



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

## Senator Reichlin-Melnick delivers \$74,000 to local nonprofit to combat gun violence and protect domestic violence survivors

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK September 15, 2021



**NEW CITY, NY** - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick visited the Center for Safety and Change in New City on Tuesday afternoon to deliver a check for \$74,000 in support of the Center's legal program, which provides free legal services to victims of gender-based violence, as well as a new initiative to provide outreach and education to the Rockland County community on gun violence.

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*State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester) said, “Around the country, gun violence is on the rise. We have a duty to support the organizations that are working on the ground in our community to support victims and overcome gun violence. The Center for Safety and Change has been working with vulnerable populations in our community for over 40 years and is committed to justice and equality, and ending fear and oppression. It is an honor for me to present this check to support an incredible organization doing meaningful and needed work in our community.”*

Of the \$74,000 grant, \$50,000 will go towards community-based violence intervention programs and Hospital-based violence intervention programs that provide counseling, case management, and social services to individuals who are recovering from injuries resulting from violence or who witness violence. The \$24,000 balance will support legal services including advocacy, information & referrals, supportive counseling, crisis intervention, civil legal assistance in obtaining protection or restraining orders, and other legal advice and/or counsel.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick was first elected to the New York State Senate in November of 2020, and has worked diligently in his first term to find targeted legislative solutions to overcoming the gun violence epidemic. He has introduced and passed legislation to create a statewide gun violence research fund, and has introduced bills to put silent panic alarm alarms in schools to protect kids during active shooter situations and other emergencies, as well as legislation to give judges discretion to keep people accused of crimes that involve illegal firearms off the streets.

**Elizabeth Santiago, CEO at the Center for Safety & Change**, thanked Senator Reichlin-Melnick for delivering funding to the Center. “In thinking about domestic violence, we know the person in control is the perpetrator, not the victim, and 19% of domestic violence cases

involve a weapon. According to the Jackie Campbell study, we know that when a gun is present, the risk of homicide increases by 500%", Santiago said. "We look forward to providing legal services to victims, helping victims and their families recover from the trauma they have endured, and working closely with the community through focus groups to determine the best way to prevent gun-related violence."

The mission of the Center for Safety and Change is to develop strategies to end gender-based violence and provide shelter and supportive services that empower survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other crimes. The Center envisions a society in which all individuals can live with dignity and equality, free from fear, violence and oppression.

For more than 40 years, Center for Safety & Change has worked tirelessly with victims, survivors and their family members, offering life-saving and life-changing programs and services to thousands in Rockland and beyond. The Center operates an emergency shelter and remains a safe haven for thousands of children and families, and is the only victim-centered non-profit organization in Rockland, offering free and confidential life-changing programs and services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and other crimes.