

# Rebecca Seawright



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Recently, I wrote an Opinion Editorial to the Editor of the Jewish World on the Synagogue takeover in Colleyville, Texas published in this week's edition.

You can read the full Op-Ed below on this important issue. I look forward to confronting hate crimes this session in Albany with legislation to combat anti-Semitism and other crimes.

Stay safe,

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright

## LONG ISLAND Jewish World

### A Stark Reminder

Synagogue takeover highlights scourge of anti-Semitism

By REBECCA SEAWRIGHT

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#### FIRST PERSON

Texas was successfully resolved. The law enforcement personnel worked together so tirelessly and effectively to resolve this issue and all of the hostages emerged alive and unharmed. The phenomenal bravery of Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and the hostages, honed by prior security training, is now a matter of public record.

This regretful circumstance stands as a stark reminder that the rampant scourge of anti-Semitism and bigotry must be confronted at all levels. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that between April of 2021 and May of 2021, in the U.S there was a distressing increase of reported anti-Semitic incidents reported to

the ADL of 75% from 59 reported cases in April to 124 reported cases by the end of May.

Reports of hate crimes have been



FBI hostage rescue team converged on Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas after reports surfaced of a hostage situation.

steadily increasing over the past several years. According to FBI reports, in New York City, reports of hate crimes reached a record 7175 incidents in 2017, the most since hate

crime data collection began in 1995. The 2017 tabulation represented a 17 percent increase above the 6121 hate crime incidents in 2016.

Nationally, attacks on people motivated by bias or prejudice reached a 16-year high in 2018, according to the FBI. Physical assaults against people accounted for 61 percent

of the 7,120 incidents classified as hate crimes by local law enforcement officials nationwide.

In August of 2020, my community office was the subject of an anti-Semitic attack with white paint and an anti-Semitic note left

safe. Our legislation is key to confronting the surge of hate crimes we have witnessed in our city and state of New York.

Nothing about crime prevention would be complete

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at the door, with two more attacks subsequently on my district and campaign offices.

To address the scourge of hate crimes, I am sponsoring legislation to mandate training or counseling in hate crime prevention and education for individuals convicted of a hate crime. This legislation passed the Assembly unanimously with a vote of 145-0. Education and training are central to promoting tolerance and respect for others. Combined with vigilant law enforcement, this is essential to keeping our communities

without expressing our profound sadness over the horrific murders in Manhattan of NYPD Officer Jason Rivera and Officer Wilbert Mora. The officers were shot while responding to a domestic incident. No words are sufficient as we express our deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers to the families and friends of these courageous men.

As we grieve as a community for all police officers that have been killed or wounded in the line

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*Assemblywoman Rebecca Seawright's anti-hate presser outside her Manhattan office, which was vandalized with anti-Semitic messages. Michael Cohen on far left, Simon Wiesenthal center, and Rabbi Joseph Potasnik second from the right.*

**By REBECCA SEAWRIGHT** This past weekend, I joined with all of our community greatly relieved that the hostage situation at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas was successfully resolved. The law enforcement personnel worked together so tirelessly and effectively to resolve this issue and all of the hostages emerged alive and unharmed. The phenomenal bravery of Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and the hostages, honed by prior security training, is now a matter of public record.

This regretful circumstance stands as a stark reminder that the rampant scourge of anti-Semitism and bigotry must be confronted at all levels. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that between April of 2021 and May of 2021, in the U.S there was a distressing increase of reported anti-Semitic incidents reported to crime data collection began in 1995. The 2017 tabulation represented a 17 percent increase above the 6121 hate crime incidents in 2016. Nationally, attacks on people motivated by bias or prejudice reached a 16-year high in 2018, according to the FBI. Physical assaults against people accounted for 61 percent the ADL of 75% from 59 reported cases in April to 124 reported cases by the end of May.

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In August of 2020, my community office was the subject of an anti-Semitic attack with white paint and an anti-Semitic note left at the door, with two more attacks subsequently on my district and campaign offices. To address the scourge of hate crimes, I am sponsoring legislation to mandate training or counseling in hate crime prevention and education for individuals convicted of a hate crime. This legislation passed the Assembly unanimously with a vote of 145-0. Education and training are central to promoting tolerance and respect for others. Combined with vigilant law enforcement, this is essential to keeping our communities safe. Our legislation is key to confronting the surge of hate crimes we have witnessed in our city and state of New York.

Nothing about crime prevention would be complete without expressing our profound sadness over the horrific murders in Manhattan of NYPD Officer Jason Rivera and Officer Wilbert Mora. The officers were shot while responding to a domestic incident. No words are sufficient as we express our deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers to the families and friends of these courageous men. As we grieve as a community for all police officers that have been killed or wounded in the line of duty, we must, as New York City Mayor Eric Adams has said, “Dam the sea of rivers that feed the sea of crime”.

The City of New York should strengthen the visibility and deployment of law enforcement, institute a proactive and effective plainclothes unit, and provide more comprehensive mental health services. Heading the list must be a coordinated federal, state, and regional campaign to stop the massive influx of guns from southern states and elsewhere to New York. Every tactic and strategy in the collective toolkit must be utilized to stem the epidemic gun flow which has sustained ongoing criminal activity and threatens all New Yorkers.

We simply cannot make the progress needed towards a humane and just society without placing public safety at the top of our agenda.

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