

SENATOR PARKER TELLS MTA NOT TO BE A PLATFORM FOR HATE

For Immediate Release: January 9, 2012

(Brooklyn, NY) Today, Senator Kevin Parker strongly urged the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to cease displaying anti-Muslim hate advertisements on their properties. In a letter to Acting Chairman Fernando Ferrer, Senator Parker presented the MTA with a legal basis for preventing the MTA from being used as a platform for hate. The Senator also requested the MTA follow the lead of other mass transit systems such as the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), which have adopted advertising carriage rules that allow them to deny the use of their property as a platform for hate speech and incitements to violence. “I take this step in asking Chairman Ferrer and the MTA to cease being a platform for hate because, as a legislator with a large number of Muslim constituents, I am concerned that the rhetoric of hate could lead to increased targeting of Muslim New Yorkers,” said Senator Parker.

The issue arose because of a series of ads by the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI), the most recent of which shows the World Trade Center towers burning with a partial verse from the Quran that implies that all Muslims attacked America. When vitriolic rhetoric increases, it is not surprising that Muslims and those who appear to be Muslim are targeted for violence. In the past two months alone, elderly Muslim men in New York City were savagely attacked in two separate incidents, and in a particularly horrifying incident, a man whose attacker believed he “appeared to be Muslim” was pushed off a subway platform to his death.

“It is unacceptable for the MTA to allow its space to be used in promoting hate, particularly when the MTA can legally choose not to,” said Parker. “I urge the MTA to immediately adopt a viewpoint-neutral advertising policy and remove AFDI’s hate ads from its properties.”

About Senator Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He also represents a very large and diverse Muslim community. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.