



Agudath  
Israel  
of America

אגודת ישראל באמריקה

June 17, 2015

Honorable Bill de Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Mayor and Madam Speaker:

As an advocate for the City's large and growing population of children who attend Jewish schools – over 95,000 students across the City – Agudath Israel of America respectfully urges you to support Intro 65, which would require the NYPD to assign, upon request, school safety agents to nonpublic schools.

City law currently mandates that school safety agents be assigned to every public school. There is no comparable mandate with respect to nonpublic schools. Intro 65 is designed to redress this anomaly.

It is difficult to articulate a justification for withholding school safety agents from nonpublic schools. Surely it cannot be that the City is unconcerned about the safety and wellbeing of the children who attend these schools; if anything, certain religious schools may be even more vulnerable to attack than public schools. It cannot be that providing school safety agents to religious schools would violate the constitution's prohibition against the establishment of religion; it has always been understood that providing religious entities with basic government services, such as those furnished by the Police, Fire and Sanitation Departments, does not cross the line of separation between church and state.

So on what conceivable basis can one justify the status quo of withholding from nonpublic schools the type of essential protection that is provided to public schools?

The only possible answer is that school safety agents cost money. It is an expenditure, however, that needs to be made to protect all children in all school settings, especially at a time when the daily headlines from across the globe remind us how violence and terror – particularly targeting groups like the constituency we represent – are so much a part of modern day life. That is why Intro 65 is so important and deserves your support.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Rabbi David Zwiebel

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