



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY

MICHAEL E. MCMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

130 STUYVESANT PLACE
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK 10301
TELEPHONE (718) 876-6300

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Ryan Lavis (718) 556-7150
Ryan.Lavis@rcda.nyc.gov

DA McMahon Announces Launch of the Staten Island Hate Crimes Task Force

STATEN ISLAND, NY – On Thursday evening, dozens of community leaders representing groups that have traditionally been the target of hate-based attacks attended the inaugural meeting of the Staten Island Hate Crimes Task Force led by District Attorney Michael E. McMahon & Scott Maurer, CEO of COJO of Staten Island. The group was convened in direct response to the unspeakable tragedy that occurred at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh last month and the general rise in hate across the nation.

“All Staten Islanders deserve to live their lives free from fear and free to express their identity however they wish,” said District Attorney McMahon. “Hate in all forms must be universally condemned no matter who it is expressed against, and the Staten Island Hate Crimes Task Force will work together with all our communities to develop solutions and inform our neighbors that our differences make us stronger and hate has no place in our borough.”

In the coming weeks, the Task Force will, among many other efforts, work to create educational materials to be distributed to Staten Island students informing them of the many different populations that make up our borough and the meaning behind the symbols of hate often directed toward these individuals. Further, the Task Force will develop legislative recommendations with the aim of strengthening protections for vulnerable groups and developing an early intervention model for those who are expressing hatred but not yet acting on their vitriol.

Further, Task Force members will serve as ambassadors within their own communities to promote greater understanding of those with different backgrounds and will work with fellow members to accomplish this outside their own communities to educate Staten Islanders of all ages about tolerance and understanding.

District Attorney McMahon continued: “Although hate crimes on Staten Island are down this year, one hate crime is too many. We implore all Staten Islanders to report any incidents of hatred so my office and the NYPD can fully investigate; only then will we be able to stamp out these vile attacks.”

The taskforce includes members from the following groups and organizations: Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island (COJO); NYPD Hate Crimes; SI Center for Independent Living; Lifestyles for the Disabled; SI Pride Center; Virgin Mary & St George Orthodox Church (Tottenville); Coptic Orthodox Church of Archangel Michael and Saint Mena (Great Kills); Staten Island Gurdwara Sahib; SI Hindu Temple; Albanian Islamic Cultural Center; Islamic Center of SI; Masjid Al Noor Islam Society; Integrity Senior Services; Jamaica and Caribbean Organization of Staten Island (JCOSI); UFT; Mt Sinai United Christian Church; Central Family Life Center; El Centro del Inmigrante; La Colmena; Project Hospitality; Community Agency for Senior Citizens; AARP New Dorp Chapter; Chinese American Community Association; NY Korean Evangelical Church.

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