

NEW YORK STATE SENATE
REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

ANTISEMITISM WORKING GROUP

2023 - 2024 REPORT



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1/5/00

 **CONFRONTING
ANTISEMITISM**

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INTRODUCTION:

New York State has the largest Jewish population in the United States and we have seen a dramatic rise in antisemitic hate crimes across the state. In an effort to address this, the New York State Senate Republican Conference announced the creation of an antisemitism working group in February, 2023. Senator Jack Martins was appointed to serve as the Chair of the working group, and Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Senator Joseph Griffo, Senator Peter Oberacker, and Senator Bill Weber were named as members.

The antisemitism working group held multiple meetings across the state with stakeholders, and convened two roundtable hearings, the first in Rockland County on Tuesday, September 19th and the second in Nassau County on Tuesday, September 26th.

During these roundtables, the members of the working group heard from individuals who have witnessed and experienced antisemitism who shared informative and alarming feedback. Stories about verbal and physical attacks drove home the urgent need to address this issue in New York.

After the horrific attacks on October 7th, the already high number of antisemitic hate crimes rose substantially. While many were still trying to comprehend the scale of the atrocity in Israel – the kidnapping, the rape, the torture, the murders– there was an explosion ripple effect of antisemitic and anti-Israeli sentiment emerging here in New York and throughout the nation.

According to recent data from the NYPD, in October 2023, hate crimes against Jewish people in New York City rose by 214 percent compared to October 2022, with 69 occurring in October 2023 compared to 22 in October 2022. In September 2023, 16 Jewish people had been targets of hate crimes, an unconscionable 331 percent increase in antisemitic hate crimes before Hamas began its evil and barbaric attack on Israel.

We saw pro-Hamas protesters calling for the death of Jews everywhere. Calls for “from the river to the sea” are calls for genocide. Yet, the open embrace of Hamas and this call were now openly being made, not just by the antisemites we sadly already knew of, but disturbingly also among college students, professors and other members of academia and elected officials. Even more disturbing, administrators at what have been long considered some of our most elite schools refused to condemn the antisemitism and the calls for the genocide of their Jewish students.

What have our children been taught? What has happened to our society?

Sadly, we have come a long way from the words of George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport Rhode Island on August 18, 1790: “May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.”

For decades, we said “never forget.” Have we forgotten?

¹<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/crime/nyc-anti-jewish-crimes-increase-whh2skmr>; <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/news/p00095/nypd-city-wide-crime-statistics-october-2023>

²<https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/news/p00093/nypd-citywide-crime-statistics-september-2023>

A LETTER FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

In the months before the horrific October 7th terrorist attacks in Gaza, the Senate Republican Antisemitism Working Group convened to address the alarming trend of Jewish hate crimes growing in New York State. Our goal was straightforward: to expose and examine the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment and hate crimes in our state, a state that was traditionally recognized as a beacon of tolerance. What we knew at that time was already unsettling. In 2022 alone, New York City saw 263 anti-semitic attacks, more than double the number of previous years and a figure that dramatically underscored what was a nationwide problem. Worse still, the trend was not raising eyebrows and few elected officials were speaking out.

So we forged ahead with our work and as late as September 26th, 2023 - just days before the attacks - we were bringing together various community and religious leaders, law enforcement experts, and elected officials from around New York to record their personal testimony and gather evidence. Their first-hand experience would help us raise awareness and be used to help us shape legislation to combat the scourge of antisemitism.

Then, October 7th happened and it became clear that the antisemitism we were investigating had a much broader and ugly reality: somehow Americans, and in particular some New Yorkers, had grown more tolerant of hate and hate crimes towards Jews and our Jewish communities. Of course, we had all seen the videos of a known terrorist organization, Hamas, taking hostages, and barbarically mutilating, torturing and murdering civilians. We witnessed untold acts of cruelty and watched as hostages and bodies were paraded in the streets of Gaza. And although this could only be described as savagery, the reactions of New Yorkers were shockingly divided. Incredulously, some were openly and without reservation or shame, applauding and cheering what they saw. Antisemitism was no longer hiding in the shadows but had become tolerated and worse, mainstream. To the disgust of our Working Group, the bigotry and intolerance we sought to highlight was now in full view. It had taken hold at our state's private and public universities and we were inundated daily with news of out of control, pro-Hamas rallies that inevitably included violent and ugly calls for the destruction of Israel.

Sadly, while these demonstrations were taking place, many good people throughout the state remained silent, having quietly resigned themselves to the "new normal." Unfortunately, some elected representatives shamelessly co-opted this hatred and enmeshed it into their "progressive" talking points. Instead of calling it out as unadulterated antisemitism, they instead chose to clothe it as a righteous anti-Israel, anti-zionist movement and incorporate it into a larger socialist agenda. And the mainstream media ignored it, and in some cases, even embraced it. And no one stopped them. This phenomenon perpetuated a double-standard, where hatred and acts of violence and intimidation that would never be tolerated for other protected classes became somehow acceptable toward Jews for the sake of a progressive ideology.

The work of our Senate Republican Antisemitism Working Group is now drawing to a close. And it feels like we're digging out of a deeper hole than the one we tried to fill, as we never dreamt that antisemitism would become so openly and egregiously embraced by some groups as it is today. But rest assured our working group has never been so motivated either, as we can see our adversaries clearly now. This is a pivotal moment for New York. This report calls for a series of clear-cut initiatives that place clear penalties on those who would advance hate and unite New Yorkers against antisemitism. But we need the Governor and the state legislature to lock arms with us and lead the way.

NEW YORK STATE SENATE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE ANTISEMITISM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS



Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick

9th Senate District



Senator Joseph A. Griffo

53rd Senate District



Senator Jack Martins, Chair

7th Senate District



Senator Peter Oberacker

51st Senate District



Senator Bill Weber

38th Senate District

"We must never remain silent in the face of bigotry. We must condemn those who seek to divide us. In all quarters and at all times, we must teach tolerance and denounce racism, antisemitism and all ethnic or religious bigotry wherever they exist as unacceptable evils. We have no place for haters in America -- none, whatsoever." -Ronald Reagan



The Rockland County Antisemitism Roundtable

September 19th
Clarkstown Town Hall Auditorium
10 Maple Avenue, Room 301 New City, New York 10956

Moderator:

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman, Editor, The Monsey Mavaser

Speakers:

Chief Jeffrey Wanamaker - Clarkstown Police Department

Chief Martin Reilly - Ramapo Police Department

Rivkie Feiner, Feiner Grant Strategies and Community Activist

Rabbi Shragi Greenbaum - Director, Agudath Israel Rockland County

Andrea Myer Winograd, Executive Director, Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education at Rockland Community College

Rabbi Avi Kahan - Derech Shalom Center

Key Takeaways:

- The need for bolstered social media monitoring.
- The enhancement of Jewish history curriculum, particularly the study of antisemitism in public schools.
- Increased funding for education and security measures.

ROCKLAND ROUNDTABLE





The Nassau County Antisemitism Roundtable

September 26th

**Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue, Mineola, New York 11501**

Moderator:

Scott Cushing, Special Advisor to the Nassau County Executive for the Combating Antisemitism Task Force.

Speakers:

Avi Posnick - Regional Director for StandWithUs in the Northeast

Mazi Pilip - Nassau County Legislator

Abraham Hamra, Esq. - President of Uprooted and Managing Partner at Cohen Tucker & Ades, PC

Michelle Ahdoot - Director of Programming & Strategy for #EndJewHatred

Evan Bernstein - Security Volunteer and CEO & National Director of Community Security Services (CSS)

Jeffrey Lax - Professor of Law at Kingsborough Community College, Co-Founder of Students & Faculty for Equality at CUNY (S.A.F.E. CUNY)

Mindy Perlmutter - Executive Director of Jewish Community Relations Council of Long Island (JCRC-LI)

Commanding Officer Christopher Ferro - Nassau County Detectives

Detective Sergeant Sabrina Gregg – BIAS Liaison Officer, Nassau County Police Department

Key Takeaways:

- New York State must do more to ensure that laws currently on the books are being enforced in a fair and equitable manner.
- The public should be better educated to recognize incidents of antisemitism and report those crimes when witnessed.
- Ensure that law enforcement is trained and given the tools to handle antisemitic crimes.

NASSAU ROUNDTABLE



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Pass Legislative Proposals:

S.3275 (Griffo) – places a definition of antisemitism within the state human rights law, to specifically provide that acts of antisemitism shall constitute a violation of the state human rights law, and to further provide that antisemitism that incites, causes or results in any act of violence, or injury to a person, or the damage to or destruction of real or personal property, shall be deemed to constitute a hate crime.

S.4665 (Lanza) – make hate crimes bail eligible.

S.5247 (Weik) – protects the identity of hate crime victims during the discovery process in hate crime prosecutions.

S.6418 (Martins) – regulates social media companies and platforms; provides for age requirements for the use of social media and parental consent; prohibits certain data collection from social media accounts; limits the hours a minor can have access to social media.

S.7040 (Weber) – makes a specified offense or a trespass at a house of worship a hate crime.

S.7773 (Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick) – creates the “Dismantling Student Antisemitism (DSA) Act”- implements antisemitism awareness and prevention sensitivity training in colleges; threat of loss of funding.

S.7752 (Weber) – prohibits students from receiving TAP if they engage in antisemitic behavior.

S.7761 (Tedisco) – adds a penalty to New York State’s hate crimes law for any SUNY or CUNY student convicted of such crime to be expelled and not be allowed to ever take a course, be enrolled, or fill out an application to take credit in universities and colleges in the SUNY and CUNY system.

S.8225 (Rhoads) – prohibits funding for SUNY, CUNY or community colleges which, directly or indirectly, permit terrorist organizations on campus.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

S.8457 (Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick) – increases funding for the program Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes from \$35 million to \$100 million and expands the program’s eligibility to also include small businesses.

S.8625 (Martins) – enacts the “New York State Antisemitism Vandalism Act” which establishes the crime of vandalism of pro-Israel print, provides a class A misdemeanor for any individual who intentionally destroys, damages, removes, or causes to be destroyed, damaged or removed any banner, poster, flyer or billboard which is located in a public space, where the intent or purpose of such banner, poster, flyer or billboard is to bring awareness for Israeli individuals who have been victims of a crime, or to positively support the country or citizens of Israel in any way.

S.8646 (Martins) – enhances penalties for those who obstruct traffic and access to buildings during protests and allow for it to qualify as a hate crime.

S.8774 (Oberacker) – expands the prohibition of harassing conduct involving Nazi symbols.

Dedicate Funding in the State Budget:

To improve security for synagogues and yeshivas.

To provide education and awareness of antisemitic behavior and how to prevent such behavior.

Continue the Discussion and Raising Awareness:

By hosting a potential additional roundtable in New York City.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

News Outlet: Great Neck Record

Author: Jennifer Corr

October 20, 2023

New York State Senate Hosts Roundtable On Antisemitism

According to the Audit of Antisemitic Incidents from the Anti-Defamation League, there was a 36 percent increase of antisemitic incidents from 2021. It was the highest amount of incidents, tabulated at 3,697, since the Anti-Defamation League began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.

On Sept. 17 and 18, five Jewish houses of worship received similar bomb threats that were found to be "not credible."

During Yom Kippur, Nassau County and Suffolk County Police increased patrols outside of synagogues and temples.

A little over a week after the threats, New York State Sen. Jack Martins chaired the second Antisemitism Working Group at the Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building in Mineola with Senators Patricia Canzoneri Fitzpatrick, Joseph Griffo, Peter Oberacker and Bill Weber. The aim of the roundtable was to provide the senators with ideas to bring back to Albany to prevent more acts of antisemitism.

Joining the senators were Avi Posnick of StandWithUs; Sabrina Gregg, the Nassau County Police Department's bias liaison officer; Gerard Filitti, civil and human rights attorney; Abraham Hamra, a law firm partner and Jewish-Syrian refugee; Eric Post, the American Jewish Council's regional director; Jeffrey Lax, a City of New York (CUNY) professor; Mindy Perlmutter, the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council; Chris Ferro, Nassau County Police Department Chief of Detectives; Nassau County Legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip, of Nassau County's Special Legislative Task Force to Combat Antisemitism; and Michelle Ahdoot of EndJewHatred.

The roundtable was moderated by Scott Cushing, public information officer to the Nassau County Board of Elections Commissioner's office. Audience members included Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jen DeSena, Herricks Board of Education President Jim Gounaris, Great Neck Plaza Mayor Ted Rosen, Nassau County Legislator Arnold Drucker, of the Nassau County's Special Legislative Task Force to Combat Antisemitism, New York State Assemblymember Ari Brown, among many others.

Each of the panelists introduced themselves and gave their testimony, as well as their recommendations on how to prevent antisemitism in schools, in colleges, in synagogues and in everyday life.

Ferro explained that in working with the local FBI office, the police learned that the suspect of the bomb threats is not in the country. "There are over 200 similar investigations into the same exact verbiage throughout the region," Ferro said. "The FBI does have someone of interest. The person is not in this country currently."

Ferro said that he'd like to see the police, with the district attorney, not have to go through "leaps and bounds" to obtain IP and subscriber information in order to find leads.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

In cases where there are repeat locations where people are damaging property with antisemitic slurs and imagery, it's helpful to get more lighting and cameras there. Ferro said he'd also like to see increased penalties for hate offenses, earlier education starting with elementary school and more training on bias.

Gregg pitched the idea of having a hate offenders registry similar to a sex offenders registry. "What it would do is penalize even acts such as swatting (deceiving an emergency service to respond to another person's address) or doxing (publishing private information about someone on the Internet)," Gregg said. "If you were attached to this registry, it would be set up and monitored similarly by the Department of Criminal Justice Services."

Gregg explained that offenses include hate offenses, bias incidents and hate speech, and that because people who want to threaten groups know the laws, they toe the line in order not to receive charges. Gregg said if a person was giving financial assistance or time to a hate group, they should have to be registered as a hate offender.

Perlmutter agreed that there is currently not enough to make arrests in incidents where antisemitic propaganda is left on people's cars and properties.

"We need to find a way to make problems out of these horrible fliers that talk about why Jews are horrible and rule the world and why they're going to end the world, and it's coming on my property," Perlmutter said. "But nothing can be done."

Perlmutter recommended that Nassau County should have a non-emergency line to call like Suffolk County's 311.

"You have trained people who work in the 311 system that now all you do is pick up the phone, dial 311 and report an incident of hate crime," Perlmutter said. Nassau County residents do have the ability to text 911 if they need to report an incident.

Several of the panelists also recommended more education in schools beyond a lesson on the Holocaust during a World War Two unit. Great Neck resident Karen Bekker spoke on educating children about Jewish history in school.

"As a Jewish taxpayer, my own money is going to fund the teaching and the incitement towards my children. Sixty percent of CUNY funding comes from New York State taxpayers, and that is just intolerable," said Bekker. "The second part that I had, I appreciate that people are bringing up not just Holocaust education but Holocaust and modern antisemitism. I really appreciated [Abraham Hamra's] statement."

Hamra said, "I truly believe more education is the way...The Holocaust was an occurrence that happened because of the diaspora of the Jewish people. It's not the beginning of the Jewish people. It's not the story of the Jewish people."

As an Ashkenazi Jew, Bekker believes the story of the Sephardic Jews is very sorely missing from most of our educational system.

"In addition to teaching the Holocaust and more modern forms of antisemitism, I think that we also have to teach positive stories of Jews," said Bekker. "Jewish children should not be sitting in school, only learning about when Jews were victims. Jewish children should also be learning the story of Jewish success in America, the story of Jewish success in Israel and other students need to be learning that Jews are not just victims. We shouldn't learn to see Jews only as victims. We also have to teach them positive stories."

Great Neck Plaza Mayor Ted Rosen spoke to the panel, agreeing with increased penalties, and easier access to report hate and also discussing education.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

"I think education is very important. It's very important to teach about the Holocaust. It's very important to teach about antisemitism and its causes," said Mayor Rosen. "A very important aspect of education is teaching that there's a commonality with hatred. Hatred against Jews is hatred against Blacks. It's hatred against Asians. It stems from ignorance. Yes there are differences with respect to causes of antisemitism, and that needs to be addressed. But education should also look to bring all segments of society who are victims of hatred together."

Several months ago, the Great Neck Chinese Association's (GNCA) welcome banner in Great Neck Plaza was defaced with a racial slur. The GNCA, local elected officials, and the Nassau County Police Department immediately addressed this act of hate. The Nassau County Police Department has investigated the hate crime.

"The lesson of that incident and from many incidents is that hatred against one is hatred against all," said Mayor Rosen. "I think the one thing the Senate could do is encourage throughout the state the formation of community groups where people from all different backgrounds are brought together to learn about their backgrounds and to teach respect. . . . Punishment is very important. I'm not diminishing punishment. But there should be an emphasis on the positive to weed out hatred and encourage people to understand other groups and teach respect."

More antisemitism roundtables will follow.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

News Outlet: Patch

Author: Lanning Taliaferro, Patch Staff

September 27, 2023

Antisemitism Working Group Meets In Rockland As Issue Swirls

At question is some opposition to the sentence imposed on two rabbis who caused the fatal fire at the Evergreen Court Home for Adults.

ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY – Five state senators forming the Antisemitism Working Group convened its inaugural public roundtable Sept. 19 at Clarkstown Town Hall as controversy swirled about opposition to the sentence imposed on two rabbis who caused the fatal fire at the Evergreen Court Home for Adults in 2021.

The group is chaired by New York State Senator Jack Martins from the 7th Senate District. Other members include Sen. Bill Weber from Rockland, Sen. Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick (9th SD), Senator Joe Griffo (53rd SD), and Senator Peter Oberacker (51st SD).

Participants in the panel discussion included Mrs. Rivkie Feiner, CEO of Feiner Grant Strategies, Rabbi Shragi Greenbaum from Agudah of Rockland, Rabbi Avi Kahan, VP of the Derech Shalom Center/Pathway to Peace & Committee Member of Access for Justice, and Mrs. Andrea Winograd of the Holocaust Museum and Center for Tolerance and Education. The panel also included Clarkstown Police Chief Jeffrey Wanamaker and Ramapo Police Chief Martin Reilly.

During the roundtable, the panelists provided insights into antisemitism in New York State and how it manifests itself.

"Some people will say Antisemitism has always been here and will always be here but that doesn't mean we shouldn't keep talking about it, keep educating our youth, and talking about how we can eradicate it," Weber said in a statement after the meeting.

Key takeaways from the evening included the imperative need for bolstered social media monitoring, the enhancement of Jewish history curriculum, particularly the study of Antisemitism in public schools, and increased funding for education and security measures.

"The Anti-Defamation League tells us that antisemitic incidents reached an all-time high in the United States last year. What's worse, the same holds true for New York. And yet it hardly raises an eyebrow with those who should be outraged," Martins said in a statement after the meeting. "There's clearly a double standard as to how these hate crimes are being treated and that's not acceptable. Alarm bells have been sounding on this for years. It stops now."

The panelists also said that antisemitism is ignorance and due to a lack of education about Jewish history, organizers said.

When Rockland County Court Judge Kevin Russo sentenced Nathaniel and Aaron Sommer to probation on Sept. 20, he said the courts don't respond to [vengeance and intimidation](#), The Journal News reported.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Russo had received a letter from 27 elected officials and rabbis from the Orthodox Jewish community about an “antisemitic campaign” against the Sommers, who are father and son. In part, [the letter](#), which was obtained by The Journal News, read:

We all grieve the tragic loss of firefighter Jared Lloyd and assisted living resident Oliver Hueston. Firefighters especially represent the heart and soul of our public service, a sentiment we universally share. Nevertheless, this tragedy should not become a vehicle for inciting antisemitic sentiment, nor should it compromise the principles of justice.

Our concerns are substantiated by research we have attached to this letter. It appears that the individuals spearheading the campaign to imprison the defendants—despite their guilty pleas under the understanding that they would receive no jail time—are motivated by anti-Semitism. Disturbingly, the leader of this group has previously expressed the desire to incarcerate the entirety of the Orthodox Jewish community simply for their religious beliefs, stating, “(expletive) hate this scam Jewish community. Boulder Stadium needs to be made into a prison for most Orthodox and Hasidic [Jews].”

Rockland County Legislator Itamar Yeger issued his own statement Sept. 21.

“As we move forward as a community, it is crucial that we lean on informed perspectives, not those motivated by anger or hate,” he said. “I also worked 12 years as a prosecutor participating in cases that included homicide and arson. Since the tragedy of March 23, 2021, I have devoted hours to reviewing the publicly available evidence in this case and more than 100 homicide cases from across New York State. Based on my experience and the research I conducted, it is clear that the court’s decision to sentence the Sommers to the maximum periods of probation permissible under law was just and appropriate.”

“While individuals without comparable legal or prosecutorial expertise are certainly entitled to their own viewpoints, it is irresponsible to mount unwarranted and inaccurate attacks on our County’s judicial system.”

Protests have mounted in the county since the plea deal was worked out.

SEE: [Rockland Rabbis Avoid Jail Time In Fatal Fire Plea Deal](#)

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

News Outlet: Rockland/Westchester Journal News

Author: Diana Dombrowski

Nyack latest Lower Hudson school district to see, address racist or antisemitic incidents

A Nyack elementary school is the most recent school in the Lower Hudson Valley to see the scrawling of racist or antisemitic graffiti.

In an email to families Friday, Nyack Superintendent Susan Yom said the Clarkstown Police Department and school district were investigating the appearance of the n-word on a Liberty Elementary School bathroom wall.

"This word is a racist and offensive slur that is not reflective of our commitment to eliminate all forms of racism from our District," Yom wrote. "We are deeply troubled that hateful and bigoted vandalism was scrawled in a building where we should all feel safe and welcomed. We must call out this act for what it is: racist, unacceptable and abhorrent."

Yom said the word was removed from the wall.

The incident comes just a few weeks after Nyack and Lakeland School District were investigating reports that spectators taunted Nyack cheerleaders during a varsity football game

Liberty Elementary School in Nyack. Other recent incidents in Lower Hudson schools
Nyack is just one district in the region to see racist behavior in recent days.

A Carmel High School student was arrested last month, weeks after staff and students found a swastika and "Adolf Hitler" scratched into the tennis courts at the high school. An Oct. 3 email to the school community from the school board also noted a swastika carved into a table leg at the high school.

In an email to the community this past Thursday, Interim Carmel Superintendent Joseph McGrath said of those incidents, "We send those notices because we do not want to normalize antisemitism or make hate speech of any form acceptable in our schools. We value the safety of every student in our schools, regardless of background, so we call out hate incidents in real time."

Edgemont Superintendent Kenneth Hamilton also addressed two recent racist incidents in an email Thursday.

Hamilton told the community that a student at the Junior Senior High School wore blackface during Halloween festivities and another student "likened a monkey on the board to an Edgemont student of color."

"It is essential to provide context for why blackface and all degrading acts are both harmful and racist," Hamilton wrote. "Identifying a student in reference to a monkey is also equally harmful and racist. These practices have caused profound pain and suffering for Black communities and are a painful reminder of our nation's history of racism."

In June, Hamilton wrote to the community that several swastikas were found on a desk, in a textbook and in a bathroom. Hamilton said they were reported to the Greenburgh Police Department.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

How schools address hatred

Hamilton said the district's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee would meet Monday to discuss the incidents.

"The goal of this discussion is to promote a deeper understanding of why actions like blackface and other epithets are harmful and perpetuate racial stereotypes and discrimination," he said in Thursday's email.

In June, Hamilton listed several actions the district was taking in response to the swastikas, including seeking guidance from the ADL's school program No Place for Hate and the American Jewish Committee; engaging with local clergy; initiating a committee to address hatred; and developing lesson plans addressing the historical context of the swastika.

"They're not shying away from it," said Steve Goldberg, director of education at the Holocaust and Human Rights Center in White Plains, of Carmel and Edgemont.

Goldberg gave a presentation in Carmel on Tuesday night titled "Exploring the Symbols and Language of Hate" and planned to return to Carmel this week to discuss the history of antisemitism to faculty.

He is also working with Edgemont.

"It's a matter of educating kids to respect the differences in people," Goldberg said.

He also said a lot of kids don't necessarily understand the significance of what they've done. They need to understand that words and symbols can hurt, he said.

Earlier this year, swastikas were found at Clarkstown South High School. School officials encouraged parents to talk to their kids about recognizing hate and discrimination.

The Anti-Defamation League said in March that New York saw a 39% increase in antisemitic incidents in 2022 compared to the year before. The ADL also reported a spike in antisemitic incidents since Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre of Israeli civilians.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt antisemitism is a multifaceted problem that will require an all-hands-on-deck approach from communities, schools, governments and support organizations. The Task Force worked at great lengths to have all stakeholders discuss how their communities were handling acts of antisemitism. After soliciting testimony from various areas of the State, the antisemitism working group acknowledged that working toward rooting out antisemitism takes community and local involvement from the bottom-up.

Throughout 2023, and still today, we have seen an increase in antisemitic crimes happening throughout the state. Almost weekly, there were stories of antisemitic demonstrations negatively impacting the quality of life of regular everyday New Yorkers.

In [December 2023](#), commuters and travelers encountered antisemitic demonstrations that abruptly stopped New York City traffic in Queens, blocking access to airports and train stations. And sadly, nothing was done to aid the law abiding citizens who were simply trying to go about their day.

Then we witnessed a live video that hit the media internet by storm. Students at [Cooper Union New York City](#) locked themselves in the library because there were student protests that made them feel unsafe with chants, "Long live the Intifada."

From the discussions we learned New Yorkers do recognize antisemitism, but sadly it often goes unreported and therein lies the problem. Our job as leaders is to do our best to address the issues our communities are facing.

In conclusion, the working group was able to gather the feedback from the Rockland and Nassau community roundtables to create legislation to help address some of the antisemitism occurring in communities. This is the first step in correcting antisemitism.

Our New York State Senate Republican Conference is committed to restoring public safety and protecting our Jewish brothers and sisters from hateful acts of violence. We are looking forward to working with all levels of government and stakeholders to craft policies to protect New Yorkers from the fear and impact of antisemitism. None of us should be living in fear.



RESOURCES

Agudath Israel of America

Founded in 1922 to serve as Orthodox Jewry's umbrella organization, is the arm and voice of American Orthodox Jewry. With national and DC offices, and regional branches serving the entire country, Agudath Israel – also called Agudas Yisroel or the Agudah – advocates for its constituents at federal, state, and local levels. The Agudah and its many divisions provide social, educational, and youth services to its constituents, continuing a century-long tradition of championing the evolving needs of Orthodox Jewish life in America.

Location:

42 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10004

Phone: 212.797.9000 ext. 310

Rockland County Regional Office, greenbaum@agudah.org

Phone: (845) 826-5447

Contact: info@agudah.org

For more information visit: www.agudah.org

Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education

Our mission is to educate, through the lens of the Holocaust, about the dangers of intolerance, to invoke critical thinking, and to inspire moral courage in the face of injustice.

Location: Rockland Community College
145 College Road
Library Media Center Room 4110
Suffern, NY 10901

Phone: (845) 574-4099

Sid Jacobson JCC

Sid Jacobson JCC, the only full-service JCC on Long Island's North Shore, provides a full range of cutting-edge recreational, health, fitness, educational, cultural arts, and social services programs to East Hills and the surrounding community. Sid Jacobson JCC promotes Jewish identity and provides a comprehensive program based on Jewish values, traditions, heritage, and culture and is committed to enriching the lives of all individuals and families in its community.

Location:

300 Forest Drive
East Hills, NY 11548

Phone: 516.484.1545

For more information visit: www.sjjcc.org

RESOURCES

Jewish Community Relations Council

JCRC-LI serves as the central coordinating body and resource organization for the Jewish community across Long Island. It operates as a nexus between community-based organizations, religious institutions, elected and public officials and the private sector, and works to open the lines of communication between these entities.

Location:

6800 Jericho Turnpike
Suite 120W
Syosset, NY 11791

Phone: 516-433-0433

Contact: jcrcli@jcrcli.org

For more information visit: www.jcrcli.org

StandWithUs in the Northeast

StandWithUs is a 15 year old Israel education organization that supports people around the world who want to educate their campuses and communities about Israel.

Location: New York Northeast Office

Phone: 646.440.3047

Contact: infony@standwithus.com

For more information visit: www.holocauststudies.org/about-us