

Profile

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Outside of politics, Wildes has carved out a career as a noted immigration attorney. Following his work at the U.S. Attorney's Office, he joined Wildes and Weinberg, the firm his father founded, and began making a name for himself as representation of choice in difficult deportation cases. He has testified on Capital Hill in connection with anti-terrorist litigation, and has been a guest lecturer and panelist at Yale, New York University, and Cardozo School of Law. Still involved with the police force, he is of counsel for the National Police Defense Foundation and the New Jersey State Law Enforcement Asian-American Advisory Committee.

As mayor of Englewood, Wildes has faced a unique set of challenges. One of the best known came when Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi planned a visit to the U.S. this year. Qaddafi, who has been known as a sponsor of terrorist activities, planned on setting up temporary residence on a Libyan-owned estate in Englewood. Few American cities would be excited about the prospect of hosting Qaddafi, but in Englewood there was a particularly strong outcry; the city is home to a large religious Jewish population, many of whom took particular issue with Qaddafi's support of anti-Israel terrorist activity. Responding to massive community protest regarding the visit, Wildes used a stop-work order to cease construction of the temporary residence where Qaddafi planned to stay, and relied on a State Department injunction against the future use of the property by anyone other than its owner, a Libyan diplomat. In explanation of the stop-work order, Wildes responded to the publication *The Jewish State* that "[w]e do not know if it's being used illicitly as a safe house or otherwise. I do not trust their word. I do not trust their presence. I do not trust them at all."

Less publicized, but no less important, is Wildes' approach to economic issues. Englewood is an economically diverse town, home to both poor and affluent residents. Wildes has chosen to address this issue in a personal way. Every year around Thanksgiving, he, his wife, and their four children, along with roughly twenty volunteers from all walks of life, prepare bags filled with fresh produce, grocery items, donations from local businesses (t-shirts, knick-knacks) and health-related items in their Englewood home. They then gather together to deliver the bags on Thanksgiving Day to hundreds of seniors living in public housing in Englewood. Mayor Wildes feels that this is particularly important for homebound residents of the complexes, who look forward not just to the distribution but to the yearly visit from Wildes and company. Wildes feels it extremely important for his children to understand charity and the importance of giving back to those less fortunate, and he sees the visits as an opportunity to lead by example, and to involve his own family in the community that he governs and the commitment to public service that has characterized his career.

