



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

Felder Urges Governor: Fund Security in All Houses of Prayer

SIMCHA FELDER May 12, 2019

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Senator Felder, this week, urged Governor Cuomo to finance the installation of panic buttons at all Houses of Prayer (Churches, Mosques and Synagogues) utilizing budgetary funding from the New York State Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes program.

Violence against our Houses of Prayer has tragically become a regular occurrence throughout our nation and across the world. Over the last several weeks, we have witnessed lethal violence at a Mosque in New Zealand, a Church in Sri Lanka and a Synagogue in California. Many congregations cannot afford to implement the necessary safety measures leaving many New Yorkers at risk in their place of worship.

“This year’s State budget judiciously allocates \$25 million in funding for security improvements to nonpublic schools, day cares, cultural museums and summer camps due to their heightened risk of hate crimes (Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes program). In the case of an attack, something as simple as strategically placed panic buttons in a House of Prayer could make the difference between a massacre and a miracle,” said Senator Felder.

Unfortunately, in a violent attack, casualty tolls increase with every passing minute. A panic button is a cost-effective way to save precious moments by immediately alerting emergency response teams. A 2016 study of the Orlando shooting found that one-third of the victims

could have lived had they received basic EMS care within 10 minutes.

“A congregation in a House of Prayer is a frighteningly easy target. Our hope is to deter these hateful, violent attacks in the first place, but it is clear that New Yorkers must be prepared and protected right now. An immediate response system that is easily activated in a chaotic situation, will save lives,” stated Senator Felder.