



**ICNY**  
Interfaith Center of New York

Dear Friends,

Protecting religious freedom and promoting civic engagement - two of the core peace strategies practiced by the Interfaith Center of New York for a quarter of a century - are particularly vital here in New York, one of the most diverse cities in the United States.

Regrettably, two recent US Supreme Court decisions have made our work more difficult.

Since 2012, ICNY has hosted public, private and faith-based educators from around the country for our three-week Summer Institute known as "[Religious Worlds of New York](#)".

Historically, our workshop instructors underscored the power-imbalance between teachers and students, and the importance of any kind of teachers refraining from proselytizing a particular religious tradition while on the job. This follows the Religious Freedom Center's guidance on how public school teachers can teach religion in Constitutionally appropriate way.

Unfortunately, one of the three significant religious freedom cases recently decided by the US Supreme Court has up-ended our approach. **Kennedy v.**

**Bremerton** allowed a high school football coach to pray with his students at the 50-yard line after a game.

Instead of ruling this public prayer to be a violation of the Establishment Clause, the Court majority put the religious freedom of the public school coach -- a government

employee -- *before those of his students*. Wrote Paul Peterson, father of four former Bremerton High School students,

*When [Coach] Kennedy met with the entire team on the field immediately following games, with the community watching, it would have been incredibly hard for a teenager, any teenager, to refuse to participate, even if Kennedy's prayers conflicted with the student's personal religious beliefs. I feel for any kids, especially religious minorities or nonreligious kids, who participated because they thought it was the only way to be a good teammate, to impress their coach and to be included as part of the team.*<sup>[2]</sup>

ICNY has, until now, instructed our summer scholars that, when they go on a class field trip to visit a local mosque, temple, or other house of worship, they must make certain that their religious leaders hosts do not - even in a well-meaning way - hand out proselytizing literature during the tour.

After **Kennedy v. Bremerton** how do we instruct our educators to teach religious literacy and also protect their students' religious freedom?

Our experience in other areas of our work teaches us skepticism when we see members of a dominant and well-resourced religious community being protected like this for expression in the public square. Would the same verdict have been reached in Kennedy v. Bremerton if a Muslim or Hindu football coach were leading prayers at the 50 yard line? It remains to be seen if the Court will offer such deference to religious liberty consistently across America's many faith traditions. Our experience of 25 years in New York City suggests not.

And that's not all.

For more than two decades, ICNY has relied on the countless contributions of female religious leaders to foster a flourishing and resilient civil society in our city of 8.5 million people. Early on we learned to change our terminology from "clergy" to "religious leader" in order to include female leaders in the many faith traditions that do not ordain women.

Many of these women -- Roman Catholics, Orthodox Jews, devout Muslims, and many others -- had more impressive track records of working for social change than their ordained male colleagues but were overlooked by the traditional hierarchy within their faith or denomination.

There is no question that the participation of female faith leaders and their constituencies in the public life of New York City has made us a stronger and more vibrant city.

By excluding women from reliable participation in public life, the Supreme Court's attack on abortion rights in **Dobbs vs. Jackson** diminishes our entire democracy -- not only the rights of those Americans who can become pregnant.

Women of diverse faiths make up most of what we refer to as "civil society." Their own views and the teachings of their faith traditions no doubt vary widely on the question of when life begins. (Indeed, state legislators who adopt wholesale a narrow swath of Christian teaching on this question should also be the targets of free exercise lawsuits from other Christian and non-Christian people of faith whose traditions disagree.)

However diverse the faith perspectives of American women are on these subjects, we know uniformly that when women can't control their own reproductive lives, they are pushed to the sidelines of public life. And thus, the majority ruling in *Dobbs vs. Jackson* stymies our country's democracy -- including the civic life of New York City --making it weaker, less resilient, and more anemic.

Sincerely,



REV. DR. CHLOÉ DREYER

Executive Director

[2] NBC News Opinion, June 27,

2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/coach-kennedy-wins-supreme-court-case-praying-football-games-students-rcna35478>

To find this statement on our website [Click Here](#).

---

**ICNY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS - JULY  
SUPPLEMENT**

## INTERFAITH CIVIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Applications to join the 2022-23  
Leadership Academy open soon



**ICNY**  
Interfaith Center of New York

Civic engagement, advocacy, and community organizing training for diverse New York religious leaders. Stipends for participants, and grants for community projects.

Learn more about the program at [interfaithcenter.org/icla](https://interfaithcenter.org/icla)

Request application by emailing [hanadi@interfaithcenter.org](mailto:hanadi@interfaithcenter.org)



## Applications for the 2022-23 ICLA Fellows Cohort Open Soon

[Click Here to Request an Application](#)

On June 29th, ICNY graduated our third cohort of [Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy fellows](#), whose final projects ranged from supporting survivors and victims' of the Twin Parks Fire in the Bronx, to a community art exhibit highlighting anti-gun

violence work on Staten Island. All fourteen fellows gained civic engagement tools, grassroots organizing skills, and a better understanding of city and state government. City Council Member [Shahana Hanif](#) (District 39), the first Muslim woman elected to City Council, offered a keynote address, reflecting on the role her faith plays in her life, as well as on the importance of civic engagement for diverse faith communities. Each fellow received a commendation from Mayor Eric Adams.

We are also looking forward to working with our fourth cohort of ICLA fellows in the coming year. Applications for the 2022-2023 Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy will be available soon. If you or a member of your community would like to apply, please email ICNY Director of Community Partnerships Hanadi Doleh at [hanadi@interfaithcenter.org](mailto:hanadi@interfaithcenter.org).

---

Save the Date...

Senator  
Chris  
Murphy  
(CT)



In Conversation  
with  
Senator Chris  
Murphy,  
A Lead Negotiator  
on New  
Gun Legislation

July 12  
@  
12 pm



The New York Board of Rabbis  
*Where diversity and unity meet*





# Conversation with Senator Chris Murphy, a Lead Negotiator on New Gun Legislation

Tuesday, July 12 - 12:00 PM EST

[Click Here to Register](#)

Join ICNY and the the New York Board of Rabbis for a conversation with Senator Chris Murphy, a lead negotiator on New Gun Legislation.

Chris Murphy, the junior United States Senator for Connecticut, has dedicated his career to public service as an advocate for Connecticut families. Senator Murphy has been a strong voice in the Senate fighting for job creation, affordable health care, education, sensible gun laws, and a forward-looking foreign policy.

As a member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) Senator Murphy has worked to make college more affordable and ensure that our public education system works to serve all students. Senator Murphy also led a bipartisan effort to reform our mental health system, working across the aisle to craft the first comprehensive mental health bill in the Senate in decades.

Senator Murphy has laid out a forward-thinking foreign policy vision for the United States. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, he has been an outspoken proponent of diplomacy, international human rights and the need for clear-eyed American leadership abroad.

Following the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school in 2012, Senator Murphy became one of the leading proponents of commonsense reforms to reduce gun violence. He has championed a number of bipartisan bills aimed at expanding background checks and keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.

---

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**FREE SUMMER MEALS NYC**

Starting June 28 for everyone 18 years old and under at select public schools, community pools and parks.

Available for iOS & Android

311

[schools.nyc.gov/summermeals](https://schools.nyc.gov/summermeals)  
Dates, times, locations and menus are subject to change.

NYC FOOD to 304-304  
Standard Text Messaging Rates May Apply

AGENCY IFOOD NOKID HUNGRY

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## Free Summer Meals NYC

**Started June 28: for everyone 18 years old and under at select public schools, community pools and parks**

[Click Here to Find a Meal](#)

Breakfast and lunch will continue beyond the instructional school year. the NYC Department of Education's Summer Meals Program is available throughout New York City to anyone ages 18 years old and under. Designated public schools, community pool centers, parks, and food trucks will be open for service. No registration, documentation, or ID is necessary to receive a free breakfast or lunch meal.

Breakfast and lunch meals reflect the NYC Department of Education's commitment to the highest standard of nutrition. Our meals meet or exceed U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards and do not use food additives such as artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives. We offer a variety of fresh fruit, whole grains, vegetables, and salads for children to enjoy.

Use the [Find A Location Search](#) to view the menu(s) served at that location.

---





# NYPD

New York City Police Department

212-RECRUIT  
NYPDRECRUIT.COM

## POLICE OFFICER EXAM



**REGISTRATION PERIOD BEGINS:  
JUNE 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Starting Salary: **\$42,500**  
Salary After 5 ½ Years: **\$85,292**

**Exam is Free of Charge**  
**Register early to secure a seat @ [nyc.gov/oasys](https://nyc.gov/oasys)**

For more information, visit  
**NYPDRECRUIT.COM**, call us  
at **212-RECRUIT**, or scan **QR Code**  
with your smart phone:



   @NYPDRECRUIT

*NYPD is an Equal Opportunity Employer*



# Police Officer Exam

## Filing Period Ends on Friday, July 15

The filing period for the next Police Officer Exam comes to an ends on July 15. The Exam is free of charge, register early to secure a seat at [nyc.gov/oasys](https://nyc.gov/oasys). For more information, visit [nypdrecruit.com](https://nypdrecruit.com), you can also call 212-RECRUIT, or scan the QR code on the flyer above.

*The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) works to overcome prejudice, violence, and misunderstanding by activating the power of the city's grassroots religious and civic leaders and their communities.*

[Donate](#)



**ICNY**  
Interfaith Center of New York



© 2021 The Interfaith Center of New York