



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator Sanders' Statement on DOJ Labeling NYC as "Anarchist Jurisdiction"

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The Department of Justice has identified New York City as an “anarchist jurisdiction,” meaning that according to the agency, we permit violence and destruction, which is just a ridiculous and untrue statement. It is just another way President Trump is trying to starve localities whose leadership has different opinions than his own. He may have been born in Queens but every day he puts more distance between himself and what it means to be a true New Yorker. US Attorney General William Barr approved the designation.

“It is my hope that the cities identified by the Department of Justice today will reverse course and become serious about performing the basic function of government and start protecting their own citizens,” Barr said.

It is such a backwards statement. Here in New York, the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, it was our government’s leadership that helped us flatten the curve and set the standard for other states. We did not panic. We put on our masks and remained resolute and because of our actions, the numbers dropped to the lowest in the country. That could not be accomplished in an anarchist society. Anarchy is defined as “a state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority.”

Also receiving this dubious distinction were Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. The reasons given by the DOJ for New York’s addition to the list were increased shootings, cuts to the NYPD budget and the rejection of law enforcement support by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio. Following the death of George Floyd on May 25 at the hands of four Minneapolis police officers New York refused to "accept offers of Federal law enforcement assistance."

Other than trying to soil the image of our beloved city and withholding federal money, legally the “anarchist” label does not mean very much. It is not as though convicted criminals will get a lighter sentence because they live in an “anarchist jurisdiction.”

Always tough, New Yorkers have taken to social media to blast the city’s new anarchist label, posting pictures of every day peaceful New York life and activities and slamming the President for his unrealistic characterization.

After the death of George Floyd, New Yorkers like many other people around the

world, came together to call for justice and most of the protests were peaceful. You cannot take the actions of a few people who stirred up isolated episodes of violence at these events and label an entire city as being the same.

The list of jurisdictions is updated periodically in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the director of the Office of Management and Budget. I hope they come to their senses soon.