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SIMCHA FELDER
Senator, 17th District

April 30, 2019

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I am writing to request that financing for the installation of panic buttons at Houses of Worship (Churches, Mosques and Synagogues) be made available through the New York State Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Grant.

Violence against our Houses of Worship has tragically become a regular occurrence throughout our nation and across the world. Over the last several weeks, we have seen lethal violence at a Mosque in New Zealand, a Church in Sri Lanka and a Synagogue in California. Many New Yorkers are now at heightened risk when they enter a House of Prayer.

This year's State budget judiciously allocates \$25 million in funding for security improvements to nonpublic schools, day cares, cultural museums and summer camps due to their heightened risk of hate crimes. A panic button is a cost-effective device that quickly alerts police and emergency personnel in the event of a violent situation. In case of an attack something as simple as strategically placed panic buttons could make the difference between a massacre and a miracle.

I urge you to add all Houses of Worship interested in installing panic buttons to the list of accepted applicants for Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes funding. By encouraging our Houses of Worship to install panic buttons, New York State will allay New Yorker's fears and demonstrate its leadership in combatting hate crimes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simcha Felder".

Simcha Felder
Senator, S.D. 17

SF/bb

