

24 Speaking for Women's Resources, I can
25 say that we appreciate the work being

1 undertaken by this committee and
2 applaud your efforts in making our
3 judicial system effective for
4 everyone without regard to their
5 gender or race. Thank you for this
6 opportunity to speak and share some
7 of our experiences.

8 MR. CAFARDI:

9 Thank you.

10 MS. ARIOLA:

11 My name is Judith
12 Ariola-Rivera. For the past seven
13 years I have been employed by Women's
14 Resources of Monroe County as a
15 bilingual and bicultural domestic
16 violence counselor. It has been my
17 personal and professional experience
18 that racial and gender bias continues
19 to affect the lives of many of the
20 women we provide services for. This
21 issue is most prevalent in the law
22 enforcement and criminal justice
23 systems.

24 I was the counselor
25 involved in the case of two women

1 from South American who were brought
2 to this country at different times as
3 mail order brides. These women were
4 victims and sexual abuse and
5 imprisonment. It was disturbing to
6 see how law enforcement and the
7 criminal justice system and the media
8 used the women's culture and language
9 as a way to portray them as
10 uneducated and poverty-stricken
11 opportunists. The legal system and
12 the media minimized the issue of
13 abuse.

14 In other case, an
15 attorney accused a Latino woman that
16 I was working with of using her
17 sexuality and cultural belief system
18 to manipulate the outcome of her
19 divorce and custody proceedings. And
20 this may sound similar to Beata's but
21 it a different case. I strongly
22 believe that this woman feared her
23 spouse so much that she was willing
24 to do anything to stay safe and
25 continue to see her children. It is

1 my experience that women of color
2 hesitate to call the police for fear
3 of retaliation by their partners,
4 even there is physical abuse.

5 Just this year, a woman
6 I was working with was arrested in
7 her own home for allegedly assaulting
8 her spouse, even though witnesses who
9 were present told the police that the
10 assault did not occur. The
11 perpetrator is a prominent member of
12 the community and was unable to
13 persuade the police that the victim
14 is crazy. The victim was wearing
15 full cultural and religious attire at
16 the time of her arrest and was forced
17 to undress in front of male officers.
18 She was given a high bail and not
19 informed of her legal rights to post
20 bail or seek counsel. She spent the
21 entire weekend in jail. Clearly, her
22 civil and criminal rights were
23 violated in the most discriminating
24 way.

25 I know of many other

1 instances where victims of domestic
2 violence were not afforded their
3 basic rights. It is my belief that
4 in order for women to be safe, gain
5 equal and fair representation, the
6 issue of racial and gender bias must
7 be addressed and abolished. I thank
8 you so much for allowing me to speak.

9 MR. CAFARDI:

10 Thank you. Do we have
11 questions? Ms. McCormick?

12 MS. MCCORMICK:

13 Ms. Ariola, have you
14 ever had a situation where victims of
15 domestic violence for whom you were
16 advocating, for whom you were
17 working, had to attend court hearings
18 and was in need of an interpreter?

19 MS. ARIOLA:

20 Yes, there are cases
21 they do need an interpreter. The
22 court has not provided that. What
23 they do is they call me as the
24 advocate to do that and be there with
25 the victim. And I choose not to do

1 that because it isn't my
2 responsibility to be an interpreter.
3 I am not an interpreter by law or in
4 a professional manner. But I do have
5 to be there. I do help her with that
6 language and try to facilitate the
7 process for her. But the court
8 should be providing that in all areas
9 of the law.

10 MS. MCCORMICK:

11 Do you know whether in
12 Monroe County there is any type of a
13 list of interpreters that judges can
14 call upon?

15 MS. ARIOLA:

16 I am not sure. I
17 believe they have made attempts to do
18 that. But I have not seen --- my
19 experience at that is not an easy
20 thing to happen where they're able to
21 get someone. Instead they refer to
22 me.

23 MS. MCCORMICK:

24 And can you speak of
25 any other experiences, specific

1 experiences where individuals could
2 not speak English and did not have an
3 interpreter experience a miscarriage
4 of justice or were harmed in some way
5 and did not get what they sought
6 through the system as a result of
7 their failure to understand what was
8 going on?

9 MS. ARIOLA:

10 I think that's really
11 prevalent in women who come from
12 foreign countries that cannot speak
13 English well or none at all, whether
14 they're Spanish or Polish or German.
15 But I find it more prevalent among
16 the Latino and African-American
17 community that when they choose to
18 speak with the magistrate, let's say,
19 they view women as non-American. She
20 doesn't speak well, she doesn't know
21 the system, we can't help you. And
22 also when she applies for the PFA, if
23 he is an American citizen, she is
24 not, he is given preference in
25 treatment. Of course, she's looked

1 at as someone who married him for the
2 purpose of just getting into the
3 country.

4 And also, African-
5 American women fear the police
6 retaliating against their partner
7 because they will be treated
8 differently. And so the fear is not
9 only for their own lives, but also
10 that their spouse or partner would be
11 injured or treated differently than a
12 Caucasian male that the police were
13 called on.

14 MR. CAFARDI:

15 Ms. Haddon has some
16 questions.

17 MS. HADDON:

18 Ms. Peck Little, I was
19 wondering if you could just give us a
20 little bit more information about
21 what our organization has done. You
22 introduced it in the first paragraph.

23 MS. LITTLE:

24 Sure. Women's
25 Resources, while we carry the name

1 Women's Resources, we actually work
2 with anyone who is a victim of sexual
3 and domestic violence. I'm sure
4 you're aware at this point in
5 Pennsylvania one in seven boys is
6 sexually assaulted before the age of
7 18, one in four for girls.

8 We provide an entire
9 range of services. We maintain a
10 shelter. We do legal advocacy,
11 medical advocacy. We're an active
12 and ongoing part of the SART team,
13 which is the Sexual Assault Response
14 Team. We do private counseling. We
15 do group work. We go out to the
16 schools and do prevention education.
17 We have legal advocates. We have an
18 office directly across the street
19 from the courthouse so that there can
20 be direct services when people go to
21 the courthouse for assistance. We
22 run a program called Lou Garson
23 Bureau (phonetic) which is a safe
24 place. And have, as an act of the
25 board, staff who speak a variety of

1 languages so that we can provide
2 services in a culturally competent
3 and appropriate way. Have I missed
4 anything? We do a lot of work with
5 kids. We have a program called Kids
6 First which works with children who
7 have either been victims or have
8 witnessed violence in their lives and
9 we work with them on safety planning,
10 on dealing with those issues, on
11 conflict resolution. So really a
12 whole range of things.

13 MS. HADDON:

14 And are there other
15 similar organizations in this area?

16 MS. LITTLE:

17 There is essentially
18 one in each county in Pennsylvania.
19 We're a part of both the Pennsylvania
20 Coalition Against Domestic Violence
21 and the Pennsylvania Coalition
22 Against Rape. And so I know that
23 there are 67 programs, including
24 ours, in Pennsylvania for violence
25 and 64 for rape.

1 MS. HADDON:

2 But in this county, you
3 service ---?

4 MS. LITTLE:

5 Yes. There is --- in
6 Wilkes-Barre there is an agency,
7 there are two. And Scranton has a
8 women's center and so does
9 Wilkes-Barre have a crisis center
10 also. We have a 24-hour hotline that
11 provides services.

12 MS. HADDON:

13 A second question about
14 what you talked about. You gave us
15 some insight as to the changing
16 demographics here. I was wondering
17 in terms of the status population, is
18 there a great variety of different
19 countries that the population comes
20 from?

21 MS. LITTLE:

22 Yes. And I'm glad you
23 brought that up. Because we tend to
24 lump folks together and say, oh,
25 everyone who speaks Spanish has a

1 certain culture and lives a certain
2 way. And that's clearly not true.
3 We have women from South America. We
4 have women from Mexico, people from
5 Costa Rica, Central America, as well
6 as a lot of women and men as well who
7 come from New York and New Jersey but
8 who have a Latino background and
9 actually speak Spanish as the primary
10 language before they learn English.

11 MS. HADDON:

12 Both of you spoke of
13 some fear or hesitation for people to
14 come forward when they are
15 experiencing problems with the court.
16 Are you familiar with any grievance
17 process or dispute resolution process
18 that the court or perhaps the Bar
19 Association have instituted? I know
20 in other counties this is an
21 increasing movement, to have an
22 opportunity for people to come and
23 raise these problems in a forum that
24 can handle it confidentially?

25 MS. LITTLE:

1 I will start to try to
2 answer that. Judy may have something
3 to add. The situation in our county
4 is that, yes, we do try to encourage
5 people to do that. But the judicial
6 grievance process, specifically, one
7 of our judges actually sits on that
8 panel. So it makes it very difficult
9 for anyone to actually get
10 assistance. And what happens is
11 often times that the outcome is worse
12 when people speak out. And so our
13 job really is to help people work
14 through the process and think about
15 what the various options are and what
16 the potential outcomes might be so
17 that they can make those choices.
18 For many, many people, just staying
19 safe, making sure that they get to
20 see their kids, that they don't lose
21 their job, that they don't lose their
22 house --- we had a situation just a
23 few weeks ago where someone lost her
24 place of residence because she
25 applied for a PFA. They really look

1 to those issues as being critical.
2 And so what we can do is help them
3 come up with alternative ways of the
4 judicial system.

5 MS. ARIOLA:

6 We help women get
7 representation and, if it's possible
8 to get attorneys that were willing to
9 work with them or provide pro bono
10 work. They say they do. But again,
11 when you send the women there or when
12 they call them up, they briefly tell
13 them what they're going to do for
14 them and they're on their own after
15 that. I also find there's a lot of
16 conflict that occurs between the
17 attorneys that practice outside of
18 the DA's office, let's say, and the
19 attorneys or the DA. There's a lot
20 of conflict that goes on, things that
21 are not ethical and should not
22 continue to happen.

23 I have a difficult
24 situation or position where I have to
25 be careful how I advocate and what I

1 say, too, because eventually it's
2 going to affect the woman that I'm
3 trying to help. So when it comes to
4 even custody and divorce, those
5 issues that women want to try and get
6 help with, sometimes they're denied
7 that just because they're women or
8 because they don't have money. So
9 they're looked at as irrational and
10 so forth. But we definitely need
11 some change and serious advocacy with
12 the legal system in Monroe County.

13 MS. LITTLE:

14 If I could add one more
15 piece, which is that we do know that
16 women are often chastised in a report
17 for how they dress and how they
18 appeared without any regard for the
19 fact that the night before they
20 literally ran out of their houses
21 without their glasses, without their
22 purse, without their medication,
23 without their shoes, with the clothes
24 that they were wearing, usually night
25 clothes. And lawyers have been told,

1 again in open court as part of the
2 record, that if they continue to
3 provide services pro bono or as a
4 paid attorney in the way that they're
5 doing for these kinds of situations,
6 the judges no longer want to hear
7 them or see them represented in
8 court. And so they get, I think,
9 very fearful. And some of them have
10 talked about this, that it will
11 affect other kinds of cases they do.
12 And because most of our lawyers work
13 in small, family-run businesses
14 because it's a fairly rural county,
15 for them to put their practice in
16 such jeopardy is not something that
17 they can do.

18 MS. HADDON:

19 I have to say if you
20 have any examples of open court
21 statements like that, if you can
22 refer us to the case name, we could
23 get the record. It would be
24 important for us to hear that.

25 MS. LITTLE:

1 The problem we have is
2 that this open court, I guess the
3 issue for us is confidentiality.

4 MS. HADDON:

5 Right. That's why I
6 question the open court aspect. If
7 it's open court, we'd like to hear
8 it. One more thing. I teach
9 constitutional law. So I can tell
10 you it would be a problem if we
11 didn't get equal rights after 40
12 years instead of 140 years.

13 MS. LITTLE:

14 Yes. I was just
15 thinking about the civil rights
16 movement.

17 MR. LAUREDA:

18 With respect to the
19 perception, I'm hearing some comments
20 in terms of your experiences in
21 court. What have you seen, based on
22 your own experiences --- I think you
23 said, Ms. Ariola, you've been there
24 seven years. Ms. Peck Little, you've
25 been involved in this for how many

1 years?

2 MS. LITTLE:

3 Three years.

4 MR. LAUREDA:

5 So together you have at
6 least a decade of experiences. Based
7 on those years of experiences, what
8 observations have you made in terms
9 of the judges, when you've been
10 representing Latino or other parties?
11 Let me put it this way also, based on
12 your presentation, the so-called
13 members of this community?

14 MS. ARIOLA:

15 Yes. There is a
16 terrible bias against New Yorkers and
17 Jerseyites who come here in
18 residence, myself included. And a
19 lot of that migration has been by
20 many Latinos and African-Americans to
21 the Poconos. And even myself have
22 had to deal with cultural responses
23 when I speak and I appear a certain
24 way and I choose to speak Spanish or
25 translate for someone. I'm viewed as

1 different. I'm viewed as, I never
2 thought you would speak Spanish or
3 you do not look Spanish. And people
4 change the way that they respond to
5 you after that. So I find that I
6 think judges, for instance, and I
7 have to be careful, again, I think
8 that many try to do the best they
9 can. I think that some do not
10 understand differences. They have no
11 clue about diversity and differences
12 in religion and culture and ethnicity
13 and why one would choose to leave and
14 another one would not or why she
15 would feel intimidated and wear maybe
16 a very short skirt and flamboyant and
17 look a certain way while others
18 don't. And so I think there have
19 been many comments.

20 There was one
21 particular judge that told a woman
22 she had to go home and change her
23 clothes, she was not going to deal
24 with her in open court. And we might
25 be able to provide that. I'm not

1 sure. I had a particular attorney
2 that told the woman who was Latino,
3 and actually she was born and raised
4 here, she just had the accent, and
5 said to her, why are you sleeping
6 with him? And he said, because he
7 keeps the kids away from me and I
8 need to see my children. And so he
9 uses that. And so the attorney said,
10 well, look at the way you're dressed?
11 I understand that the women from your
12 country are accustomed to being
13 sexually aggressive and flamboyant.
14 And I was very offended by that
15 because she is Puerto Rican and so am
16 I.

17 And I said to him,
18 excuse me, you're offending me. That
19 is unjustified what you're saying to
20 her. And again, I had to back off
21 and let her speak for herself. She
22 feared responding to him because,
23 again, he's an attorney and he's
24 doing --- he's giving her a deal, you
25 know, not charging her the usual

1 price and she's hoping things will
2 work out.

3 MR. LAUREDA:

4 If I may try to reduce
5 things to writing, if it's possible,
6 with respect to that particular
7 experience and any other experiences,
8 as we have requested, if you have
9 certain specifics as to cases,
10 citations or particular records, if
11 you could make that available, that
12 may also assist the committee.

13 One other question that
14 I do have, that is with respect to
15 outreach. What initiatives, if any,
16 have you observed, state or local Bar
17 Associations or have you interacted
18 in any way with any state or local
19 Bar Associations as to these concerns
20 that you've expressed here today?

21 MS. ARIOLA:

22 I don't see them making
23 attempts to reach out to the Latino
24 or African-American community at all.
25 We have just recently, in the past

1 three years, in Monroe County
2 established a Latin American alliance
3 organization which has become --- and
4 trying to make programs open to the
5 community and keep our culture alive
6 and continue to bridge the gaps
7 within the community. And I think
8 that runs into a lot of barriers and
9 obstacles within the community,
10 getting permits to do things. And
11 it's getting a little bit better.
12 The commissioners seem to be
13 supportive of this. So that's a big
14 change. But again, I think that it's
15 not welcomed and so that committee is
16 really working hard. We all are. Our
17 agency has been instrumental in
18 trying to provide diversity not only
19 within the agency but to reach out to
20 the community and let them know that
21 we are culturally conscious and are
22 willing to work. I myself just
23 recently began to do outreach at
24 Mount Pocono and Tobyhanna, which are
25 areas that are undisturbed to Latino

1 and African-Americans. And that is
2 something that is important to me.
3 And so we have fliers in Spanish, we
4 have brochures, we have materials
5 that we are handing out to doctor's
6 offices, to big corporations that are
7 willing to back us, community centers
8 there and even churches. So we have
9 a very large outreach program,
10 including education to religious
11 groups in the communities.

12 MR. CAFARDI:

13 Thank you. Any other
14 questions?

15 MS. CRONIN:

16 I have just one small
17 question. I was wondering if the
18 same problems exist with juveniles
19 who come with these problems or if
20 there are other organizations in the
21 community that really reach out to
22 help juveniles, such as schools?

23 MS. LITTLE:

24 I don't know of any
25 formal organization that's working

1 with juveniles in terms of juvenile
2 justice. I would guess that things
3 are occurring, as we've been able to
4 tell with children who are coming
5 through our system, to our shelter
6 program or to our Kids First program.
7 I know the schools are aware of it.
8 We've had some luck in getting into
9 some schools and very little luck
10 getting into others. So it really
11 depends upon the administration of
12 the school and their perception of
13 themselves. Mount Pocono School
14 District, which is an area where
15 there is a very heavy concentration
16 of African-Americans and Latinos who
17 live in that part of the county has
18 been relatively open to us coming.
19 But other school districts tell us,
20 oh, no, we don't have such a problem
21 here. So that's what's been going
22 on. Our STOP abuse team, which is
23 Students Together for Outreach and
24 Prevention have been trying to get
25 into their own schools to do this

1 work. But there's been very little
2 going beyond that.

3 MS. ARIOLA:

4 Can I make a comment on
5 that? I think that for teenagers and
6 adolescents, they have the hardest or
7 the lack of opportunities and
8 services. They cannot reach out most
9 of the time. They may reach out to
10 us because they understand we
11 maintain confidentiality and will not
12 report them. But we can't help them
13 any further than that because most of
14 the time they cannot turn to anyone.
15 And if they do turn to their advisors
16 in school and teachers, we may get a
17 call and may be able to come to the
18 school and provide a service. But I
19 believe that's an area that really
20 needs a lot of focus and a lot of
21 attention in trying to provide teens
22 and adolescents with support systems.

23 MR. CAFARDI:

24 Thank you. Thank you
25 both very much. Before we go on to