



Suffolk County Legislature

OFFICE OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Legislator Calarco Passes Open-Data Legislation *Improves Transparency and Accountability*

Riverhead, NY - At today's General Session, Suffolk County Majority Leader Rob Calarco's bill, IR 1717-2014, "Directing the Department of Information Technology to Develop Policy and Program to Facilitate Opening Data to the Public," passed unanimously (18-0).

The bill, which directs the Department of Information Technology and a committee of nine other members to develop a policy within 120 days, strives to make existing data from Suffolk County departments open to the public via a website or web portal. The data made available would be nonproprietary and would not reveal private information.

"Suffolk County departments serve 1.5 million residents, and during their course of business generate a lot of data," stated Legislator Calarco. "That data generated should be free and open to the public."

While the bill does not specify the types of data that should be made immediately available, Legislator Calarco has spent the last six months meeting with various departments to see the types of data that have been generated but are not yet posted on the Suffolk County website. "Data relating to water quality, matters of public health and public safety are all available but not easily accessible. This bill will make it easier to see what your Suffolk County

government is doing for you," said Legislator Calarco. "The policy brings us in line with a policy already adopted by NYS, which has put an emphasis on open data. With ever increasing use of technology an Open Data Policy will help increase public participation. Making information available will benefit researchers, students and the general public at large, which in the end will help make Suffolk government more effective," he said.

"Open access to data not only leads to better government accessibility but also leads to economic development," said Legislator Calarco. "Government needs to be a partner in innovation. It has been proven that when residents have access to data it spurs ingenuity."

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