



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## SENATOR HOYLMAN HOSTS FILM SCREENING AND TOWN HALL ON HATE CRIMES, THE “ALT-RIGHT” & WHITE NATIONALISM

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL January 31, 2017



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NEW YORK – Last night, State Senator Brad Hoylman (D, WF-Manhattan) hosted a free film screening of Hate in America: Stories From the Files of the Southern Poverty Law Center and a panel discussion at the SVA Theatre in Chelsea about the growing influence of the white nationalist, Alternative Right (Alt-Right) under White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon, the recent rise in hate crimes since the election of Donald Trump, and ways New Yorkers can fight back.

A joint production between NBC, Investigation Discovery, and SPLC, Hate in America follows Emmy award-winning journalist Tony Harris as he investigates hate violence around the country, sitting down with victims, law enforcement agents, and a former white supremacist to uncover the motivations behind these attacks. Following the screening, Senator Hoylman moderated an expert panel including Hate in America Producer and Director Rebecca Teitel; Director of Center on Extremism at the Anti-Defamation League Oren Segal; and Intelligence Project Director for the Southern Poverty Law Center Heidi Beirich.

The panel discussed the ascendancy of white nationalist groups, the recent spike in hate crimes across the nation, the history and meaning of the term Alt-Right, as well as the prospects for further acts of hate and civil rights enforcement under the current administration. Coming on the heels of the Trump Administration's executive order banning immigrants and refugees from seven majority Muslim countries from entering the United States, the group also focused on the growing role of Stephen Bannon, former Executive Chair of the Alt-Right platform Breitbart News and current White House Chief Strategist.

**State Senator Brad Hoylman, Ranking Member on the Senate Judiciary Committee** said: "Statistics from the NYPD show a 23% increase in reported hate crimes throughout the five boroughs in 2016. To understand how we got here we need only look to the Oval Office and the man who

works right down the hall from it, Steve Bannon. As Executive Chair of Breitbart News, Bannon proudly declared ‘we’re the platform for the Alt-Right,’ and sought to use the outlet to spread a message of intolerance towards Muslims, Jews, and multiculturalism, while extolling the virtues of white nationalism and white supremacy.”

“Now, in the wake of Donald Trump’s ascendance,” **Hoylman continued**, “Bannon and his ideology of intolerance have been empowered to shape public policy as we saw just last week with the Administration’s Muslim ban. This town hall was an opportunity to shine a light on the growing influence of the Alt-Right and start a national conversation on how we can work together to fight back against Steve Bannon and his fellow acolytes of hate.”

Also in attendance at the event was New York City Public Advocate Letitia James who spoke to the audience about New York City’s efforts to push back on the prejudice and xenophobia emanating from the Trump Administration.

To coincide with the event **Hoylman released an updated version of his 2013 report** on the implementation and enforcement of New York’s Hate Crimes Law. The original report, New York’s Hate Crimes Law: An Assessment, presented the results of a legislative forum that led New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli to conduct an audit of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The updated report provides current statistics on hate crime incidents and assesses law enforcement agencies’ effectiveness in recording, monitoring, and reporting such occurrences.

“It’s difficult to come back to this film so many years later,” said **Rebecca Teitel, Director and Producer of Hate in America**. “The ending, seemingly hopeful at the time, has become more poignant in recent months as we’ve seen the number of reported hate crimes increase across the country. The conversation today is very different from the one we had when this was

first released -- and much more urgent."

**Oren Segal, Director of Center on Extremism at Anti-Defamation League** said: "While threats targeting Jews, Muslims, African-Americans, the LGBT community and others are not a new phenomenon, technology allows hate groups and their often far-flung & anonymous supporters to spread fear and terrorize communities more quickly and with far greater geographic reach than ever before. It is important to keep in mind, most extremists are unaffiliated with organized groups, and the internet has enabled isolated extremists to become more active, allowing more of them to become involved in various virtual campaigns – weaponizing social media to harass their perceived enemies. Unfortunately, I expect to see more widespread harassment and attacks in the future as the techniques are shared and further embraced by extremist from across the ideological spectrum."

**Heidi Beirich, Intelligence Project Director, Southern Poverty Law Center** said: "What I find most striking about this film is that at the end I say 'these people' want to turn back the tide of changing demographics,' yet now we have someone in the White House has those views. Steve Bannon is the worst offender in the administration and thanks to his position of influence the Radical Right is growing. It's a real effort to stymie the move of our country away from whiteness and undo the Civil Rights Movement. In the year 2000 there were 602 hate groups; we are now at about 1,000."