



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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July 14, 2022

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee, Chair
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 557 (MURATSUCHI) SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 557 (Muratsuchi).

California, like much of the nation, has seen a recent increase in hate crime activity. In the last 10 years, reported hate crime events have increased by 89.6 percent. Reported hate crime events increased 32.6 percent from 2020 to 2021. The number of reported hate crime offenses, victims, and suspects increased about 42 percent during that same time.

Reported hate crime events involving a racial bias overall increased 33.1 percent from 875 in 2020 to 1,165 in 2021.

- Anti-black or African American bias events rose from 456 in 2020 to 513 in 2021, an increase of 12.5 percent.
- Anti-Hispanic or Latino events rose from 152 in 2020 to 197 in 2021, an increase of 29.6 percent.
- Anti-Asian bias events rose from 89 in 2020 to 247 in 2021, an increase of 177.5 percent.

Reported hate crime events involving a religion bias increased 21.1 percent from 180 in 2020 to 218 in 2021.

- Anti-Jewish bias events rose from 115 in 2020 to 152 in 2021, an increase of 32.2 percent.
- Anti-Catholic bias events rose from 6 in 2020 to 16 in 2021.

Reported hate crime events involving a sexual orientation bias increased 47.8 percent from 205 in 2020 to 303 in 2021.

- Anti-gay (male) bias events rose from 162 in 2020 to 211 in 2021, an increase of 30.2 percent.
- Anti-homosexual bias events rose from 21 in 2020 to 61 in 2021.
- Anti-lesbian bias events rose from 18 in 2020 to 27 in 2021.

Reported hate crime offenses increased 42.1 percent from 1,563 in 2020 to 2,221 in 2021.

- Violent crime offenses increased 47.4 percent from 1,088 in 2020 to 1,604 in 2021.
- Property crime offenses increased 27.7 percent from 469 in 2020 to 599 in 2021.

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The Attorney General's latest report on hate crimes in California recommends that hate crime be prosecuted vertically. Vertical prosecution means a single prosecutor handles a case from start to finish – to both promote accurate and consistent prosecution and provide continuity for the victim.

AB 557 will help implement this recommendation by establishing a pilot grant program for District Attorney offices to create or expand vertical prosecution units for hate crimes. In addition to assigning a single prosecutor to each hate crime case, these units will also connect victims with victim advocates.

Vertical prosecution of cases involving vulnerable victims has numerous benefits, each with the potential to improve public safety. With vertical prosecution, victims are able to work with the same prosecutor and investigator from the time potential charges are first reviewed through the sentencing of the offender. Vertical prosecution has shown to improve conviction rates, reduce victim trauma, and provide more consistent, appropriate sentencing. It is therefore considered best practice.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Daniel Felizzatto in my Sacramento Legislative Office at (916) 442-0668.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney

cc: Assembly Member Muratsuchi