



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senator Klein, Council Member Andrew Cohen and the Fieldston Property Homeowners Association host an Anti-Hate Forum

JEFFREY D. KLEIN October 16, 2017

| ISSUE: **HATE CRIME, ANTI-HATE, RELIGION, COMMUNITY**

Local school, religious and community leaders also join to discuss religious tolerance and acceptance in the wake of a recent hate-crime in Fieldston

Bronx, NY - Senator Jeff Klein, Council Member Andrew Cohen and the Fieldston Property Homeowners Association hosted an Anti-Hate Forum Monday night at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School.

An eight-member panel comprised of the elected officials, educational, religious and community leaders led a discussion on religious tolerance and acceptance to our youth in light of a recent anti-Semitic hate crime in Fieldston where a teen was arrested for the incident.

“Any act of anti-Semitism is appalling and inexcusable, but when perpetrated by minors it is our duty to educate our youth on religious acceptance and tolerance. What happened in Fieldston last month is heartbreaking on many fronts. On Monday night we sent a message that hate will not be tolerated, and it’s my hope this educational forum will help deter any future hate crimes against this community,” **said Senator Jeff Klein.**

"We cannot tolerate any act of hatred in our community," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**. "It is important that we come together to take a strong stand against hatred, especially in light of the act of anti-Semitism that occurred last month in Fieldston. I thank all the community leaders who participated to educate our youth on kindness and tolerance."

"With all the inflammatory rhetoric out there today, it is critically important for communities to come together and stand united against hate. I'm proud to join my colleagues in government and members of the community in saying we reject bigotry and intolerance. We are all Americans, united as one," said **Congressman Eliot Engel**.

In addition to stressing the importance of religious acceptance, Senator Klein on Monday night highlighted legislation aimed at combatting hate crimes. Following the chilling rash of bomb threats to Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) last winter, Senator Klein and the Independent Democratic Conference introduced the Religious Freedom Package. One of the pieces of IDC legislation in the package addresses the Fieldston hate crime. The bill would create a specified offense for graffiti making as a hate crime. Currently graffiti vandalism is a misdemeanor, but the bill would elevate it to a felony if it's made to target a person's race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation.