



Civil Rights Department Commission on the State of Hate

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Minutes

Commission on the State of Hate August 28, 2024, 9:00 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89618199269>

or

1-669-444-9171 and Webinar ID: 896 1819 9269

Commissioners Present

Chair Russell Roybal
Commissioner Cynthia Choi
Commissioner Regina Cuellar
Commissioner Andrea Beth Damsky
Commissioner Cece Feiler
Commissioner Brian Levin
Commissioner Shirin Sinnar
Commissioner Erroll Southers

Ex Officio Members Present

Abby Browning, Ex officio member of the Commission

Civil Rights Department (CRD) Staff Present

Adam Romero, Deputy Director of Executive Programs
Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist
Kevin Thomas, Research Data Specialist
Monica Chavez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Gregory Mann, Senior Attorney Mediator
Marquez Equalibria, Assistant Deputy Director of the Community Conflict Resolution Unit
Christina Teixeira, Attorney Mediator
Shilpa Ram, Assistant General Counsel

Others Present

An estimated 20 members of the public attended virtually.

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

Chair Roybal called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.

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

B. Establishment of a Quorum

Research Data Specialist Rebecca Goodsell conducted the roll call.

C. Review of the Agenda

Chair Roybal reviewed the agenda and public comment process.

Link Sent in the Chat:

https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2024/08/CSH-Meeting_8.28.2024_NoticeAgenda.pdf

CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov

II. Approval of the Minutes

Link Sent in the Chat:

https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2024/08/Attachment-A_CSHMeeting_7.24.2024_Minutes.pdf

Commissioner Damsky moved to approve the July 24, 2024, meeting minutes; Commissioner Feiler seconded.

- Ayes: 8 (Chair Roybal, Commissioner Choi, Commissioner Cuellar, Commissioner Damsky, Commissioner Feiler, Commissioner Levin, Commissioner Sinnar, Commissioner Southers)
- Nays: 0

III. Chair and Subcommittees Updates and Discussion

A. Chair Russell Roybal

Updates provided by Chair Roybal:

- Announced that this is Commissioner Sinnar's last Commission meeting and thanked her for her service on the Commission.
- CA vs Hate is available as a resource to assist victims of hate.
- There are free services available for communities experiencing hate or discrimination through the California Civil Rights Department's Community Conflict Resolution Unit (CCRU).
- United Against Hate Week will take place between 9/21 - 9/27, 2024.

Links Sent in the Chat:

<https://www.cavshate.org/>

CCRU@calcivilrights.ca.gov

<https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/community-conflict-resolution-unit/>

<https://www.unitedagainsthateweek.org>

B. Subcommittee on Data and Research

Updates provided by Commissioner Sinnar:

- There will be a research convening in October with the UCLA Initiative to Study Hate that will focus on generating evidence-based state-level policy proposals for preventing and reducing hate online and in K-12 schools in California.
- The Subcommittee is planning a presentation on restorative justice for a future meeting.
- Shared concern over political attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs after a recent Supreme Court decision regarding affirmation action in college admissions.
- Shared concerns with the external pressure that is being exerted on universities to crack down on campus speech and protests for Palestinian rights.
- Commissioner Sinnar emphasized that we should all be invested in the struggle against anti-Semitism and all students, regardless of their identity or political positions, should be welcome on campuses.
- Emphasized that it is important for all students, regardless of background or identity, to be able to protest human rights issues. She also explained that free speech is not oppositional to hate speech, but that it is fundamental to advocacy and social change.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Feiler acknowledged the balance between free speech and maintaining safety on campuses.

Commissioner Sinnar responded that it is important for all students to be able to access campus and feel welcome. She also explained that it is important to obtain an accurate understanding of what student activism and movements look like. She explained that two research centers independently concluded that Pro-Palestine student demonstrations were overwhelmingly peaceful. In the few situations where violence had occurred, it was often instigated by counter-protesters or the police.

Commissioner Levin expressed admiration for Commissioner Sinnar's contributions to the Commission and emphasized the importance of restorative justice in addressing crime and social issues.

Commissioner Choi asked about updates on the efficacy of hate crime legislation.

Commissioner Sinnar responded that there is a need for more empirical research on penalty enhancements and their deterrent effects.

Commissioner Feiler thanked Commissioner Sinnar.

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

Updates provided by Commissioner Choi:

- The memo on barriers that NGOs face in effectively responding to hate incidents is almost complete.
- Research is underway to better understand existing state training and protocols designed to educate officials and state employees on hate prevention. The findings of this research will help fulfill the Commission's obligation to suggest and prescribe recommended training for state officials and staff to recognize and address dangerous acts of hate and intolerance.
- Reiterated Commissioner Sinnar's concern regarding the potential of SCOTUS decision to adversely impact initiatives to mitigate bias and discrimination.
- Emphasized the importance of proactive bias mitigation efforts, despite the state's affirmative action ban.

D. Subcommittee on Recommendations for Law Enforcement

Updates provided by Commissioner Damsky:

- The Subcommittee is exploring new directions with input from community police oversight boards and human relations commissions.
- Commissioner Damsky plans to meet with Assembly Member Chris Ward to discuss the Stop Hate Littering Act (AB 3024).
- Shared feedback on AB 449 training video; noted some feedback after watching the footage. Video progress continues, with discussions on improving accessibility and narrative clarity.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Southers and Commissioner Choi thanked Commissioner Damsky for her work on the law enforcement training video.

E. Subcommittee on Community Forums

Updates provided by Commissioner Cuellar:

- On September 26th at 5:30 p.m., the Commission will host its next community forum at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center, focusing on hate and disability.
- The last forum of the year will be on December 4th in Fresno.

Commission Discussion

Chair Roybal announced that they can attend the forum in September.

Commissioner Levin thanked the subcommittee and emphasized the importance of the topic.

Commissioner Choi wanted clarification that it will be a joint forum.

Commissioner Cuellar responded that the September forum will be held in collaboration with the Civil Rights Council. In December, the forum will be jointly held with the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA) and the Racial Equity Commission.

Chair Roybal shared that the Council has regulatory authority.

F. Subcommittee on Funding

No updates from the Subcommittee on Funding.

Public Comment

The first commenter thanked the Commission for the work they are doing to highlight hate against people with disabilities. They extended an invitation to present at an LA County Commission on Disabilities meeting and highlighted some of the structural challenges facing people with disabilities.

The next commenter shared their concerns with growing tensions around the implementation of ethnic studies curriculum in a Santa Cruz County school district.

IV. Commission Member Announcements

Commissioner Damsky shared that the Eradicate Hate Global Summit will be occurring from October 21-23 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Commissioner Feiler acknowledged the public comments about ethnic studies curriculums and anti-Semitism. She also thanked Commissioner Sinnar for her work on the Commission.

Commissioner Southers expressed his gratitude for Commissioner Sinnar.

Commissioner Levin thanked Commissioner Sinnar and shared statistics on anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Jewish hate.

Commissioner Choi announced that Chinese Affirmative Action released a report on disinformation in elections.

Commissioner Levin discussed misinformation coming from Russian sources and political figures online.

Commissioner Southers shared that his colleagues worked on a report on political violence in the 2024 elections.

Commissioner Sinnar thanked the Commission and Governor for the opportunity to serve on the Commission and for the opportunity to listen to different communities affected by hate. She also thanked Commissioner Levin for his work in their subcommittee.

Links Shared in the Chat:

<https://eradicatehatesummit.org/2024-summit/>

<https://newlinesinstitute.org/state-resilience-fragility/part-2-2-u-s-domestic-political-stability-and-security-a-strategic-estimate-for-2024-and-beyond/>

<https://caasf.org/2024/08/conspiracy-theories-lies-a-i/>

V. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

One Commenter shared their concerns related to anti-Semitism and ethnic studies courses.

The next commenter encouraged the Commission to make anti-Semitism in K-12 curriculum a future agenda item.

Another commenter shared accounts of anti-Semitism in California school districts and asked that the Commission add anti-Semitism in K-12 schools as a future agenda item.

Chair Roybal reminded everyone of CCRU and CA vs Hate services. The next Commission meeting will occur in October.

Commissioner Levin discussed the importance of combating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

VI. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were discussed.

VII. Adjournment of the Meeting

Commissioner Choi moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Levin seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:29 am.