

**Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci**  
**New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision**  
**Hispanic Heritage Month**  
**Central Office - Albany, New York**  
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New York State is the State of Opportunity.

The quote on the Statute of Liberty, which comes from the Emma Lazarus sonnet, New Colossus, is truly inspiring.

“Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

How many millions of immigrants have arrived in this country and been greeted by such a powerful symbol, the Statute of Liberty, and contemplated those very powerful words.

We are very fortunate to be living in this country, and we are very fortunate to be living in New York State, where so many different races and ethnicities from all over the world come together to become part of one tapestry. And we all benefit by the diversity that surrounds us.

I do not understand why elsewhere in this country the politics of exclusion and the politics of vehement opposition to immigration seem to thrive.

The reality is that every single one of us, whether we are first generation or tenth generation, are here because we are descended from immigrants who were permitted to come to this country, build a life for themselves, their children and their children’s children, and live the American dream – a dream which says, if you work hard and obey the law, you can enjoy the fruits of your own labor, you can build a better life for yourself, and your children will have opportunities that would not have been possible anyplace else.

And make no mistake about it. The people who are coming to this country, or trying to come to this country, are willing to work very hard, they are willing to obey the law, and they are willing to follow the rules, in order to build a better life for themselves and their children. And all of us benefit when that happens.

Today we are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, and this year's theme is: "Hispanics: A legacy of history, a present of action and a future of success."

As the proclamation has noted, during this annual observance, we welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to our flourishing Hispanic Communities, and the traditions, history and heritage of their homeland countries.

And as part of our annual observance, we always select a keynote speaker of Hispanic Heritage, who usually has a personal story to tell us of his or her journey in life.

When Governor Cuomo assumed office in 2011, one of the first criminal justice policy determinations he made was that the Division of Parole and the Department of Correctional Services should merge to become one agency. His vision was that a single agency should be responsible for an offender and provide a seamless transition from reception, to incarceration, to release to supervision in the community, and finally, to completion of supervision.

There is no question in my mind that the merger is fulfilling the Governor's vision. But there also have been a number of secondary benefits that we have realized, and one of them is, that with the stroke of a pen, we became more diversified as an agency. As I have said on many occasions, as we become more diversified, we also become stronger and we are better able to address the many and diverse needs of those who are committed to our care and custody.

As a direct result of the merger, our very first Deputy Commissioner for Community Supervision was a Latina, Angie Jimenez.

And today, our keynote speaker, Assistant Commissioner Steven Claudio, is a Latino, who also came to us as part of the merger.

Steve began his career in the public safety field as a probation officer in New York City. In 1987, he became a parole officer with the New York State Division of Parole. Subsequently, he moved up the ranks as a senior parole officer, Bureau Chief, and Regional Director. During his tenure with the State Division of Parole, Steve served in various special assignments. He was a parole officer in the absconder search unit. He was assigned to the NYPD Bronx Warrant Squad from 1988-1994. And he was a senior parole officer in the victim impact unit and Board of Parole.

Assistant Commissioner Claudio was the recipient of the Smile Award in 2008, when the NYS Division of Parole Chairman recognized him for his coordination in a state-wide fund-raising effort to support an initiative to rebuild parks in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina.

Lastly, Steve has been intimately involved in new and exciting initiatives presently being tackled by the Community Supervision arm of the agency. These include the GIVE project, which stands for Gun Involved Violence Elimination. Steve has also played a key role in our project to ensure that all sex offenders being released to the community are placed in residences away from schools and in compliance with the Sexual Assault Reform Act.

I have worked closely with Steve for the past year and I found that he is not only professional, conscientious, knowledgeable, thoughtful and thorough, but with a soft-spoken and pleasant demeanor, he has proven himself to be both a gentleman and a real team player who gets results.

Ladies and gentleman, our keynote speaker, Assistant Commissioner Steve Claudio.