



RABBI'S RAMBLINGS...

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

ו' אדר-ב תשע"ט

Shalom,

Last month, the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester and the Jewish Community Relations Council invited rabbis from all local congregations, directors of all Jewish agencies and the volunteer presidents of all these organizations, to attend their annual Legislative Luncheon.

We had the opportunity to meet elected officials from the surrounding towns and counties, including Town Managers, county leaders, State Representatives and State Senators. Together we heard three presentations on themes which represent the most important issues on the organized Jewish community's legislative agenda:

1. **Gun Violence** (especially in the wake of the recent massacre at Congregation Tree of Life, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)
2. **Antisemitism and Security**
3. **Israel and anti-Zionism**

It was reassuring to learn that our community leaders are actively engaged in building close relationships with elected leaders, regardless of political party, and in educating them about why these issues are important to their Jewish constituents.

We were told about specific legislation that the community was monitoring, concerning the FY 2019 Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which would significantly strengthen security in our facilities by providing funds to help pay for increased security measures. Just days after the luncheon, the FY 2019 Homeland Security spending bill passed both houses, with a \$60 million provision for the FY 2019 NSGP.

Now that the bill has passed, we await news from Albany to find out how the portion of these funds that is allocated to New York, will be distributed. In particular, how much can we look forward to seeing here in Rochester, which is home to the state's second largest Jewish community after the NYC Metropolitan area?

While it was disturbing to discover that antisemitic incidents across the U.S. surged nearly 60% in 2017 (according to the Anti-Defamation League), the support which the Jewish community has received not only from political leaders but also from other faith communities, has been heart-warming, to say the least. Furthermore, the steps that our local Jewish Federation has taken to put local Jewish leaders in conversation with town and state police, the FBI and the Governor's office, has been extremely impressive and we are tremendously grateful to all those who work to protect us and keep us safe.

With blessings of שלום – Peace – to all,

Michael

Rabbi Michael Silbert

SHABBAT THIS WEEK

Friday, March 15 – Saturday, March 16, 2019



Candle lighting: 6:58pm
Shabbat ends: 8:00pm

Torah reading: Parashat Vayikra / Shabbat Zakhor
Triennial Year 3: Lev. 4:27-5:26 / Maftir: Deut. 25:17-19