

Mayor Bosse Invited to Antisemitism Summit in Athens

BY ANA FIGUEROA

Beverly Hills Mayor Lili Bosse will attend the Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism in Athens, Greece from Nov. 30 to Dec. 1. Chaired by Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis, in partnership with the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM), the event is co-hosted by the Center for Jewish Impact and the Jewish Federations of North America.

The summit's mission is to present strategies, exchange ideas and create partnerships among municipal leaders united with a common purpose: to fight antisemitism.

For Bosse, the child of Holocaust survivors, it is destiny.

"This is something I'm very, very, very passionate about. It's part of who I am," Bosse told the Courier.

The topic is one of increasing concern



Mayor Lili Bosse

on both the local and global stage. Here in the United States, incidents of antisemitism continue to rise, according to statistics from See **BOSSE INVITED**, page 17

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the Anti-Defamation League. Hate speech proliferates on social media, which in turn magnifies the rantings of high-profile individuals. The trends show no sign of abating.

"I was on a U.S. Conference of Mayors Zoom yesterday that was talking about combating hate and extremism. I've gone to the U.S. Conference of Mayors before, and I don't recall this being a topic that we had talked about. So, this is clearly front and center," said Bosse.

Last year CAM hosted its inaugural Mayors Summit virtually. Participants ranged from the Mayor of Pittsburg to the Mayor of Poway, as well as the then-Mayor of West Hollywood and current Supervisor-elect Lindsey Horvath.

The leaders discussed innovative ideas in the areas of education, law enforcement, and community-building, among other topics.

This year, Bosse and other high-profile attendees such as New York City Mayor Eric Adams have been invited at the organizer's expense to attend the first in-person event. Bosse is especially enthusiastic about the global reach of the Athens summit.

While not slated to give a formal address, Bosse fully intends to let her voice be heard.

"Being a daughter of an Auschwitz survivor, my mother always told me to never give up. She told me to always, always tell her story. We hear, 'never forget,' and we hear 'never again,' and yet here we are again in 2022, having the same conversation. That is why I intend to speak up a lot while I'm there to tell the story of what is happening in our city and neighboring cities. I will tell the story as somebody whose whole family was murdered because of antisemitism. And I will tell the story as I see it. There are those who defend this as free speech and the First Amendment. But we have seen too many examples of how hate speech does lead to violence," said Bosse.

She also believes it is important to show that no destination is immune from the scourge of hate, even one with a glamorous, idyllic image, such as Beverly Hills.

"We've seen here locally flyers in our city filled with hate and antisemitism. We've seen a van drive around our city with hateful slogans. And we've seen people standing over the 405 with a Nazi salute. Hate speech is meant to divide. But these acts brought our community even more together. I am hoping to inspire other mayors and other people to never be fearful about speaking out against hatred," she said.

A major objective of the summit is to share best practices, and Bosse hopes to bring ideas back to Beverly Hills. Bosse herself will have a lot to share about ideas she has spearheaded here. Security concepts and solutions, for example, feature prominently on the summit agenda. Beverly Hills excels in both, thanks to initiatives she has sponsored, such as The Real-Time Watch Center and BHPD Alerts.

"I think we are definitely using technology in ways that many other cities and countries are not. I know that for a fact because Chief Stainbrook has said that he's had at least 30 law enforcement agencies come to look at our Real-Time Watch Center because they're in awe of what we're doing. I think we have a very powerful story to tell," said Bosse.

Convinced that a city on the world stage should be seen as a leader in the movement against hate, Bosse is tireless in her efforts.

"Just two weeks ago, the 'Dr. Phil' show invited me to speak. I was happy to see that he was doing a story about antisemitism. So, for me to fly out literally for two days to attend a summit about antisemitism, I'm going to do it. We are seeing now that what happens outside of the United States does affect us. We are one world. I feel that we

are really fighting for the soul of humanity. And humanity, in my mind, knows no borders. It's important that this summit is happening on the other side of the world and that Beverly Hills be represented there."

It is equally important – and significant – that Bosse is representing Beverly Hills.

"When I first ran for office back in 2011, I always told people that I grew up here on South Maple Drive with my parents, and that I was an only child of Holocaust survivors. That was literally the first thing that came out of my mouth. People would say to me, 'Why does that matter?' And I really did feel it mattered because it shaped my being, my sense of commitment to community and my perseverance. I had no idea in 2011 that I was going to be Mayor in 2022 and that it would matter so much now. I don't think any of us thought that we would be having this conversation in 2022."

She adds, "I have more fire and more strength now. I am my mother's daughter. It's not just me as a Jew and a child of an Auschwitz survivor, but it's everybody's responsibility to stand up and say no to hate of any kind. It is up to us as human beings to fight for each other. That's why I feel that this summit is very, very necessary. And there is nothing that will keep me away." ●