



**OFFICE OF SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE-ELECT
STEVEN BELLONE**

***** NEWS RELEASE*****

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Bellone Lays Out Vision for Suffolk's Future in Inaugural Address
Vows to Make Government More Efficient

Steven Bellone today took the oath of office for his first term as Suffolk County's 8th Executive. During his inaugural speech, entitled "**Suffolk's Next Chapter: Efficiency, Opportunity and Diversity**," delivered before a full house of 450 people at the Van Nostrand Theatre at Suffolk County Community College's Brentwood campus, incoming Suffolk County Executive Steven Bellone laid out his vision to reform government and create more and better jobs for Suffolk residents.

Bellone used the opportunity to list his priorities: job creation, a county budget that is balanced fairly, and improving government through innovation and efficiency.

"There is no doubt that we are facing a challenging environment but it may be that this is the greatest fiscal crisis our County has ever faced," said duly elected Suffolk County Executive Bellone.

He noted that because Suffolk County must live within the New York State tax cap which he supports, it means that government must become more efficient. Bellone said, "It is because I believe in the power of government to do great things that I demand more of it. I will not tolerate waste and inefficiency. Some accept the notion that inefficiency is just a part of government. I challenge that premise."

Bellone discussed his growth agenda for Suffolk County, including the need to streamline the permitting process and build affordable housing, adding, "unless government in our region, at all levels, comes together to effectively address the issues inhibiting growth, these new businesses will face the same challenges that every other business on Long Island faces today."

Bellone also stressed his commitment to diversity, noting "we must be a more efficient county, we must be a county with more opportunity and we must be a more inclusive county. For those who are willing to work hard and are looking for a better life, regardless of where you came from - We want you in Suffolk County."

Congressman Steve Israel served as Master of Ceremonies. Additional speakers at the event included United States Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Tim Bishop. Retired Supreme Court Justice and former Suffolk County District Attorney Patrick Henry administered Bellone's Oath.

Also taking the oath of office in today's ceremony were Bellone's two Deputy County Executives: Regina Calcaterra and Jon Schneider.

Prayers were offered by Bishop Andy Lewter of Hollywood Baptist Church in Amityville, Rabbi Marc Gellman of Temple Beth Torah in Melville, Reverend Charles A. Coverdale of First Baptist Church of Riverhead and Amin Ur Ahman of the Islamic Association of Long Island.

A full text of incoming Suffolk County Executive Bellone's remarks, as prepared for delivery, is provided below.

December 30, 2011

Suffolk County Executive-Elect Steven Bellone
Inaugural Remarks
As prepared for delivery

Suffolk's Next Chapter: Efficiency, Opportunity and Diversity

Thank you and good afternoon to all of you.

Senator Schumer, Congressman Israel, Congressman Bishop, Senator Skelos and members of our State Delegation, District Attorney Spota, Comptroller Sawicki, Sheriff DeMarco, County Clerk Pascale, Treasurer Carpenter, Presiding Officer Lindsay, Minority Leader Kennedy and all of my Colleagues in County Government, my fellow Town Supervisors and all my colleagues in local government, Judge Henry, distinguished clergy, members of our law enforcement community, veterans, friends and family, thank you for joining me on this important day.

I particularly want to thank my wife Tracey, and my daughters Katie and Mollie for their love and support. There is nothing more important to me in this world than my family. I also want to thank my mother who along with my father sacrificed every day to give to me and my brother and sister. I was always proud of my father, a veteran, a police officer and a corrections officers and a good hardworking man. Although he never saw me hold elected office I have always tried to conduct myself in a way that would make him as proud of me as I was of him. Mom, I will continue to do that. Even though he is not with me today I am very happy that my Dad's two brothers, my Uncles Bob and Tom, both veterans of World War II, were able to be here.

Let me begin by thanking the residents of Suffolk County for entrusting me with this responsibility. The faith and confidence you have chosen to place in me is very humbling. When I think about how hard so many residents of our County work to make ends meet, I know that those of us who work in the public trust are going to have to dig deep, roll up our sleeves, and come together – it is our shared obligation to work every bit as hard as the people of our County as we address the challenges ahead.

Many of you may be wondering why we are here on December 30th and not January 1st? The answer simply is we must watch every taxpayer dime we spend. If we can avoid authorizing overtime, we will. Today is not a holiday, today this building is open, today county employees are reporting to work. Today, we set the tone for Suffolk County government.

During the campaign, I saw so much of this beautiful county and talked to so many of our residents. In each community, there was a theme that resonated, an idea that everyone understood, and I said time and again all across the county: We have to do more with less.

Why? Because the alternative is that we're going to do less with less, and that is unacceptable to me. But let me be clear, we will be doing with less.

Over the next few weeks, we will undertake a detailed analysis of the budget to determine the deficit we will now face. Based on the conversations I have had with experts and the Budget Review Office, I am anticipating this will be a sobering number. There is no doubt that we are facing a challenging environment but it may be that this is the greatest fiscal crisis our County has ever faced.

How we choose to confront this challenge will offer us great opportunity.

On this day, I will make a promise to every resident of Suffolk County that in my administration, you will have a more efficient government. You will have a government that is constantly challenging assumptions and constantly asking itself, 'how can we deliver this service quicker, better, and more cost effectively.

It is because I believe in the power of government to do great things that I demand more of it. I will not tolerate waste and inefficiency. Some accept the notion that inefficiency is just a part of government. I challenge that premise.

When I see waste, I see lost opportunities. When I see waste, I see people who we are hurting. Think for a moment what it is that we do in county government. We ensure public safety, we maintain public health, we provide a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our society. When I see waste, I think of a child in need who we don't have the resources to help. How do we tell that child that waste is just part of the system?

How do I go to a struggling taxpayer, barely making ends meet and say, we need more of your money to subsidize inefficiency because we don't have the will to root it out.

So, believe me, when I tell you your County government will do more with less, we will.

We cannot confront this crisis simply by adding significant new burdens on taxpayers. I was a big supporter of Governor Cuomo's property tax cap which was enacted with the support of Senator Skelos and Speaker Silver and our entire state delegation. This tax cap is in place to impose fiscal discipline on governments that have spent too much money in the past. That is why I will never submit a budget nor support a budget that seeks to override that tax cap. Even in this crisis we will stay within the tax cap and make government more efficient.

Similarly, when it comes to creating jobs and providing opportunity, Suffolk County must be part of the solution.

During the campaign and through the transition, I have sat with dozens of members of the business community and I have listened closely to the things they have said about the need to improve our economy and speed up our permitting process.

I am tired of reading headlines about businesses packing up and moving out of Suffolk County for greener pastures in places like Colorado or the Carolinas. I am tired of reading headlines about young people leaving Long Island for other parts of the country. This is Suffolk County and this should not be happening here. We have too much going for us, too much to be proud of for Suffolk County to be a place that people are leaving. Working together, we need to put Suffolk County on a level playing field to compete.

We need to make sure agencies like the Health Department are fair regulators, not making it unduly difficult for businesses to get the permits they need to operate and hire people.

We need to invest in clean water infrastructure, to grow our economy AND protect our environment - something I understand firsthand from my work in Wyandanch.

A major obstacle to Suffolk County businesses' ability to compete is our lack of quality, affordable rental housing. Businesses take a holistic view of the region as they decide where to locate their facilities – affordable housing means we can keep our best and brightest and that we don't price businesses out of the market.

I believe that we have never effectively leveraged the assets we have as a region to create economic growth and opportunity. That is why I am so excited about the Accelerate Long Island initiative developed under the leadership of Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko and Long Island Association President Kevin Law. Under this initiative, our world class scientific, medical and research institutions - Brookhaven National Laboratory, Stony Brook University, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, North Shore LIJ and Hofstra University - are beginning to collaborate on the development of startup companies that can commercialize the groundbreaking research that is happening in our community.

Because of the incredible assets we have here our region has the capacity to organically grow new companies.

BUT unless government in our region, at all levels, comes together to effectively address the issues inhibiting growth, these new businesses will face the same challenges that every other business on Long Island faces today.

I want to partner with Accelerate Long Island to make our region a high-tech leader. I want to work with our towns to develop a more uniform and streamlined permitting process and to create a new Innovation Zoning category. Suffolk cannot retain and grow new businesses if we do not have low-cost and accessible places to put them. Working with towns, we can identify publicly owned parcels that are currently off tax rolls to create Innovation Zones, just like North Carolina's "Research Triangle." These new zones will have the lowest tax rates on businesses Long Island has ever seen, and working with Governor Cuomo, Senator Skelos and our entire Senate and Assembly

delegations we will make sure Suffolk Innovation Zones can compete with incentives offered anywhere in America.

We must be a more efficient county, we must be a county with more opportunity and we must be a more inclusive county.

For those who are willing to work hard and are looking for a better life, regardless of where you came from - We want you in Suffolk County.

We are a nation of immigrants and at some level, we all have our immigrant story to tell. For some Suffolk County residents like Congressman Bishop, that story goes all the way back to the 17th century. My story is more recent. My mother and my Aunts and Uncles used to tell me about their childhood, growing up in Washington Heights, the children of immigrants. They would tell me about how my mother along with her 8 brothers and sisters, my grandparents and two cats lived in a tiny two bedroom apartment, where the small dining room was converted into an additional bedroom. They would tell these stories to me and my cousins and it was always so difficult for us to imagine. So I had to find out for myself. One day, not long ago, we went with my mom back to the place where she grew up. She had not been back there in nearly 50 years. We knocked on the door to the old apartment and introduced ourselves. The Dominican family who was now living there welcomed us in. And sure enough, my mother and her brothers and sisters had been exaggerating. The place was even smaller than they had described.

As I reflected on that visit I was struck by the fact that while the surnames change, the story of America stays the same. The same apartment which provided a home for my Irish grandparents was now serving that same purpose for a new generation of Americans. The same desire for freedom and opportunity which brought my grandparents to this nation from Italy and Ireland, continues to bring immigrants from all over the world.

That same desire to make a better life for our family brought my parents, each the child of immigrants, to Suffolk County. Today, their son, the grandson of immigrants, stands before you, ready to assume the highest office in our county.

I will serve for a limited time as County Executive, but I will always be the grandson of immigrants. Accordingly, I will use my time in office to not only celebrate our diversity, but to make sure that we seize upon it as one of our greatest assets.

We are stronger together.

Yes, we have challenges, but I assure you, this is a county that knows how to face challenges.

Suffolk County was home to William Floyd, who risked his life by signing the Declaration of Independence and to the Setauket Spy Ring which reported vital information about the British Army to General Washington.

Suffolk County sent thousands of men to fight in the Civil War and Teddy Roosevelt returned to Montauk with his Rough Riders at the close of the Spanish American War.

Along the Route 110 corridor and in factories throughout our region, we provided many of the critical tools to win World War II, the Cold War and put a man on the moon.

Recently, a son of Suffolk County, Navy SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy was the first Medal of Honor recipient since the Vietnam War for bravery and selflessness, exposing himself to enemy fire to try to save members of his SEAL team.

That is our collective history. That is what we must live up to.

We face challenges, we work together and we do great things.

Starting on January 1st, I ask you to join me. To my fellow Suffolk County employees, work with me to reform our government, to the business community, work with me to create jobs and put people back to work and to the residents of Suffolk County, stay active and hold this government accountable. Believe in our ability to make things better so our children and grandchildren can have the great communities they deserve. Together, we will add an exciting new chapter in Suffolk County's storied history.

Thank you very much. And God bless.

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