

Local Leaders Denounce Antisemitism

Originally Published in [Times Hudson Valley Media](#)

Local and regional elected officials and faith leaders gathered in the City of Newburgh on Thursday, August 31 to express solidarity in the face of recent racism and antisemitism. Posters with aggressive antisemitic rhetoric were posted on telephone poles and signs in the city.

The poster featured an image of City of Newburgh Mayor Torrance Harvey who had met with several of Newburgh's landlords at his office who had requested to speak with him. The photo had been shared to Facebook by Harvey but was met with negative comments and thus was removed.

The posters in question began to appear during the week of August 24. No person or group at this time has claimed responsibility for the posters. According to Harvey, the City of Newburgh Police Department and the FBI are currently investigating the situation. Video footage of the incident is being reviewed along with other footage of hate crimes such as swastikas in front of City Hall.

"There is video footage of the swastika and of the postings," he said. "That's an ongoing investigation, that's all I can say about that. But if and when someone is identified or people are identified, I was assured yesterday that they will be held to the fullest extent of the law."

The poster read as follows: "This is a look inside how Newburgh's mayor plans on selling Newburgh to the Jews, help them push Blacks out, and in return they will help the mayor in his home town Poughkeepsie. We are Newburgh not them!"

Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson, Senator James Skoufis, Senator Rob Rolison, Assemblymember Chris Eachus, Assemblymember Karl Brabenec, Wendy Cedar, President of the Orange County Jewish Federation, Orange County Legislator Kevindaryán Luján, NAACP Newburgh Highland Falls Chapter President Ray Harvey and Vice President Kyle Conway, Councilman Bob Sklarz, Councilwoman Ramona Monteverde and other faith leaders gathered at Newburgh City Hall and held a press conference to speak and stand against the actions taken.

"We are here because of the hate rhetoric and the antisemitic rhetoric that has taken place in the City of Newburgh. And it stemmed from a meeting with landlords that I had,"

said Harvey. "I'm here to unify. I'm not here to divide. I'm here to look, learn and listen from everyone."

The conference also comes several days from when, on August 28, 1963, 60 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech which was a call for equality and freedom in America. The famous speech was delivered at the nation's capital during the Civil Rights Movement.

"There is no place in our political discourse or in our culture for anti-semitism and racism. Not in Newburgh, not in New York State, not anywhere in our great nation. Hate speech is wrong," said Jacobson. "There is simply no excuse for what has recently happened here, and what is happening elsewhere in this country."

"It's despicable and it's really unsettling that right here in our own backyard in the year 2023, we still see such antisemitism and anti black racism happening here in Orange County," said Skoufis.

"We're all here today to speak in unison across party lines as one voice and say, 'Not here. Not now. Not ever in Orange County. We won't tolerate it'."

"Torrance, to you, my friend and colleague, we're with you, were with each other all the time when these things happen," said Rolison.

"Anti-semitism, racism are a form of ignorance. That's what they are, people unknowing of what's going on," said Eachus. "I have the largest growing Jewish community in all of the United States. I will not stand for it. I will stand with these folks right here and do whatever it takes to wipe this out."

"I just want to mention that when you see an uptick in hate, the only real answer is to uptick in love to look out for each other, to add in goodness and kindness," said Rabbi Shmuel Serebryanski of Chabad of Eastern Orange County. "Any act that we can do of showing benevolence, showing friendship, showing care that is the greatest answer and that ultimately overcomes any ill feelings."

"As a representative of a portion of the Jewish community in Orange County, I want to thank the state and local representatives that are here today showing support for the Jewish community and against hatred in general. I also want to thank the faith leaders, from other faiths, who understand that we're all created in God's image," said Cedar.