



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Latimer

## **Latimer Introduces Hate Crime Legislation for Bomb Threats to Community Centers with Religious Affiliation**

Joseph Glazer

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For More Information: Joseph A, Glazer, Dir. Of Comm - 518-45-2031 (or reply to this e-mail)

Latimer Introduces Hate Crime Legislation for Bomb Threats to Community Centers with Religious Affiliation

With the sudden rise of bomb threats against Jewish Community Centers across the nation, including several targeting centers in Westchester, State Senator George Latimer (D-Westchester) is introducing legislation to make those phone calls a hate crime.

“These calls put families, employees and public servants in fear and harm’s way, targeting people simply because there is a religion named in the places they meet,

study, relax and congregate. Targeting something simply because it has a religion in its name and mission is really the definition of hate,” Senator Latimer said.

Under existing law, certain crimes, if perpetrated specifically because of beliefs regarding race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation, can be prosecuted as “Hate Crimes”. Although many public places are currently covered by the law, community centers with religious affiliation are not included.

By prosecuting these charges as hate crimes, the punishment is made more severe. For these types of bomb threats, the charges would be increased to a hate crime felony.

Senator Latimer added, “Our officers and prosecutors need to have the appropriate tools to deal with these terrible crimes. By ensuring these bomb threats can be prosecuted as hate crime felonies, those who commit these acts will face the proper punishment.”

If enacted, the law would not only apply to Jewish Community Centers, but to all community centers with religious affiliation.

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Joseph A. Glazer Director of Communications Office of Senator George Latimer 518-455-2039