



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## With Hate Crimes on the Rise, Kennedy Secures \$100,000 for Buffalo Jewish Federation's Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund for Security Upgrades & Crisis Training

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY April 17, 2019



*According to the FBI, In 2017 There Were Nearly 1,750 Victims of Religious Bias Hate Crimes Reported, Over 58% Were Anti-Semitic in Nature*

*Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund Was Created in Fall of 2018 After Massacre at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue, Aiming to Better Protect and Prepare Local Religious Institutions*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined leadership of the Buffalo Jewish Federation to announce the inclusion of \$100,000 in the New York State budget for the

Federation's Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund, a program that was created in the aftermath of the Tree of Life massacre last fall, which left eleven members of Pittsburgh's Jewish community dead. The fund, which has already raised over \$110,000, is focused on security upgrades and training for local synagogues and other Jewish institutions such as Hillel. Additionally, in the wake of the horrific massacre of 50 Muslim worshipers in Christchurch, New Zealand, the Federation plans to include the local Muslim community in its active shooter trainings that will be offered. The Buffalo Jewish Community has close to 20 agencies, synagogues, and other organizations.

"Western New York is built on diversity, and we embrace citizens of all faiths, races, and beliefs," said **Senator Kennedy**. "In the past year, we have seen heinous hate crimes committed against members of the Jewish community in Pittsburgh, the Muslim community in New Zealand, and all across our country. We wholly reject this ideology of hatred, and today we are demonstrating our commitment to protecting the right of all New Yorkers to peacefully express their religious beliefs. I applaud the Buffalo Jewish Federation for proactively working to secure the local Jewish community and for their eagerness to include Western New York's Muslim community in their efforts."

"Following the recent attack in Pittsburgh, and the rise of anti-semitism both inside and outside of this country, our Jewish community has prioritized increasing security to ensure the safety of our institutions and anybody who visits them," said **Leslie Shuman Kramer**, President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation. "We are grateful to Senator Kennedy for his unwavering support both for our community and this endeavor, and together with over a hundred thousand dollars raised within our community since December, this grant will allow us to get the professional guidance and security systems we deem are necessary."

"We so appreciate living in our region of good neighbors," said **Rabbi Jonathan Freirich**, Convener of the Buffalo Board of Rabbis & Cantors. "Our elected officials, especially Senator

Kennedy, remind us every day of the value of a caring community. We cannot offer enough thanks for the advocacy that leads us all to be more secure in our places of gathering.”

According to the most recent data available from the FBI, in 2017 there were 1,749 victims of anti-religious hate crimes, of which 58.1% were victims of crimes motivated by anti-Jewish bias. That is an increase from 1,584 anti-religious hate crimes in 2016, of which 54.4% were anti-Jewish. Kennedy announced the funding at Congregation Beth Abraham, located in Buffalo’s Elmwood Village. The congregation, which is open to the community, has been active since 1922 and welcome hundreds through its doors each year.

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