



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Sanders Hosts Successful Anti-Terror Attack & Mass Shooting Defense Training

JAMES SANDERS JR. July 14, 2016



Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) today hosted a historic event at Holy Unity Baptist Church in Jamaica, where top defense experts trained the public on how to protect themselves in the case of a terror attack or mass shooting. Dozens of community members attended the 4-hour event, which was held at Holy Unity Baptist Church in Jamaica.

Attendees learned how to identify a dangerous situation, the steps necessary to escape and the types of weapons and ammunition used in these attacks. It even included a live

interactive demonstration on how to disarm a gunman as a last resort. The training was intended to educate, prepare and organize the community in response to such public safety threats.

“Hopefully, this never happens to you, but if it does, you better have a plan,” Sanders said. “Most people don’t live because they are not prepared to live. They don’t think about it, and therefore they don’t know what to do.”

Sanders added, “Committed people who are serious, especially if they are trained, can absolutely take an attacker down. This information that we are bringing to you is not meant to scare you, but to do the opposite – to allow us to live. We live in an America that is awash with guns. There are more guns than people, and yet with all these guns, we feel less and less safe.”

There are more public mass shootings in the United States than in any other country in the world, according to a recent study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information. In June, a gunman opened fire in a gay nightclub in Orlando killing 50 people. It was the worst mass shooting in U. S. history, and since the alleged killer in that case reportedly pledged allegiance to the terrorist organization, ISIS, it is also one of more than a dozen successful attacks on U.S. soil linked to Islamic extremism since 9/11, according to published reports.

Avi Avramcheyiv, Founder and Chief Instructor of NY Self Defense Academy, who is also a former trained hand-to-hand combat instructor with the Israeli Defense Force, demonstrated how to disarm a shooter armed with an AK-47 or a handgun, only as a last resort. Using instructors and students from his school armed with fake weapons as props,

Avramcheyiv explained how to escape when faced with different scenarios, whether the shooter was targeting the victim from the front, side or behind.

In one staged example, where a faux shooter was pointing a weapon down at Avramcheyiv, he wrapped his arms tightly around the bottom of the attacker's leg, pulled him to ground, then struck him first in the groin, then abdomen, then face, finally disarming him.

Eldar Ben-Yosef, a Senior Security Consultant with International Security Associates, Inc., a Manhattan-based company that specializes in the analysis and execution of high-threat level security programs and investigative services, advised the crowd to be always be aware of their surroundings and to be proactive when it comes to prevention, advising "If you see something, say something."

"It doesn't matter what religion you are or what color you are, everyone is a potential target," Ben-Yosef said. "It's everybody's problem. In movie theaters, shopping malls, churches, synagogues, community centers – something could happen. The attackers not only hate, they have a disease. If you get up in the morning ready to kill people and assuming that you are going to die doing it, you have to have mental sickness."

As part of his presentation, Ben-Yosef showed a video created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which highlighted a three-step method for how to handle an active shooter attack. The instructions were:

**Run** – If you can get out, do so. Always try to escape or evacuate even if others insist on staying behind. Getting out of harm's way is the top priority. Call 911 when you are safe.

**Hide** – If you can't get out, find a place to hide. Be quick and quiet. Secure your hiding place the best way you can. Turn off the lights, lock the doors, and turn off the ringer on your cell phone. If you can't find a safe room or closet, try to hide behind large objects.

**Fight** – As a **LAST resort** and **ONLY** if your **life is in danger**, fight back with aggression. Use improvised weapons to disarm the shooter. Commit to taking the shooter down, no matter what.

Police Officer Christopher Mazzey from the NYPD's Counterterrorism Division SHIELD Unit, described a similar set of survival steps:

**Avoid and Evacuate** - Stay away from stairwells and exterior doors. Keep your hands open and above your head when the police arrive.

**Barricade and Hide** - Seek shelter. Lock and blockade the door. Remain silent. Turn off cell phones.

**Confront and Attack** - Act quickly and aggressively. Use improvised weapons. Act collectively.

Mazzey also noted that active shooter events can occur anywhere. They usually last between 7 and 11 minutes and in 97 percent of cases the perpetrators are male. He explained that the overall way to prevent such a situation from occurring in the first place is to become a hard target through vigilance, situational awareness and other security measures.

When involved in an active shooter event, call the police when it is safe to do so and be prepared to provide the following information: your name, location, the number of shooters, the direction they are traveling, a description of their physical appearance, the number and location of the injured and if there are any suspicious devices in the area.

Senator Sanders held a similar defense training last year which focused on the faith-based

community and was prompted by a mass shooting at a church in South Carolina. Due to the tremendous community response to Sanders initial training and the fact that these mass shootings and terror attacks continue to occur, the event was expanded this year to include the general public.