



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein And Assemblyman Latimer Outraged By Vandalism At St. Joseph's Seminary In Westchester

JEFFREY D. KLEIN June 7, 2006

"We are outraged and appalled at this latest incident of religious vandalism in Westchester County. Sadly, this recent crime makes crystal clear the need to impose stiff penalties on the vandals who desecrate our houses of worship. The hateful messages callously scrawled on St. Joseph's walls are not just a crime against the Church, but a crime against all individuals who seek to practice religion freely.

"Bigotry and hatred have no place in any community and we will not stand idly by as our houses of worship and religious community centers are defaced by criminals and bigots. We urge the District Attorney to see that this outrageous crime is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and continue to urge our colleagues in the Legislature to pass our legislation strengthening penalties for theft or vandalism at a house of worship"

Following a series of incidents of theft and vandalism at area houses to worship during the 2005 holiday season, Senator Klein and Assemblyman Latimer introduced legislation to increase penalties for vandalism to or theft from a house of worship. The legislation

(S.6439/A.10386), which is being supported by the Anti-Defamation League, the Catholic Conference and the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, would elevate the crime of theft from or vandalism to a house of worship from a misdemeanor to a Class E felony, which carries a sentencing recommendation of up to 1 ¼ to 4 years in jail.