

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR
EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT
15 PARK CIRCLE, SUITE 209
CENTERPORT, NY 11721



CONTACT: **LIZ ALEXANDER**
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE AIDE
OFFICE: (631) 854-4500
FAX: (631) 854-4503
elizabeth.alexander@suffolkcountyny.gov

MEDIA RELEASE

NOVEMBER 23, 2016



A MOSAIC OF VOICES STAND UNITED TO DENOUNCE HATE AND IGNORANCE

Huntington Station: Elected Officials across the political spectrum, clergy, rabbis, educators, law enforcement, civic leaders and members of the community joined together at the Tri-CYA in Huntington Station today to call for unity, peace, and acceptance. The message was to condemn harmful expressions and threatening acts of hate and ignorance.

Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. kicked off the event that drew out over 70 community stakeholders and stated, "I want to bring everyone together today to speak to the ignorant and/or hateful actions that have increased in our communities. Our message is that no matter whom the target is, threatening acts are not accepted and they will be denounced."

As a doctor and a legislator, William Spencer has received multiple calls from friends and colleagues that have shared with him stories and concerns about ethnic bullying they have recently experienced. In Northport it was reported to school officials that three students at Northport High School found multiple swastikas drawn in the theater storage room at the high school. Fliers glorifying the KKK were found distributed on cars in the Suffolk community of Patchogue. "I sense much of this stems from ignorance that can be called out with education and a firm stance against it," stated the Legislator.

Legislator Steve Stern stated, "With an unprecedented level of rancor in our discourse that has reared its head in recent times, we must take notice, particularly when it rises up in our schools. We can do better; and we do that not by simply tweeting, but by coming together in meaningful ways and setting an example for the sake of our youth."

"What happens in schools is often a reflection of what is happening in our greater society, in our homes and in our communities. In all my years in education there has been discussion about future policies after an election, this was the first time where the conversations were focused around respecting and accepting each other. These conversations need to take place so issues can be addressed and everyone can feel safe," stated Superintendent Dr. Bossert of the Elwood School District.

Legislator Trotta stated, "One of these incidents is one too many. It's our responsibility to speak out against it and educate our youth of the ramifications of such actions."

“Our community is strong and vibrant because of our diversity. Let’s celebrate and support that.” stated Councilwoman Tracey A. Edwards

Reverend Jennings closed the event, “Let’s use this time as an opportunity, as a teaching moment for all of us. When we are at our best, our homes, our community and our nation will be at our best. Let’s remember that we have the power.”

If you want to report a crime or fear for your safety, call 911 immediately. Governor Cuomo set up a statewide hotline for Residents who have experienced bias-motivated threats, harassment or discrimination are encouraged to call our toll-free hotline at (888) 392-3644 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday.

A call to provide and offer resources and support for educators to educate students on our history of bigotry and violence was a take-away from the event. Legislator Spencer’s office will be following up on those requests. Councilwoman Susan Berland stated “I pledge to attend and support any event that takes place in our school districts that will help educate our kids.”

###