



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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June 19, 2023

The Honorable Phil Ting
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 449 (TING) SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Ting:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 449.

AB 449 requires all state or local law enforcement agencies to adopt a hate crime policy by July 1, 2024, and to forward a copy of the policy to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure it complies with state law.

Although hate crimes make up a small percentage of total reported crimes, the number of reported hate crimes in California has increased. In 2020, the DOJ reported hate crime events increased 31.0 percent from 1,015 in 2019 to 1,330 in 2020. The report also found hate crime offenses increased 23.9 percent from 1,261 in 2019 to 1,563 in 2020. According to DOJ's 2021 report on hate crimes, "hate crime events" reported to law enforcement "increased 32.6 percent from 1,330 in 2020 to 1,763 in 2021," and "hate crime offense increased 42.1 percent from 1,563 in 2020 to 2,221 in 2021." Specifically, the DOJ found that "[v]iolent [hate] crime offenses increased 47.4 percent from 1,088 in 2020 to 1,604 in 2021." Even with these statistics it is still well known that hate crime incidents remain underreported in California.

Hate crimes severely impact victims. Hate crimes also impact the victim's community. According to the California State Auditor, "[T]hese crimes likely had a significant impact on the groups to which victims belonged... [by] communicat[ing] to members of the victims' groups that they are unwelcome and unsafe in their communities." Indeed, "Entire communities can feel the impacts of victimization. Members of the targeted community may experience vicarious trauma symptoms resulting from witnessing others being victimized. In addition, a review of structural discrimination shows that for a targeted vulnerable group, long-standing, systemic inequalities can be seen in economic, housing, and educational disparities."

A 2018 report by the California State Auditor found that law enforcement had not taken sufficient action to identify, report, and respond to hate crimes. According to the report, "Officers at...law enforcement agencies might have been better equipped to identify hate crimes

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if their agencies had implemented better methods for doing so and provided periodic training.” The report added, “At local law enforcement agencies we reviewed, a lack of hate crime training and protocols, in addition to little proactive guidance and oversight from DOJ, have contributed to the underreporting of hate crimes.”

California currently does not require law enforcement agencies to have a hate crimes policy. Given the rise in reported hate crimes (and knowing that hate crimes remain underreported) and the impacts these crimes have on the victim and their community, it seems appropriate to require law enforcement agencies to develop hate crime policies.

For these reasons our Office is pleased to support AB 449.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gascón', written in a cursive style.

GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney