



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Legislation co-sponsored by Addabbo to require students to learn significance of symbols of hate approved by Senate Education Committee

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. January 23, 2020

| ISSUE: **HATE CRIMES, HATE SYMBOLS, STUDENTS, EDUCATION COMMITTEE, ADDABBO**

NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently voted with his colleagues on the Senate Education Committee to approve legislation (S.6648) that will require New York State students in grades six through 12 to be taught about the significance of two well-known symbols of hatred: the swastika and the noose.

“In Queens and elsewhere, we are seeing an alarming increase in hate crimes, including acts of anti-Semitism that are threatening to shred the fabric of our communities,” said Addabbo, a long-time member of the Education Committee. “Swastikas and other hateful graffiti were recently scrawled all over a motor vehicle in Fresh Meadows, which follows on the heels of other highly disturbing incidents of physical violence, swastikas being placed on sidewalks and playgrounds, and racist epithets being painted on fences and buildings.”

One way to combat these devastating crimes, Addabbo believes, is to teach young people about symbols of hate, their significance, and how their use can be hurtful to people of different religions, races and cultures. “We’ve had instances where children have drawn swastikas and other harmful symbols at schools and playgrounds, not fully realizing the impact of their actions,” he said. “Hopefully, appropriate education in our schools will help to

nip hateful incidents like these in the bud, and encourage all of our children to treat other people with respect and understanding. After all, no one is born knowing how to hate; it is learned behavior.”

Under the legislation, all public, non-public, and charter schools will be required to incorporate instruction about symbols of hate, specifically the swastika and the noose, into their sixth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculums. The State Board of Regents will determine how to include this instruction in existing courses of study, and the State Education Department will develop rules and regulations to implement the Regents recommendations.

“Nationwide, we are hearing more and more reports of anti-Semitic violence and vandalism, as well as other crimes that are symbolic of the destructive platform of hatred and discrimination against people because of their religion or color,” Addabbo said. “People of the Jewish faith know very well the devastating story behind the swastika symbol and the Nazi regime, and people of color also recognize the significance of the noose in historic and horrific racial lynchings. Our children need to understand the pain and grief that others have endured in order to improve and help heal our communities as they grow into adults.”

According to New York Police Department data, Addabbo noted, hate crime incidents in the city increased by 64 percent between 2018 and 2019. Arrests for hate crimes also increased during the same time period. Anti-Semitic incidents make up a majority of reported hate crimes in New York City. In 2019, the NYPD reported a 67 percent jump in reported hate crimes in the first quarter of the year, with anti-Semitic incidents increasing by 82 percent.

Now that the hate symbol education legislation has been approved by the Senate Education Committee, it will be considered for a vote by the full 63-member Senate. In the Assembly, the bill is under review by its respective Education Committee.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2019-S6648

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Requires instruction regarding symbols of hate to be incorporated into the curricula for grades six through twelve

August 09, 2019

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Todd Kaminsky**

Do you support this bill?

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