



# SSCNA

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## Press Release

ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY - On March 7, 2023 the Synagogue Security Council of North America (SSCNA) worked with renowned attorney, Jay Sekulow, from The American Center for Law & Justice (ACLI) to file an [Amicus Brief](#) in the [SPENCER V. NIGRELLI](#) case which challenges New York State's ban on carrying firearms in Houses of Worship. The case is being heard in the Second Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The Synagogue Security Council of North America ([www.sscna.org](http://www.sscna.org)) is a 501c3 non-profit organization formed to help synagogues develop and train congregant first responders. In an era of [increasing threats of violence against Jews](#) and the targeting of synagogues, New York's misguided law makes synagogues more vulnerable to violent attacks. According to the FBI, the average police response time to an active shooter call in the United States is over three minutes. In rural areas, this could be over thirty minutes. This means that in case of an attack, synagogue congregants will always be the first responders.

"The increasing threats and attacks against the Jewish people in recent years has created a paradigm shift in the way American Jewish communities think about security. We can no longer afford to delegate our communal security to the state." explained SSCNA's President and Managing Director Carmi Lawrence CPP CAS. The reality is that police cannot be everywhere at all times. Therefore, the only way to ensure Jewish institutions are protected against violent hate crimes, active threats, and terrorist attacks is for the Jewish community to take responsibility for and effectively manage their own security. ACLJ Executive Director Jordan Sekulow, stated "The idea that a church or synagogue would be specifically prohibited from allowing their congregants to protect themselves is abhorrent and violates the First and Second Amendments."

Jewish communities that have the resources to utilize [armed security](#) services generally only do so on the Sabbath and holidays due to financial constraints. Orthodox Jews pray three times a day at the synagogue, in addition to study classes and other synagogue programming. This means that Orthodox synagogues would need an armed guard present most of the time the synagogue building is open.

In addition, armed guards are not part of the synagogue community. As a result, they are mostly incapable of serving in a greeter/screener role to vet with accuracy who belongs and does not; who is a threat and who is not. The only financially viable and effective way to do this, according to the subject matter experts on the SSCNA board of directors and advisors, is to have volunteer synagogue congregants trained as effective armed first responders.

The SSCNA is pleased to be collaborating with the American Center for Law and Justice on this important case, and is proud to partner with them as they fight to defend our first and second amendment constitutional rights. The ACLJ's work is vital in preventing government overreach, by interfering in our ability to safely practice our religion and exercise our constitutional rights.