

*Proposed cuts could devastate education funding for bullying prevention*

Syosset, NY— Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) and Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen M. Rice called visited Southwoods Middle School to call on Congress to provide robust funding for the U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program. This competitive grant program provides funds to schools for counseling programs that help combat bullying, which has become a growing problem locally and across the country. Both the President's proposed budget and the House Republican budget have proposed significant changes to this crucial program including consolidation it with others.

Rep. Israel said, "Combating bullying truly takes a village. We have made strides, but it would be devastating to cut funds to programs that are working. I will fight for this crucial funding, and I am honored to join with my colleague, DA Rice, who has been a true leader on this issue to bring much needed awareness for school officials, students and parents."

DA Rice said, "Every student deserves to be treated with dignity and to learn in a school free from bullying and harassment. School counselors are an essential resource to students and their parents, and critical partners in the fight against bullying in our schools and online. I'm proud to stand with Congressman Israel in his effort to continue funding for counselors who help continue anti-bullying programs in Long Island schools."

Rich Faber, a counselor who teaches peer education to Syosset students, echoed the congressman and district attorney's sentiments.

Mr. Faber said, "When it comes to bullying, we're looking to raise more awareness, not take away from it. Our only weapon is to educate our students about the impact of bullying, and we need this funding in order to do this."