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**Ari Brown
Assemblyman 20th District
Nassau County**

March 27, 2023

Commissioner Sam Miller
NY State Department of Health
External Affairs

Dear Commissioner Miller,

I wear several hats, one being a NYS Assemblyman, another, being the Deputy Mayor of the Village of Cedarhurst. I was appalled, but not surprised to learn that the NYS Department of Health sent a truck to our Orthodox Jewish community of the Five Towns on Long Island, displaying the subtle antisemitic trope of “the Jew spreading disease”.

Antisemitism should not be a fact of Jewish life, something that we or anyone should simply accept as a way of life. We Jews, like any other group, want to live unencumbered to practice our religion, to wear our yarmulkes, to attend synagogue and attend Jewish events, without fear of harassment or violence.

Antisemitism is a hatred that can be manifested in conspiracy theories, often portraying Jews as pulling the strings of the world, controlling banking and the media are often repeated epitaphs. One of the worst and historically generated tropes is that, “Jews spread disease”. Over the course of history, Jews have had many encounters with contagious diseases; often blamed for them. The Nazis, justified the walling off of the ghettos as a preventive measure against the spread of typhus, while some 300 Jewish communities were destroyed in the mass hysteria associated with the plague.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Antisemitism is sometimes expressed by people in power, in the soft and subtle bias of their words, much of which goes unchallenged. We have seen this disguised bigotry with the targeting of Orthodox Jewish communities by city and state

leaders during COVID-19 lockdowns in New York and now with a **New York State Department of Health** truck riding around Jewish neighborhoods with the rhetoric of, “*Polio is spreading in Israel, Get immunized now*”. They literally parked this truck today, March 27, 2023, in Parking Field One, in front of the Gourmet Glatt supermarket, Cedarhurst. It’s the same “Jews spread disease libel”. I will fight antisemitism and will not be silent whether it’s from a government official, media, academic institution, or whomever”. I would appreciate an expeditious response.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ari Brown".

Assemblyman Ari Brown

Cc. Congressman Anthony D’Esposito
County Executive Bruce Blakeman
Senator Patricia Canzoneri Fitzpatrick
Assemblyman Josh Jensen
Assemblyman Jake Blumencranz
Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny
Assemblyman Simcha Eichenstein
Assemblyman Dov Hikind
Mayor Benjamin Weinstock
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