



# News

from  
Assemblyman  
**DOV  
HIKIND**

DECEMBER 2012

## OUR LEGAL SEMINAR WAS A HUGE HIT

Assemblyman Hikind's free Legal Services Forum at the Boro Park Y saw a turnout of nearly one hundred Boro Park and Flatbush residents eager to take advantage of free and extremely useful legal advice. Attendees gained a wealth of knowledge on such topics as housing, Section 8, SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption), Social Security, Medicaid, changes in the home healthcare industry, IRS audits, unemployment benefits, family services for domestic violence and divorce, and public benefits from food stamps to welfare.



"This was a fabulous event," said the Assemblyman. "When community members are in need of legal counsel and advice, they should be aware that free services are available. If you aren't income-eligible for certain services, Brooklyn Legal Services can still offer guidance and in many cases referrals. I urge our community members to take advantage of these services and to contact my office with any questions."

## ASSEMBLYMAN DOV HIKIND

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## MR. MAYOR: METZITZAH B'PEH IS NOT NEGOTIABLE!

*“By making a law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, New York City would be joining the likes of modern-day Germany in attacking freedom of religion via the rites of circumcision.”*

—Assemblyman Dov Hikind

Assemblyman Hikind has remained vocal and active regarding New York City’s attack on the practice of performing circumcisions with metzitzah b’peh (direct oral suction).

“An attack on metzitzah b’peh—a tradition practiced by most Orthodox Jews—is an attack on Orthodox Judaism,” said Assemblyman Hikind. “The proposed law requiring written consent from a parent or legal guardian is an insult to the intelligence and dignity of Orthodox Jews who live in this city. It is degrading to attack a 3000-year-old custom that stands at the very apex of our faith. It is an attack upon the covenant that lies at the heart of our history and culture. A government-sponsored edict against the traditional practice of bris milah—

circumcision—is unconscionable and will undoubtedly result in some frightened Jews refraining from the bris milah of their sons altogether.

“By making a law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, New York City would be joining the likes of modern-day Germany in attacking freedom of religion via the rites of circumcision.

“I beseech the mayor and the NYC Department of Health: Allow us to impart our customs to our children who we love at least as much as the city loves them.”

The proposed legislation regarding metzitzah b’peh is currently on hold because our community leaders have challenged its legality in Federal court.

## PESHA ELIAS BIKUR CHOLIM: AN APPRECIATION

Assemblyman Hikind participated in a special Appreciation Event held by the Pasha Elias Bikur Cholim where he had the special pleasure of awarding Dr. Robert Goodman with the Community Service Award for his many years of service to our community. The Assemblyman also noted his enormous appreciation for the tireless work that Rabbi Yitzchok Fleischer does on behalf of our community.



## KOHANIM CAN FINALLY RETURN TO FRIENDS FIELD

*“...I thought what a shame it was that one of our community’s most beautiful parks couldn’t be enjoyed by everyone.”*

*—Assemblyman Dov Hikind*

After a long absence, Kohanim (Jewish priests) can return to Friends Field (Ave. L, E. 4 St., McDonald Ave., Ave. M), which they were barred from enjoying because of religious prohibitions resulting from the park abutting Washington Cemetery and a Kohain’s religious prohibition against entering a cemetery.

Assemblyman Hikind first became aware that the park posed a problem to some community members when a constituent contacted his office. Upon visiting the park, the Assemblyman saw firsthand what the problem was. “The tree branches from the cemetery hanging over the park and branches from the park were hanging into the cemetery,” he explains. “According to Jewish law, the park had become an extension of the cemetery. Kohanim are prohibited from entering cemeteries. I thought what a shame it was that one of our community’s most beautiful parks couldn’t be enjoyed by everyone.”

This summer, the Assemblyman met with Kevin Jeffrey, Brooklyn Borough Commissioner of Parks, and Jamey Hewitt, Director of Brooklyn Forestry, to help resolve all tree-related issues impacting Boro Park and Midwood residents. Regarding Friends



*Director Hewitt, tree trimmers and Assemblyman Hikind at Friends Field.*

Field, Assemblyman Hikind offered an easy solution. “It was just a matter of cutting back the branches,” he said. “What could be more simple?” The Parks Department agreed.

“Now our entire community can enjoy the park,” said Assemblyman Hikind. “What a nice way to usher in the New Year!”

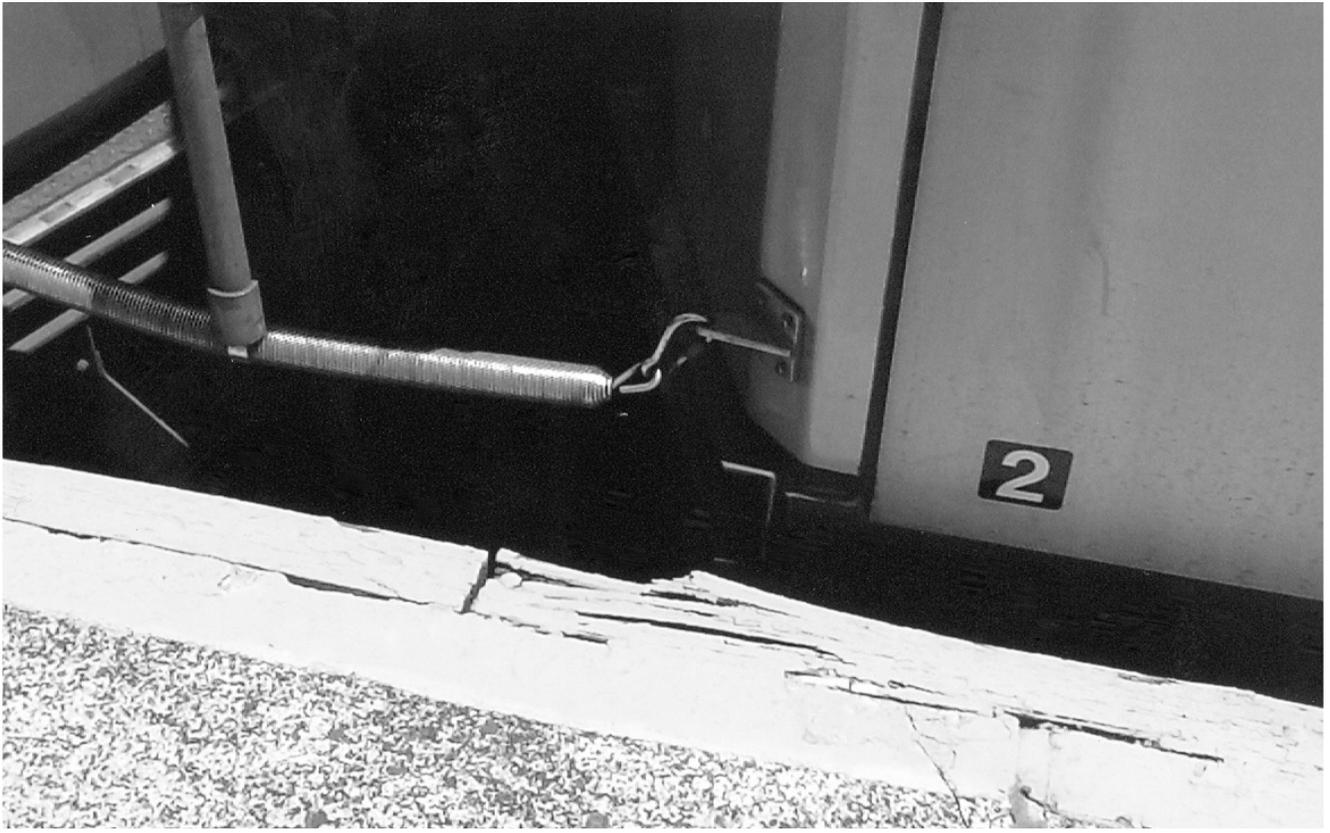
## LOOK OUT FOR IDENTITY THEFT

Assemblyman Hikind continues to warn community members to be on the lookout for fraudulent bank activity changes to their credit scores and other indications of identity theft. The FBI has contacted several Boro Park residents who were identified as potential victims of crimes after finding personal identifying information of these residents in the hands of would-be criminals in New England. Assemblyman Hikind’s senior aides worked with both the FBI and the credit bureaus to protect the community members who had been identified as potential victims.

“You don’t need to use the internet or even have a credit card to be a potential victim of identity theft,”

said the Assemblyman. “Thieves grow more and more sophisticated and can obtain your personal information from a driver’s license, bank account number, and many other ways. To best protect yourself it’s important to regularly monitor your bank and credit accounts and to occasionally check your credit scores. If there’s anything unusual going on, contact my office.”

To protect the community from potential identity theft, Assemblyman Hikind is planning a free personal and private document-shredding event for Boro Park and Flatbush residents in the near future. Details will be announced locally and at [www.dovhikind.blogspot.com](http://www.dovhikind.blogspot.com).



## CRACKS ON SUBWAY LEDGES ENDANGER COMMUTERS

*“Endangering riders for the want of a nail is outrageous.  
We are holding the MTA accountable.”*

*—Assemblyman Dov Hikind*

Assemblyman Hikind’s office recently concluded a new study of the conditions on the various subway lines that run through Boro Park and Midwood, where egregious conditions were documented on both the Manhattan and Brooklyn-bound sides of the 18th Avenue, Bay Parkway, and Avenue N stations. Wooden ledges along the F line platforms were found to be completely run down in some areas, with multiple cracks and holes creating the potential for a serious calamity.

“This is outrageous,” Assemblyman Hikind told the MTA. “Will it take a tragedy for the MTA to get serious about monitoring the state of the system?”

The Assemblyman has maintained the issue of subway safety for years, since his constituent,

a 14-year-old boy, was nearly killed as he boarded a northbound Q train; the platform edge crumbled beneath the boy, plunging him onto the tracks. Over the years, studies conducted by the Assemblyman’s office have revealed similar shoddy circumstances to that of the Kings Highway station throughout the transit system.

“If my staff can lead a discovery mission in our own district, I would certainly hope there are MTA employees directly responsible for fact-finding and fact-reporting with regard to hazardous conditions on transit lines,” said Assemblyman Hikind. “Endangering riders for the want of a nail is outrageous. We are holding the MTA accountable.”