

NEW JERSEY RABBIS SAY, “PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS”



Dear New Jersey State Leaders,

We write this with respect for your hard work on behalf of the residents of the State of New Jersey, but with shock and disappointment on an issue of critical importance to the Jewish community. As you may be aware, there is a dramatic gap in government security funding between public schools and nonpublic schools in this year's New Jersey state budget.

Our community has been bringing this inequity to the attention of members of all branches of government for a long time. Until now, the message we've sent to Trenton has not been heard. Last year, nonpublic security funding per child was only \$75 per child, around half that of public school students. The new fiscal year budget increased public school security funding by over 43%, yet nonpublic school funding was left flat.

Recently, you had an opportunity to begin the process of including nonpublic schools in equitable security funding through the Securing our Children's Future Bond Act (S-2293). To our deep disappointment, the final wording of the bill that was signed into law specifically excludes nonpublic schools from the security program. We have to wonder why our government has allowed the funding disparity to continue to grow.

Our community feels frustrated and betrayed. Families in the Jewish community send their children to Jewish day schools in order for them to receive a religious education that aligns with their beliefs. By underfunding nonpublic schools, the state is forcing them to choose between their children's safety and their religion.

Where do we go from here? How do we tell nonpublic school families, whose taxes support New Jersey's public education system, that at the end of the day, their children's safety is not important to our elected officials? We hope you care about all children and that this issue will be resolved fairly and expeditiously. What will you do now to fix this?

Rabbi Yosef Adler, Congregation Rinat Yisrael (Teaneck)
Rabbi Howard Bald, Larchwood Synagogue (Oakhurst)
Rabbi David Bassous, Congregation Etz Ahaim (Highland Park)
Rabbi Eli Belizon, Young Israel of Fair Lawn (Fair Lawn)
Rabbi Michael Bleicher, Elmora Hills Minyan (Elizabeth)
Rabbi Akiva Block, Kehilat Keshet (Tenafly)
Rabbi Mendel Bogomilsky, Chai Center of Millburn/Short Hills (Short Hills)
Rabbi Nasanayl Braun, Congregation Brothers of Israel (Long Branch)
Rabbi Jeremy Donath, Congregation Darchei Noam (Fair Lawn)
Rabbi Menashe East, Mount Freedom Jewish Center (Randolph)
Rabbi Ephraim Epstein, Congregation Sons of Israel (Cherry Hill)
Rabbi Daniel Feldman, Ohr Saadya (Teaneck)
Rabbi Menachem Genack, Congregation Shomrei Emunah (Englewood)
Rabbi Zev Goldberg, Young Israel of Fort Lee (Fort Lee)
Rabbi Dovid Harrison, Congregation Beth Shalom (Red Bank)
Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot, Congregation Netivot Shalom (Teaneck)
Rabbi Avrohom Herman, Elmora Avenue Shul (Elizabeth)
Rabbi Joshua Hess, Congregation Anshe Chesed (Linden)
Rabbi Haim Jachter, Shaarei Orah-The Sephardic Congregation of Teaneck (Teaneck)
Rabbi Gedaliah Jaffe, Congregation Ahavas Yisrael (Edison)
Rabbi Eliyahu Kaufman, Congregation Ohav Emeth (Highland Park)
Rabbi Samuel Klibanoff, Congregation Etz Chaim (Livingston)
Rabbi Binyamin Krohn, Young Israel of Teaneck (Teaneck)
Rabbi Yaakov Luban, Congregation Ohr Torah (Edison)

Rabbi Sariel Malitzky, Congregation Ohr Torah (Edison)
Rabbi Chaim Marcus, Congregation Israel (Springfield)
Rabbi Andrew Markowitz, Congregation Shomrei Torah (Fair Lawn)
Rabbi Steven Miodownik, Congregation Ahavas Achim (Highland Park)
Rabbi Elie Mischel, Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center (Livingston)
Rabbi David Pietruszka, Bais Medrash of Bergenfield (Bergenfield)
Rabbi Chaim Poupko, Congregation Ahavath Torah (Englewood)
Rabbi Steven Pruzansky, Congregation Bnai Yeshurun (Teaneck)
Rabbi Zev Reichman, East Hill Synagogue (Englewood)
Rabbi Avi Richler, Chabad of Gloucester County (Mullica Hill)
Rabbi Yehuda Rosenbaum, Maitland Minyan (Teaneck)
Rabbi Solomon Rybak, Congregation Adas Israel (Passaic)
Rabbi Kenny Schiowitz, Congregation Shaare Tefillah (Teaneck)
Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz, Congregation Adath Israel (Elizabeth/Hillside)
Rabbi Ely Shestack, Congregation Ahavat Achim (Fair Lawn)
Rabbi Marc Spivak, Congregation Ohr Torah (West Orange)
Rabbi Moshe Stavsky, Bais Medrash of Bergenfield (Bergenfield)
Rabbi Michael Taubes, Congregation Zichron Mordechai (Teaneck)
Rabbi David Tawil, Larchwood Synagogue (Oakhurst)
Rabbi Elazar Teitz, Elmora Avenue Shul (Elizabeth)
Rabbi Benjamin Yudin, Congregation Shomrei Torah (Fair Lawn)
Rabbi Ari Zahtz, Congregation Bnai Yeshurun Teaneck (Teaneck)
Rabbi Eliezer Zwickler, Congregation Ahavas Achim B'nai Jacob & David (West Orange)