



Civil Rights Department • Commission on the State of Hate

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COMMISSION ON THE STATE OF HATE

Meeting Notice and Agenda

April 24, 2024, 9:00 am PT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89588893691>

and/or

1-669-444-9171 and Meeting ID: 895 8889 3691

Commission members will participate in the meeting via teleconference. Members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting may join via the link above or at the address below. To the extent that Zoom requires members of the public to enter information as a condition of attending the meeting, members of the public may enter pseudonyms or other anonymous information.

Commissioners Present

Chair Russell Roybal

Commissioner Cynthia Choi

Commissioner Andrea Beth Damsky

Commissioner Cece Feiler

Commissioner Brian Levin

Commissioner Shirin Sinnar

Ex-Officio Members Present

Damon Brown, Department of Justice

Civil Rights Department Staff Present

Kevin Kish, CRD Director

Adam Romero, CRD Deputy Director

Becky Monroe, CRD Deputy Director

Alec Watts, Assistant Deputy Director

Monica Chavez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist

Shanna Hart, CRD Counsel

Shilpa Ram, CRD Counsel

Marquez Equalibria, Assistant Deputy Director

Gregory Mann, CCRU

Christina Teixeira, CCRU

Others Present

An estimated 19 members of the public participated virtually.

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

Chair Roybal called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

They welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the year for the Commission on the State of Hate. They shared the translated closed captioning available for this meeting.

B. Establishment of a Quorum

Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts conducted roll call.

C. Review of the Agenda

Chair Roybal reviewed the agenda and public comment process.

II. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Damsky moved to approve the minutes for the March meeting; seconded by Commissioner Feiler. Commissioner Damsky removed her motion to approve the minutes to abstain due to her absence from the community forum.

Commissioner Levin moved to approve the march meeting and community forum minutes; seconded by commissioner Feiler.

Commission action:

The minutes were approved:

- Ayes: 5 - Roybal, Choi, Feiler, Levin, and Sinnar
- Abstain: 1 – Damsky
- Nay: 0

III. Discussion Regarding the Commission’s Annual Report

Assistant Deputy Director Watts Provided a high-level summary of changes to the annual report's

second draft, mentioning edits from commissioner feedback and detailed select edits:

- Adjustments based on Commissioner input; discussion of hate related to the Middle East conflict moved to a separate section; new data on hate on college campuses and city-level patterns in California; information added on targeted violence against the unhoused population.
- Updates on law enforcement data collection on hate incidents.
- Emphasis on caution in interpreting studies; additional conditions for intergroup contact effectiveness; additional information on restorative justice; and a new section on the influence of community leaders on anti-hate messages.
- Appendix updates included technical survey data and a summary of legislation. Announced briefings on prevention and intervention strategies and resources after mass casualty events.

Sara Wilf presented on her literature review of the efficacy of K-12 school-based anti-hate programs:

- Reviewed increasing hate crimes in schools and the strategic importance of schools in addressing hate.
- Described research methodology and findings, emphasizing that effective programs often combine various mechanisms like intergroup contact, social and emotional learning, and awareness interventions.
- Highlighted best practices for program implementation and effectiveness, stressing the need for long-term, age-specific interventions with adequate staff training.
- Provided recommendations to monitor program impacts and collaborate with researchers to improve and expand anti-hate efforts. Mentioned the lack of peer-reviewed studies on many existing school programs and called for more investment and research, particularly among marginalized student populations.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Levin highlighted the relevance of surveys and studies like those from Inside Higher Ed, showing the importance of empathy building, communication, and restorative justice in educational settings.

Commissioner Damsky acknowledged the need for stakeholder buy-in for ethnic studies classes, expressing intent to discuss further in the report.

Commissioner Choi raised concerns about the lack of resources and capacity in school settings for implementing alternatives to suspension, such as restorative justice, and the ongoing support needed.

Sara Wilf responded to Commissioner Choi's comments, noting that her research touched on resource constraints but did not focus on it extensively.

Assistant Deputy Director Watts contributed by emphasizing the need to consider the resources required for restorative justice programs in comparison to existing systems. Mentioned that some recommendations can be implemented straightforwardly, like disaggregating data on bullying to better understand it. Stressed the importance of considering the evidence when schools decide to invest in programs.

Commissioner Choi added concerns about broader capacity issues, such as teacher shortages and the mental health crisis among students. Highlighted the problem of inadequate resources for program evaluation.

Presentation from Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts on public messaging as a tool for prevention:

- Acknowledged the contributions of Nya Hardaway, PhD and JD candidate from Stanford University, who led the project but could not attend the meeting.
- Provided an overview of the use of public messaging in preventing hate, defined broadly as communication initiatives in public and online spaces.
- Discussed the review of peer-reviewed research focused on preventing and reducing interpersonal biases and the role of social norms in influencing behavior.
- Highlighted several gaps in the research, such as studies mostly showing short-term effects and having relatively small effect sizes.
- Introduced evidence-based guiding principles developed from the research to aid in designing public messages aimed at preventing hate.
- Discussed guiding principles such as encouraging empathy and perspective taking, employing narrative stories and entertainment, emphasizing and aligning descriptive and injunctive norms, and considering the messenger and the audience.

Commission Discussion:

Chair Roybal highlighted the significance of political leaders' efforts in calming public sentiment during crises.

Commissioner Sinnar commented on the importance of not normalizing or promoting problematic behaviors. She highlighted the report's caution in not making explicit recommendations due to existing uncertainties.

Commissioner Damsky discussed the value of the inclusion of public messaging in strategies to prevent hate.

Commissioner Levin discussed the complexities and gaps in research on public messaging and its societal impacts. He cited specific instances where public messaging by prominent figures played a crucial role.

Commissioner Feiler highlighted the influence of leaders' public messaging to family psychological

theories, where leaders' behaviors can model societal norms much like parental behavior influences children.

Assistant Deputy Director Watts presented on Half Moon Bay and Monterey Park:

- Introduced the discussion topic concerning lessons learned from the mass casualty events in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay, affecting Asian-American and Latino communities.
- Highlighted the work of the Community Conflict Resolution Unit and California vs Hate to provide support.
- Emphasized the need for a broad range of resources and services for affected individuals, including trauma-informed mental health services, legal assistance, and culturally sensitive funeral arrangements.
- Discussed the necessity for multilingual resources and services, skilled interpreters and minimizing handoffs.
- Proposed streamlining access to resources, implementing a "no wrong door" policy, and creating a statewide response team.

Commission discussion:

Deputy Director Becky Monroe supported the lessons drawn from community leadership during the incidents and stressed the importance of a seamless governmental support system where victims don't get turned away due to procedural errors, especially during times of crisis. She mentioned the role of state agencies in following the lead of community leaders and lifting up targeted communities, operating mainly behind the scenes.

Commissioner Choi discussed the challenges faced by people with different immigration statuses in accessing services, underlining the importance of compassionate and responsive government and community actions. She shared positive feedback from Chinese migrant workers on the support and information they received.

Commissioner Feiler inquired about the existence of a mental health crisis response team and the readiness of such services during mass casualty events.

Deputy Director Monroe acknowledged the existence of emergency mental health services, not directly from the civil rights department but other state agencies, emphasizing the need for them to be accessible, language-appropriate, and culturally competent.

Commissioner Feiler responded that the UCs and the Steinburg Institute have a partnership and it might be worth reaching out to them.

Commissioner Levin highlighted the Commission's broad scope in addressing issues from religious-based hate to disabilities, and expressed gratitude to all members for their dedication and contributions.

Commissioner discussion on the overall report:

Commissioner Levin emphasized the need to update reports with the latest data on hate crimes, highlighted the importance of the Constitution and civil liberties, stressed the importance of inclusive and empathetic education, and announced plans to advocate for federal funding and support for civil rights initiatives in Washington, D.C.

Commissioner Damsky suggested including more detailed information on the challenges and debates surrounding the ethnic studies curriculum in the Commission's report.

Commissioner Sinnar expressed concerns regarding the ethnic studies curriculum and the discussion in the report on the conflict in Gaza and Israel.

Commissioner Feiler disagreed with Commissioner Sinnar's proposed edit and expressed concerns about the absence of information on physical attacks against Jewish students on UC campuses in the report.

Ex Officio Commissioner Brown suggested the state Board of Education and the Department of Justice (DOJ) could issue public guidance on the ethnic studies curriculum to highlight its expansiveness and inclusivity and recommended providing external resources to enhance understanding and awareness of the curriculum issues and implementations.

Commissioner Damsky requested links to the DOJ letters on the ethnic studies curriculum and agreed with Commissioner Feiler's view on the report's current language regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Commissioner Sinnar offered alternative language, arguing that it is a neutral and factual description of the ongoing situation. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging the Israeli military operation in Gaza and its severe impact.

Commissioner Choi expressed concern over the difficulty of the discussion regarding the report's language on the s conflict and proposed creating a smaller committee to handle the sensitive issue.

Commissioner Levin wanted clarification on Commissioner Choi's comments about process and the language used in the report.

Commissioner Choi clarified that she supports reviewing the report's language further and suggested not resolving this matter in the current meeting to allow more comprehensive engagement and input.

Chair Roybal proposed voting to approve the current report and delegate any further changes to the staff, chair, and vice-chair, consulting Commissioners or subcommittees as necessary for substantive changes.

Commissioner Choi expressed difficulty in voting to approve the current report version due to the weight of the discussions and suggested amendments and further discussion.

Chair Roybal acknowledged the need for more discussion and potential amendments to the process and proposed to continue hearing from other Commissioners.

Commissioner Damsky suggested a revised approach for the report section that acknowledges the differing views.

Commissioner Levin emphasized the need for the Commission to assert its role independently, raised a question about language referring to the conflict, and highlighted the importance of considering diverse perspectives within the Commission.

Commissioner Feiler expressed an edit and supported the idea of recognizing dual perspectives in the Commission's approach to sensitive issues.

Note: Ex Officio Commissioner Brown was having technical issues and had his camera off.

Commission took a break from 10:51-11:03am.

Chair Roybal presented two options for addressing the discussion on a particular report section: continuing the discussion or forming an ad-hoc subcommittee.

Commissioner Choi suggested recognizing diverse perspectives within various communities, including historical context, in the report.

Commissioner Feiler supported the inclusion of diverse perspectives as outlined by Commissioner Damsky, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging intergenerational pain and its role in ongoing conflicts.

Commissioner Levin advocated for voting rather than forming an ad hoc subcommittee and proposed a specific language change in the report to reflect a neutral viewpoint.

Commissioner Damsky proposed potentially sending the current section of the report to the Governor's Office with a note indicating ongoing work, reflecting concerns about its readiness.

Commissioner Sinnar voiced hesitation about voting on the current draft and the language used, suggesting further consideration was needed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

Commissioner Feiler agreed with the need for more consideration on the language used in the report and expressed willingness to vote on the language if it remained narrowly defined.

Commissioner Levin expressed openness to either voting immediately or forming an ad hoc subcommittee.

Chair Roybal initiated a discussion on whether to form an ad hoc subcommittee, asking for a show of hands from commissioners willing to participate.

Commissioners that raised their hands: Commissioners Levin, Sinnar, Choi, and Feiler

Commissioner Levin highlighted the importance of addressing anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish victimizations in the report. He later volunteered to step down from the ad hoc subcommittee to meet the requirement of keeping the committee to two members.

Commissioner Feiler raised a concern about including incidents of violence against Jewish students in the report. She asked about the logistics and implications of having four members on the ad hoc subcommittee.

Commissioner Choi stepped back from joining the ad hoc subcommittee.

Assistant Deputy Director Watts suggested limiting the ad hoc committee to two members for efficiency and easier management of the drafting process.

Chair Roybal confirmed the formation of an ad hoc subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Filer and Sinnar. They questioned the procedural need for a motion to establish the committee and outlined the committee's mandate as time-limited, working over the next month on a specific report section.

Commissioner Sinnar, Damsky, and Feiler discussed the following alternative language: "Israeli invasion of Gaza."

Commissioner Damsky supported the idea of moving forward with the ad hoc subcommittee but expressed reservations about the new suggested language. She raised a question about whether the subcommittee's outcomes would be reviewed by the full Commission before finalizing the report.

Commissioner Feiler voiced discomfort with the suggested language, indicating a preference to refer the matter to the ad hoc subcommittee.

Commission Action:

Commissioner Damsky moved that that Commission vote on establishing an ad hoc subcommittee meeting; Commissioner Levin seconded.

Commissioner Levin emphasized the importance of respectful discussion and consensus-building, praising the commission's approach to handling sensitive topics.

The Commission unanimously voted to establish an ad hoc subcommittee.

- Ayes: 6 - Roybal, Choi, Damsky, Feiler, Levin, and Sinnar

- Nay: 0

Chair Roybal stated that the ad hoc subcommittee will have 30 days to work with staff.

In chat:

Damon Brwon shared: <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/Legal%20Alert%20Re%20Inclusive%20Curricula.1.9.24.1157CLEAN.pdf>

Director Kevin Kish: "I have to leave to attend another meeting but want to thank you all (Commissioners and colleagues) for your incredible work. See you soon!"

IV. Chair and Subcommittees Updates and Discussion

A. Chair Russell Roybal

Updates provided by Chair Roybal:

- Wished a happy Passover to all celebrants.
- Announced the hiring of Dr. Kevin D. Thomas as a research data specialist for the commission, with a formal introduction planned for the next meeting.
- Shared that they participated in the California Racial Equity Commission meeting as a panelist.
- Mentioned the potential for future joint community forums with the Racial Equity Commission.
- Noted the upcoming community forum on May 11th in Shingle Springs, hosted by Commissioner Cuellar.
- Promoted the upcoming United Against Hate Week from September 21-27.
- Encouraged reporting hate incidents through the CA vs Hate.

In the chat:

Monica Chavez: <https://www.unitedagainsthateweek.org>

B. Subcommittee on Data and Research

Updates provided by Commissioner Sinnar:

- Discussed ongoing projects, including a research convening with the UCLA Institute for the Study of Hate, aimed at merging academic research with practical policy initiatives.
- Requested recommendations for community-based researchers to involve in the project, preferring communication with staff post-meeting for suggestions.

C. Subcommittee on Policy Recommendations and Best Practices in Other Jurisdictions

Updates provided by Commissioner Choi:

- Touched on concerns about campus safety and free speech, citing recent events at USC and other campuses.
- Expressed the need to examine the role of institutions in potentially escalating conflicts and the importance of ensuring physical and intellectual safety for Jewish, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian students.

Commission discussion:

Commissioner Sinnar commented on police deployment on college campuses in California, citing recent instance at Stanford, highlighted the broader issue of the criminalization of protest, noting that this has been a concern in California and elsewhere.

D. Subcommittee on Recommendations for Law Enforcement

Updates provided by Deputy Director Monroe:

- Acknowledged the efforts of the subcommittee and other leaders in organizing a three-day training session with POST.
- Identified key participants in the training from various organizations and law enforcement, including California Black Media, LAPD, and former DOJ personnel.
- Discussed the training outline, focusing on the importance of collecting hate incident data and new obligations under AB 449 for officers.
- Announced the ongoing efforts to feature community voices and survivors of hate crimes in the training.

Updates provided by Commissioner Damsky:

- Addressed specific questions raised in the previous meeting about POST's role in training tribal law enforcement and the continuing education certification process.
- Clarified that POST certifies curriculums and tracks participation through their software, including the allocation of credits for participation.
- Mentioned recent communications and preparations for upcoming meetings to develop video content for training, scheduled to start on April 30th.

Commission discussion:

Commissioner Sinnar expressed concerns about law enforcement collecting non-criminal incident data, questioning the implications of such practices.

Deputy Director Monroe responded by acknowledging the concern and stating that the training video would promote reporting to CA vs. Hate.

Commissioner Damsky noted that reporting data on hate incidents would aid in building stronger cases for prosecuting hate crimes.

Commissioner Levin expressed concerns about collecting non-criminal bias incident data and the potential misuse of such data. He emphasized that police departments should forward non-hate crime incidents to appropriate bodies like CA vs Hate.

Deputy Director Monroe stressed the importance of providing resources and information to victims to empower them to seek help, while considering civil liberties implications.

Note: Commissioner Choi left the meeting.

E. Subcommittee on Community Forums

Updates provided by Commissioner Feiler:

- The upcoming community forum on May 11th will discuss issues relating to hate against indigenous communities. She listed the speakers for the event, including Assemblymember James Ramos and officials from the governor’s office discussing tribal affairs and the California Truth and Healing Council.
- Highlighted that the next forum will be a collaboration with the Civil Rights Council.

F. Subcommittee on Funding

No update.

Chat:

Commissioner Choi: “Thank you everyone. I need to transition now.”

Deputy Director Beck Monroe: “To be clear - for the training, there will only be a focus on the importance of responding effectively to hate incidents - not the data collection. I am sorry I have to go to another meeting but really appreciate this conversation.”

Commissioner Sinnar: “Thank you for the clarification.”

V. Commission Member Announcements

Commissioner Levin shared that the White House Office on Science and Technology has invited him to speak. He proposed the Commission consider discussions on preserving civil liberties while keeping students feeling secure.

VI. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

One public commentor expressed appreciation for the Commission's public discourse on the Israeli-Hamas conflict, they outlined Homeland Security's mission to prevent targeted violence and terrorism using a public health informed approach and offered resources and additional partnership opportunities.

VII. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items discussed.

VIII. Adjournment of the Meeting

Commissioner Damsky moved to adjourn; seconded by commissioner Feiler. Commission meeting adjourned at 12:17pm.

A room is available for members of the public to observe and participate in the teleconferenced meeting at the following address:

Civil Rights Department, Los Angeles Office
320 West 4th Street, Suite 1000, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90013

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