



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## UNITED AGAINST HATE: LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND RIVERDALE JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS RALLY AGAINST RECENT WAVE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 3, 2017

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*Senator Klein highlights the IDC's Religious Freedom Package aimed at combatting hate crimes*

**Bronx, NY** - As anti-Semitic hate crimes sweep the nation at alarming rates, **Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen** and **Congressman Eliot Engel**, in partnership with the Riverdale YM-YWHA, joined members of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and other community leaders to condemn the disturbing acts during a rally at the Riverdale YM-YWHA Thursday night.

On Monday four local Jewish institutions in the New York received bomb threats. There have now been nearly 100 such threats to Jewish community centers nationwide since the beginning of the year. The elected officials and Jewish community leaders spoke out against these reprehensible acts and called for unity.

“This country is one built on the principles of freedom and tolerance, and one where so many have come to escape religious persecution. To see acts of hate, acts of anti-Semitism on the rise is chilling, and this behavior must be condemned. We must always stand together against hate, and take action in whatever capacity we can to stop it and to spread the word

that it will never be tolerated in our communities,” **said Senator Klein.**

"An alarming uptick of anti-Semitic attacks has cast a shadow across the United States. Jewish Community Centers have received five mass wave bomb threats in recent weeks, including those in my district. We must take an uncompromising stand against this horrific hatred. Such attacks cannot—and will not—be swept under the rug. I am proud to join with my fellow elected officials to take a stand against anti-Semitism here and across our nation,” **said Congressman Eliot Engel.**

“We must stand strong and speak out loudly against anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination. Unfortunately, over the past year there has been a huge increase in incidents of anti-Semitism and discrimination in general. The recent presidential campaign, particularly the new president, has unleashed the worst in many people. The alliance between the new president and the far right and his appointment of Steve Bannon to a powerful position in the White House has, in essence, given permission to some of the worst people in our society to act upon their worst instincts. The shocking refusal of the president to even mention, in his remarks on the Holocaust, the fact that millions of Jews were its victims was a disgrace. I strongly condemn the rash of recent anti-Jewish bomb threats and other incidents of anti-Semitism. We must all unite and speak out loudly against all forms of discrimination including anti-Semitism but also the outrageous acts of this administration with its Muslim ban and the scapegoating of immigrants for the nation's problems,” **said Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz.**

“Anti-Semitic threats and acts of violence against the Jewish community are rising at alarming rates. Not only are Jewish community centers being threatened, but Jewish cemeteries throughout the country are being desecrated,” **said Council Member Andrew Cohen.** “I condemn these hateful acts and ask that law enforcement provide additional security at JCC’s and synagogues. America’s strength is our diversity and all Americans must unite

together against such hatred.”

“We gather together this evening to say ‘No More!’ This moment is not just a Jewish moment. This is a universal moment, in which we are challenged to stand united against hatred and discrimination. This is an opportunity to work for our shared values of safety, freedom, dignity, and equal rights for all. As we gather to say no to hate, we say yes to all the things that make us a strong community. We say yes to programs like our Interfaith Teen Initiative, which brings together Jewish, Muslim and Christian teens to learn, to socialize and to volunteer in service to our community. We say yes to our Early Childhood Center which provides joyful, quality education, inspired by Jewish values, to children of all faiths and backgrounds. We say yes to our senior center, which serves as the social bedrock to hundreds of seniors from every race and ethnicity under the sun. And, most of all, we say yes to celebrating diversity, to building community, and to enriching the lives of every individual,” **said Deann Forman, CEO of Riverdale YM-YWHA.**

“We are grateful to Senator Klein and our elected representatives for supporting the Jewish community and all victims of senseless hatred. There is no better response than to stand together as a community and show that no bomb threat, no vandalism, no hatred can stop our support of one another. We all belong here,” **said Steven Exler, Senior Rabbi, Hebrew Institute of Riverdale - The Bayit.**

“It is reassuring for our community to hear and see the staunch support and clear responses of our government and law enforcement, to recent threats to Jews and acts of desecration to Jewish property. And, to know that the United States and its citizens will not tolerate anti-Semitism,” **said Rabbi Shmuel Zuckerman of Young Israel of Pelham Parkway Jewish Center, and Lead Jewish Chaplain at Calvary Hospital.**

“While we must remain vigilant at this time, we should remember that these threats are being done by a sordid few and we must not allow these incidents to affect the positive

attitude and good nature of our community,” said **Dan Padernacht, Chairman of Community Board #8.**

“When Jewish Community Centers receive bomb threats, when cemeteries are desecrated, and when individuals are targeted because they are Jewish, we have a duty to speak out. When the Muslim, Latino, and LGBTQ communities and many others are scared, we have a duty to speak out. And along with our words, we have a duty to act-to support, to stand up, and to love,” said **Rabbi Barry Dov Katz, Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale.**

Senator Klein highlighted the Independent Democratic Conference’s Religious Freedom Package, a collection of legislation to combat hate crimes. Some of the measures aim to stop hateful graffiti, vandalism in houses of worship, cemetery desecration and discrimination against religious attire.