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Inside ExploreLI

## TOP STORIES



Lori Loughlin leaves federal court in Boston last Wednesday.

GETTY IMAGES / PAUL MAROTTA

# Added charge for LI's Loughlin

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Federal prosecutors added money laundering to the list of accusations against actress Lori Loughlin, a Hauppauge native, her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, and 14 other prominent parents Tuesday in the college admissions bribery case, increasing the pressure on them to plead guilty as other parents have agreed to do.

Loughlin, who starred in the sitcom “Full House,” and Giannulli are among 33 wealthy parents accused of participating in a scheme that involved rigging college entrance exams and bribing coaches at top universities. The new charges come a day after “Desperate Housewives” actress Felicity Huffman, 12 other parents and a coach agreed to plead guilty.

The parents were arrested last month on a single charge of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. An indictment brought Tuesday adds a charge of money laundering conspiracy against the couple and the 14 other parents.

Attorneys for the parents charged in the indictment Tuesday accused prosecutors of “judge shopping” to get their case in front of a tough jurist. In a letter to the chief judge of Boston’s federal court, the lawyers said the parents shouldn’t be added to an indictment that has already been assigned to Judge Nathaniel Gorton.

U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling shot back, calling the letter “inappropriate” and a

“Hail Mary by people who know better.”

“What counsel fail to say — but of course mean — is that they want a different judge because they perceive Judge Gorton as imposing longer sentences in criminal cases than other judges in the district; if this matter had been drawn to a judge viewed as more favorable to the defense, counsel would not have sent the letter,” Lelling wrote.

The parents charged in the case are accused of paying an admissions consultant, Rick Singer, to cheat on their children’s college entrance exams and get their children admitted as athletic recruits at schools including Georgetown and Yale.

Loughlin and Giannulli are accused of paying \$500,000 in bribes to get their daughters into the University of Southern California as crew team recruits, even though neither of them played the sport.

They appeared in Boston federal court last week and were not asked to enter a plea.

Huffman, who starred in ABC’s “Desperate Housewives,” was accused of paying \$15,000 disguised as a charitable donation to have a proctor correct the answers on her daughter’s SAT. She and the 12 other parents agreed Monday to plead guilty to a single charge of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and honest services mail fraud.

Prosecutors say they will seek a prison sentence that’s on the low end of between four and 10 months for Huffman.

# PLASTIC

## A Suffolk bill clamps down on foam containers, too

BY DAVID M. SCHWARTZ  
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Suffolk County lawmakers passed bills Tuesday to crack down on the use of polystyrene and plastic straws to combat plastic pollution, spelling the end of days of getting a Styrofoam cup of coffee and plastic straw in a Slurpee.

Straws and stirrers would be by-request-only in sit-down restaurants and would have to be biodegradable — not plastic — in food establishments and self-service beverage stations starting Jan. 1 under a bill passed by the Suffolk Legislature. For consumers with a disability or medical condition, plastic straws would be available on request.

A separate bill that also passed would ban restaurants from using polystyrene foam takeout containers — commonly referred to under the brand name Styrofoam — and polystyrene

packaging “peanuts” starting next year as well.

“This is sweeping legislation to begin weeding out single-use plastics,” said Legis. Kara Hahn (D-Setauket), the lead sponsor of the bills.

The bills would have to be signed by County Executive Steve Bellone before they become law. County spokeswoman Marykate Guilfoyle said the administration is reviewing the legislation. Hahn said she believed he would sign them, citing the overwhelming support from lawmakers.

Legislators also passed a law that will ban the sale of single-use plastics at county parks and beaches, including plastic utensils, plates and cups. It would go into effect when current park vendor contracts are up.

The three bills passed the legislature without an opposing vote, although one lawmaker abstained from the proposed straw law because, he said,

# No tobacco sales

BY RICK BRAND  
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The Suffolk Legislature approved a local bill Tuesday that would bar pharmacies from selling tobacco products, with lawmakers saying tobacco sales run counter to the stores’ role in the protection of public health.

The bipartisan resolution was approved on a 16-1-1 vote, with Republicans Steve Flotteron opposed and Leslie Kennedy abstaining.

“Selling tobacco products is directly at odds with a pharmacy’s mission as a health-oriented business,” said Legis. William Spencer, a physician who sponsored the measure. He noted that the state pharmacy society backs the move and major chains like CVS have already adopted such policies

on their own.

Michael Seilback, an assistant national vice president of the American Lung Association, hailed the measure.

“Pharmacies are a vital part of the health care delivery . . . they shouldn’t be selling a product that kills 50 percent when used as directed.”

He said Massachusetts has a statewide tobacco pharmacy ban, as do Erie and Albany Counties, and the cities of Albany and New York.

Spencer said the measure will not only bar sales of cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and electronic tobacco liquids, but also vaping products popular with young people. He said the only exception will be products authorized by the state for nicotine replacement therapy.

The measure imposes a civil

# STRAW BAN APPROVED



Suffolk Legis. Kara Hahn pushes a ban on plastic straws during a meeting in Riverhead on Tuesday.

they're a necessity for parents of little kids going out to eat.

"I don't think it's giving all of us with little kids all the op-

tions we need to go out to eat without our kids spilling soda all over themselves," Legis. Rob Calarco (D-Patchogue) said.

Hahn responded that there are plenty of biodegradable options for straws — made out of paper, bamboo and other plant

material, and businesses are developing more to meet the demand as more municipalities pass laws.

"There are so many options out there that are biodegradable and compostable," Hahn said. "For far too long, we've been putting off" environmental legislation because of cost.

The bill does include a juice box exemption, meaning drinks that come with a prepackaged plastic straw attached would be allowed.

Legis. Kevin McCaffrey (R-Lindenhurst) said he had been skeptical of straw bans, but saw businesses adapt in places where they took place. He said one restaurant in his district is using all sustainable products.

While the goods cost more than the plastic and Styrofoam — McCaffrey said the restaurant owner said biodegradable straws cost 10 times more than plastic ones — it's worth it for environmental reasons. "We can all figure out a way to do it, if the effect on the environment is a good one," McCaffrey said.

The bill would exempt drive-through restaurants from the requirement that customers have

to ask for a straw, but the straws they provide would have to be biodegradable.

Environmentalists and legislators across the country have targeted plastic straws and other disposable plastics for littering beaches, polluting waterways, getting ingested by marine life and breaking down into tiny plastic pellets that make their way into the food chain.

Straws "are a growing emblem of plastic pollution," Jordan Christensen, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said at the meeting. She said alternatives include paper straws and bamboo straws.

A New York City study on polystyrene found it couldn't be recycled once it was used, she said.

"If you can't recycle it, the only thing we can do is ban it," Christensen said.

Andrew Fasoli, a spokesman for the American Chemistry Council, said a New York City study found it costs businesses twice as much for alternatives to polystyrene packages, which he called "a reliable, efficient and cost-effective package."

## for pharmacies

penalty of up to \$2,000 per violation, but only after a hearing before the county health commissioner. The bill will take effect 180 days after the measure is filed with the state secretary of state.

Flotteron said he opposed it because it "over-reaches what we should be doing."

In a bare 10-vote majority, the legislature also approved County Executive Steve Bellone's proposal to create a charitable tax fund as a way to avoid President Donald Trump's restrictions on state and local tax deductions. Bellone's proposal is similar to one put forward by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, but the IRS has already indicated such a plan would not be acceptable.

Republicans failed to table the measure, but in the final vote, Republicans and Demo-

cratic Legis. Al Krupski abstained, while GOP Legis. Kevin McCaffrey and freshman Rudolph Sunderman were out of the room for the vote. Krupski said he voted against the proposal because Bellone aides could not provide estimates of what a taxpayer could save.

Earlier, Alexis Weik, Islip tax receiver and head of the tax receiver association, said the proposal would cost towns hundreds of thousands of dollars to change their computer systems and would direct them to do things not now permitted by law. "No portion of this legislation conforms to any of our laws," she said. Bellone aides promised to involve town officials in working out details of the charitable trust and would not seek to put it into effect until at least 2020.

In other action, the legisla-



Suffolk County legislators meet at the Maxine S. Postal Auditorium in Riverhead on Tuesday.

ture confirmed the five-year appointment of Frances Pierre, 55, of Deer Park as Suffolk's social services commissioner, the first African-American to run the \$301 million agency. He will earn \$171,000 a year.

The legislature also approved a procedural resolution taking the first step toward authorizing Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory (D-Coppage) to issue subpoenas for an

investigation to protect a county whistleblower who disclosed potentially improper government action. The resolution authorizes the hiring of an outside law firm to come up with documents and witness needed for the inquiry within 14 days, which will be brought back to lawmakers for another vote. Lawmakers didn't identify the whistleblower or the specifics of the case.

The lawmakers also approved a partial \$10 million rollback of controversial mortgage fees that bring in \$30 million a year that Bellone says is to help taxpayers cope with the federal limits on state and local tax deductions. Critics called it an election-year ploy because the cut only helps those involved in a home sale or refinancing and leave the bulk of the fee hike in place.

JAMES CARBONE

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