



JEFF BACHNER

Poultry on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

6 New York City is known for its authentic and great mom-and-pop stores, so we want to help preserve that.”

— Photographer and author Karla Murray, who documents shops with husband James

The neighborhood didn't feel the same anymore. It lost its character.”

First of three books

Chronicling these sites became the Murrays' passion project. By the time their first book "Store Front: The Disappearing Face of New York" came out in early 2009, about 30 percent of the establishments they had photographed were gone. Now that number has jumped to 80 percent, they said.

Last week, James and Karla Murray stopped at the Albanese Meat Market to check in on Moe, the owner, and his granddaugh-

ter Jennifer Prezioso. Prezioso has taken on the challenge of revitalizing a store started by her great-grandparents in 1923.

"I want to see this place thrive," said Prezioso, who is also learning the art and vocation of being a butcher. "I learn more every day. I want to keep it as authentic to what it has always been."

The butcher shop — once one of many on Elizabeth Street — is now surrounded by chic boutiques. Prezioso hopes to boost the shop's customer base with the kind of personalized service not available in grocery stores.

"Everything is cut in front of [the customer]," she said. "That's what my grandfather has done. That's what my great-grandmother did."

At their workshops, Karla and James said talking to owners is just as important — if not more — than snapping a photo of their storefront.

"You need to show the love and passion they have," said Karla. "What we are really trying to convey is that these places are important and you need to support them because then they can be around for the future."

DRIVER'S LICENSE BILL GETS PUSHBACK

BY YANCEY ROY
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ALBANY — With the 2019 session of the State Legislature in the homestretch, the new state Republican chairman came to the State Capitol to urge lawmakers not to OK driver's licenses for people in the country illegally.

Nick Langworthy said Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and lawmakers who support the proposal are out of touch with everyday New Yorkers who are "outraged by this."

His opposition comes as supporters of the driver's license legislation have been racking up endorsements from major special interests in Albany, including leading health-care unions, insurance companies and the largest business lobby. The legislative session is scheduled to end June 19 and the issue depends on the Democrat-led State Senate.

Citing 'federal rule of law'

"This is a topic that people are talking about, and they're outraged by it," said Langworthy, an Erie County resident who

launched a successful bid to take the reins of the state Republican Party from Ed Cox last month, a move reportedly supported by President Donald Trump.

Langworthy said support for the driver's license proposal shows "blatant disregard for taxpayers" and "blatant disregard for the federal rule of law."

He contended Cuomo has "made it a political priority" not because he thinks it is "good policy" but "to further his own political ambitions on the national left."

"The only way to confront fear-mongering is with facts and the facts are that this proposal — which would put New York in line with 12 other states, including the liberal bastion of Utah — will make our roads safer and help ensure that those behind the wheel are properly licensed and pay their fair share for licenses and insurance," Cuomo aide Jason Conwall replied in an email.

"Right now those costs are being shouldered by other New Yorkers, which include many of these officials' very own constituents," he wrote

Many factions favor change

While Langworthy is trying to block the legislation, a raft of high-profile Albany players have come out for it. On Monday, 1199/SEIU, the powerful healthcare workers' union, said the bill would "allow undocumented residents to come out of the shadows and become full participants in the state's economy by obtaining the driver's licenses needed to travel to and from work."

Previously, the New York State Business Council and some insurance trade groups also announced support.

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx) has said his chamber will approve the license bill before the legislative session ends. Its fate is uncertain in the Democrat-led Senate, where some are concerned about its impact in swing-district elections on Long Island and elsewhere. As of Monday, 24 of the 40 Democrats in the Senate had signed on as co-sponsors of the bill — none of them from Nassau or Suffolk counties.

Oxycodone doctor avoids jail time

BY JOHN RILEY
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An ex-psychiatrist from Suffolk County, accused of selling illegal oxycodone prescriptions in 2013 at the same time he made media appearances skewering celebrity doctors for turning their patients into addicts, avoided a prison term at his sentencing Monday in Manhattan federal court.

William Belfar, 55, of Huntington, who pleaded guilty in 2014 to selling prescriptions for \$1,000 apiece out of his Manhattan office to an informant and two FBI undercover agents, was put on probation for 5 years and ordered to perform 400 hours of community service.

Belfar also pleaded guilty this year to health care claims fraud in New Jersey involving an illegal telemedicine business, but U.S. District Judge Andrew Carter said leniency was merited because of mental health issues, efforts to cooperate with prosecutors in the federal case, and the effect of prison on his family.

"I'm so sorry for what I did, and I regret my behavior," Belfar told the judge in an unsteady voice. "... I recognize that I abused my



NEWSDAY / JOHN RILEY

Ex-psychiatrist William Belfar of Huntington aided prosecutors.

position as a physician."

At the time of the prescription sales — between 2011 and 2013 — Belfar allegedly told an informant, "[I]t is a very easy way to make money, but it's an easy way for me to go to jail, too."

The government also said Belfar appeared on two television shows in early 2013, at the same time he was selling prescriptions, complaining that doctors were behaving like drug dealers.

"This is a big business," he said in one interview. "On the street . . . each [oxycodone] pill is \$30. . . . Patients will pay a lot of money just to get these pills.

. . . The doctors . . . just shouldn't be doing it."

Before his arrest, according to court filings, Belfar held positions at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, Gracie Square Hospital in Manhattan, and Rye Hospital in Westchester County.

Belfar faced 37 to 46 months under advisory federal sentencing guidelines, but prosecutors said he should get credit for efforts that turned out to be unsuccessful to assist the government in pursuing other cases, which were partly responsible for delaying his sentencing.

In addition to losing his medical license, Belfar told the judge, he had suffered severe financial reverses, and only after he was ordered by Carter last year to get mental health counseling did he discover that he had problems.

"Even though I'm a psychiatrist I could not properly analyze the serious illness in myself," he said. "If it weren't for you, I would never have been given the proper diagnosis. . . . It is hard for me to believe the things I did."

As conditions of probation, Carter said Belfar would have to continue to receive outpatient mental health treatment and take prescribed medications.