

National Council of Young Israel

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January 14, 2008

Memorandum of Support

This letter is in support of the Non-Profit Homeland Security Preparedness Act currently being presented to the Legislature by Assemblyman Rory Lancman and State Senator Dean Skelos. Non-profit organizations, such as the 150 branch synagogues of the National Council of Young Israel, need funds because they are potential targets of terrorist activity.

State funds are essential, since federal funds are insufficient. Our organization and branch synagogues (over 50 are located in New York State) often do not have the money available to appropriately secure its buildings. This bill would be a great step in addressing this funding gap.

Security for places of worship is critical since the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Plots against synagogues have been reported in many cities as well as a shooting incident at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, which killed one woman. These incidents demonstrate the dangerous reality in which we live. Furthermore, New York State is a prime terrorist target in which non-profits are especially vulnerable. If they can terrorize us in our own synagogues, then there is no place we can feel secure.

In addition to terrorism concerns, there has been a recent rise in hate crimes in New York. The painting of swastikas on synagogues and the hanging of nooses certainly show the need for State assistance. Your bills would be an important proactive approach, which is necessary to combat this serious problem.

The National Council of Young Israel absolutely supports the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pesach Lerner".

Rabbi Pesach Lerner
Executive Vice President

Legacy... Community... Family...