Rockland County Illegal Housing Task Force

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June 16, 2016

Hon. Ellen C. Jaffee
One Blue Hill Plaza, Suite 1116
Pearl River, NY 10965

Dear Assemblywoman Jaffee:

More than 20 yeshivas targeted by the New York State Education Department for overdue fire-safety inspections turned to Ramapo and Kaser officials this month to get their paperwork done, sidestepping attempts by the county to send its own team into the facilities for review.

Education Department spokeswoman Jeanne Beattie said in an email that 22 schools have filed inspection reports done by either private inspections or Ramapo inspectors. The filings mean the schools won't be required to be inspected by the county. The county will be challenging those inspections because they were done with an unqualified inspector. In addition, with regard to the building inspector of Kaiser, the state has already stated that he is unfit due to his lack of enforcement in the Village of New Square

61 Carlton Road just registered with NYSED and was just inspected by the questionable inspector.
This property, during construction phase, changed site plans, does not have ample parking and has no complete sidewalks and traffic pattern entrances

In a March 14 letter from the State Department of Education to then Ramapo fire inspector Adam Peltz, department Facilities Planning Coordinator Carl Thurnau brings up multiple issues with inspections Peltz carried out. The state is calling into question several school building inspections carried out by the Ramapo fire inspector.

Thurnau also notes that during a March 3 conversation, Peltz said he would not cite the broken exit doors, as they were not required by code.
"It is unlikely that you took the time during your inspection to conduct a detailed code analysis to determine if those doors were required by code," Thurnau wrote. "You also indicated that you have not received any training on how to perform inspections. This cannot be accurate as you were required to take approximately 120 hours of code training by the Department of State for initial code enforcement certification and an additional 24 hours of training per year to maintain your certification."

In a March 18 letter to state Education Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia, state Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski wrote that, as of March 4, 26 Rockland private schools have failed to file annual safety reports. Zebrowski writes that Peltz had filed 23 inspections in the past year.
"It is clear that these fire inspections are not being conducted in a proper manner and possibly constitute a violation of law," he wrote. "Since the quality of inspections of these 23 schools is in question, I am asking that these schools be added to the list for the county fire coordinator to inspect.

Until the county fire coordinator can verify all school are inspected properly, The Task Force asks that no tax exemption or funding be granted or allowed.

Cordially,

John Kryger
Rockland County Illegal Housing Rask Force Chairman

"" Our mission is, regardless of ownership or possession, to eliminate illegal and unsafe housing in Rockland County, by use of all legal means available.