



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Rockaway electeds partner with Simon Wiesenthal Center to bring two anti-Semitism town halls to the peninsula

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. February 14, 2020

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As a way to help combat the rising incidents of Anti-Semitism across the city, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. and Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato are teaming with the Simon Wiesenthal Center to bring a pair of educational town halls to the Rockaways in the coming months that will discuss hate crimes today and what is being done to prevent them.

The first event in this two-part series will take place on Thursday, February 20, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the West End Temple, located at 147-02 Newport Avenue, Rockaway Park. The second one is in the process of being planned.

Attendees of the town hall will receive information and resources on what to do if they see a hate crime taking place, or are the victim of a hate crime.

Members of the Simon Wiesenthal Center will be on hand, as well as Michael Brovner, Deputy Chief of Gang Violence and Hate Crimes from the Queens District Attorney's office to explain how they are working to stop anti-Semitism in the borough. Victims of hate crimes will also be at the forum to discuss their experience and how it has impacted their lives.

"This is Queens – the World's Borough. We are the most diverse county in the nation and we will not tolerate anti-Semitism in our communities. Sadly, we are living in a climate where people feel emboldened to express intolerance and hate based purely on their own ignorance," Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said. "I am outraged by the rise in hate crimes that we have experienced in the last few years. The Queens District Attorney's Office has a bureau dedicated to prosecuting those who act on their hate and as your DA, know that I will do everything within my power to keep our residents safe. I want to applaud both Assemblywoman Amato and State Senator Addabbo, Jr. for being proactive and making this event happen with the Simon Wiesenthal Center. This is a vital step in eradicating hate through education."

Last year, Anti-Semitic graffiti was found scrawled on the walls of the Silver Gull Beach Club in Breezy Point. This incident sparked a partnership between the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the National Park Service and Ortega National Parks to combat Anti-Semitism and hate.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center wanted to extend their reach, and partnered with Senator Addabbo and Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato to bring this pair of events to the larger Rockaway community.

“In the wake of the Anti-Semitic attacks at both the Silver Gull Beach Club and in Belle Harbor this past fall, the Simon Wiesenthal Center is proud to partner with Senator Addabbo and Assemblymember Pheffer Amato on this critical series of forums, and commends their extraordinary dedication toward ensuring that our local communities are educated about the unfortunate hate around them and how together we can better work to more effectively combat it,” said Michael Cohen, Eastern Director, Simon Wiesenthal Center.

“Hate crimes are some of the most heinous crimes because the victims are targeted for their nationality, color of their skin, or their faith,” Addabbo said. “No one should have to live in fear because of where they come from, what they look like or how they worship. I believe one of the best ways to combat hate crimes, and specifically Anti-Semitism, is through education. I would like to thank Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato, the Simon Wiesenthal Center for bringing this town hall to the district, and the West End Temple for hosting. Together we can eliminate Anti-Semitism and hate crimes.”

“It’s so important that we stand up together against bigotry, intolerance, and anti-Semitism. As a community and state, we must continue to educate the public and our youth about what hate crimes are so that we can prevent future victims,” Pheffer Amato said. “I appreciate Senator Addabbo and the Simon Wiesenthal Center for working with my office to bring this critical event to our district, and of course I thank the West End temple for hosting.”

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP with Pheffer Amato’s office by calling 718-945-9550.