



## Civil Rights Department Commission on the State of Hate

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### Minutes

#### Commission on the State of Hate

May 2, 2025, 2:00 pm

#### Commissioners Present

Chair Brian Levin  
Vice Chair Andrea Beth Damsky  
Commissioner Cece Feiler  
Commissioner Cynthia Choi  
Commissioner Bamby Salcedo  
Commissioner Erroll Southers

#### Civil Rights Department (CRD) Staff Present

Kevin Kish, Director  
Rishi Khalsa, Deputy Director of Communications  
Marquez Equalibria, Assistant Deputy Director  
Alec Watts, Assistant Deputy Director  
Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist  
David Kalkstein, Research Data Specialist  
Kevin Thomas, Research Data Specialist  
Monica Chavez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Shilpa Ram, Assistant General Counsel  
Gregory Mann, Senior Attorney Mediator  
Kendra Tanacea, Attorney Mediator

#### Others Present

An estimated 21 members of the public attended virtually.

### **I. Welcome**

#### **A. Call to Order**

Chair Levin called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

He welcomed everyone to the California Commission on the State of Hate's third meeting of the year. He shared that translated closed captioning is available for this meeting.

#### **B. Establishment of a Quorum**

BRIAN LEVIN  
CHAIR

ANDREA BETH DAMSKY  
VICE CHAIR

CYNTHIA CHOI  
COMMISSIONER

REGINA CUELLAR  
COMMISSIONER

CECE FEILER  
COMMISSIONER

RUSSELL ROYBAL  
COMMISSIONER

BAMBY SALCEDO  
COMMISSIONER

ERROLL SOUTHERS  
COMMISSIONER

Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts conducted the roll call.

### **C. Review of the Agenda**

Chair Levin reviewed the agenda and public comment process.

## **II. Approval of the Minutes: March 26, 2025, Commission Meeting**

Commissioner Choi moved to approve the March 26, 2025, meeting minutes; Vice Chair Damsky seconded.

Action by the Commission

Ayes: 6 (Chair Levin, Vice Chair Damsky, Commissioner Choi, Commissioner Feiler, Commissioner Salcedo, Commissioner Southers)

Nays: 0

Link Sent in the Chat:

[https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2025/04/Attachment-A\\_CSH\\_Meeting\\_3.26.2025\\_Minutes.pdf](https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2025/04/Attachment-A_CSH_Meeting_3.26.2025_Minutes.pdf)

## **III. Informational Presentation: Hate Crime Victim Assessment and Treatment: Pragmatics and Problems**

*Dr. Edward Dunbar, Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychology at UCLA and Licensed Psychologist*

Chair Levin introduced Dr. Dunbar.

Dr. Dunbar's presentation covered the following information:

- Hate crimes are significantly underreported.
- Paradoxically, more severe incidents of hate crimes, particularly those involving physical violence against LGBTQ+ individuals, are less likely to be reported.
- Individuals from multiple marginalized groups (e.g., people of color who are also sexual minorities) are even less likely to report hate crimes.
- Many individuals lack awareness of hate crime statutes, and a distrust of law enforcement in some communities further hinders help-seeking behavior.
- Nonviolent hate incidents, such as chronic harassment, can be as psychologically damaging as hate crimes and require developing skills for effective responses.

### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Southers asked Dr. Dunbar about for a specific California statute related to repeated harassment in public meetings.

Dr. Dunbar responded that he hadn't seen the law used with regard to public meetings and noted parallels in educator harassment, emphasizing the need to differentiate opinion from

harassment.

Commissioner Southers clarified that the repeated offensive targeting in public forums avoids direct threats and is thus considered protected free speech.

Dr. Dunbar acknowledged the challenges nations and universities face regarding the distinctions between harassment, indirect threats, and free speech.

Chair Levin referenced a Supreme Court case, *Watts v. United States*, 394 U.S. 705 (1969), on threats versus political speech.

Commissioner Salcedo asked how to reduce the more severe hate crimes against gay and trans people, particularly trans women.

Dr. Dunbar suggested that medical professionals should be equipped to appropriately respond with resources to individuals in hospitals who were targeted for gender-based hate crimes. He also emphasized public messaging and popular media's role in shaping understanding of diversity and tolerance for differences.

Commissioner Salcedo emphasized the link between political messaging and violence against gender minorities, as well as the need for community safety.

Commissioner Choi thanked Dr. Dunbar for recognizing the trauma of hate incidents beyond legal definitions and inquired about public health approaches to promote innate human value.

Dr. Edward Dunbar affirmed the importance of a public health approach and discussed the needs for education and expanded access to health services for people impacted by discrimination and harassment.

Commissioner Feiler asked Dr. Dunbar to elaborate on the impact of the current ICE climate on immigrant trust in government and willingness to seek help.

Dr. Edward Dunbar shared the concern, noting people's avoidance of government agencies and even risky workplaces. He advocated for California to establish some level of protection for keeping people safe in schools, workplaces, and the community.

Commissioner Feiler added health services to the list of institutions that people may be losing trust in.

Dr. Edward Dunbar agreed, highlighting the erosion of data privacy trust and the risk of a cultural shift towards fear and secrecy with long-term harmful effects.

Dr. Edward Dunbar suggested the Commission consider education and public health approaches to addressing the broader cultural impact of hate.

Chair Levin thanked Dr. Dunbar and asked about whether restorative justice interventions need to be individualized given the risk of negative outcomes with certain offenders.

Dr. Edward Dunbar replied that it depends, noting the potential for harm in severe cases involving psychopathic offenders but also the potential for positive outcomes among desisted hate group members.

#### **IV. Discussion and Action regarding the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Commission**

Assistant Deputy Director Watts reviewed the changes to the Commission Report since the March meeting.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Salcedo expressed her appreciation to the team for their hard work in producing the report.

Vice Chair Damsky thanked those involved in the report, noted its improvement in readability, and inquired about including a summary of the Stop Hate Littering Act.

Chair Levin then shared his concern about anti-Hindu hate crimes potentially being undercounted in the report due to LA County data, suggesting a review of this specific aspect.

#### Public Comment

One commenter thanked Chair Levin for acknowledging the issue of anti-Hindu hate not having its own category and shared concerns about targeted attacks on anti-Hindu attacks on places of worship.

Chair Levin affirmed the commitment against faith-based violence, clarified that anti-Hindu hate crime is enumerated by both California law enforcement authorities and Federal authorities as a religion hate crime category, and assured congregations that their concerns are taken seriously.

Another commenter expressed concerns about the report and the deadline for the report.

Chair Levin responded that they are endeavoring to provide the latest research and plan to release the report as soon as possible, thanking him for his question.

#### Additional Commission Discussion

Chair Levin shared his gratitude for the staff's work on the report and asked if anyone wanted to make a motion.

Vice Chair Damsky raised a procedural question about making a motion to approve the report with the addition of a section on the Stop Hate Littering Act.

Chair Levin stated that it could be included in a motion.

Assistant Deputy Director, Alec Watts, agreed, suggesting a motion to advance the report and delegate the inclusion of a summary of the Stop Hate Littering Act to the Chair and staff.

Chair Levin added that a motion could also delegate changes to the staff and chair, and he would include the Vice Chair's suggestion in that delegation.

Commissioner Choi stated that her intention was to suggest a motion to advance the report, consider the comments in the meeting, and task the chair and staff with inclusion and placement.

Commissioner Choi made a motion to advance the report; Commissioner Salcedo seconded.

Chair Levin acknowledged the second and clarified the motion as approving the report and delegating non-substantive changes to staff and the Chair, or the staff, Chair, and Vice Chair, seeking confirmation.

Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts recommended clarifying the motion as taking into consideration of substantive information shared in the meeting for inclusion and delegating additional non-substantive changes to the chair, vice chair, and staff.

Chair Levin and Commissioner Choi indicated that this motion captured the spirit of the motion and urged to move forward.

#### Action by the Commission

Ayes: 6 (Chair Levin, Vice Chair Damsky, Commissioner Choi, Commissioner Feiler, Commissioner Salcedo, Commissioner Southers)

Nays: 0

### **V. Civil Rights Department Report**

Chair Levin introduced Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts and Research Data Specialist David Kalkstein.

Assistant Deputy Director Alec Watts shared the following:

- Provided context about the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) and its summary in the annual report.
- Described CHIS as an annual survey by UCLA that is representative of California's population. Outlined the research goals: understanding patterns and trends in hate in California.

Research Data Specialist David Kalkstein:

- Explained the definition of a "hate act" used in the survey.
- Highlighted the high rates of hate across the state based on the CHIS survey.
- Reviewed data showing the difference between teens and adults' rates of witnessing and experiencing hate.
- Provided a comparison of CHIS data on hate-motivated property damage and physical violence with DOJ hate crime statistics.
- Shared that adults most often experience hate in public places and teens most often experience hate at school.
- Shared that race/skin color is the most common reason Californians are targeted for hate.
- Discussed that historically targeted groups, including people of color, the transgender/gender expansive community, people living with disabilities, and those with unstable housing, experience hate at disproportionately high rates compared to the general population.

#### Links Sent in the Chat:

<https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2025/04/Hate-Acts-in-California-CHIS.pdf>

<https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/askchis/askchis-dashboard>

#### Commission Discussion:

BRIAN LEVIN  
CHAIR

ANDREA BETH DAMSKY  
VICE CHAIR

CYNTHIA CHOI  
COMMISSIONER

REGINA CUELLAR  
COMMISSIONER

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COMMISSIONER

ERROLL SOUTHERS  
COMMISSIONER

Vice Chair Damsky asked if future work might expand into historically understudied communities, specifically mentioning potential anti-Christian bias.

David Kalkstein explained that CHIS does not currently collect demographic information on religious identification due to logistical constraints.

Alec Watts added that upcoming qualitative interviews aim to focus on groups potentially less represented in the quantitative survey data, particularly those for whom English is a second language.

Public Comment:

A commenter asked if the data conflates hate with bias as defined in law, potentially undercounting disability-related hate motivated by callousness.

David Kalkstein noted data estimating the percentage of hate acts that occur because of anti-disability bias and distinct data estimating the percentage of people living with a disability who experienced a hate crime in the last year.

Gregory Mann from the CRD Community Conflict Resolution Unit inquired about the specific definition of "hate" used in the survey.

David Kalkstein provided the definition from the survey.

Another commenter asked if a breakdown for LA County school-aged children reporting hate or bias was available for better understanding.

David Kalkstein directed them to the "AskCHIS" tool online.

Chair Levin thanked everyone for their work on the study.

**VI. Chair, Vice Chair, and Subcommittees Updates and Discussion**

**A. Vice Chair Andrea Beth Damsky**

Updates provided by Vice Chair Damsky:

- Shared concerns from communities regarding speech that incites hatred, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive relationships, educating on why speech is hateful, and distinguishing between protecting free speech and promoting hate speech.

**B. Chair Brian Levin**

Updates provided by Chair Levin

- Wished everyone a happy Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month.
- Reflected on the important events that have taken place since the March meeting, including Arab American Heritage Month, Transgender Day of Visibility, Cesar Chavez Day, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, and Yom HaShoah.
- Expressed concern about tactics used to undermine civil rights and liberties, referencing specific examples and legal actions.

- Shared preliminary data showing increases in anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish hate crimes.
- Reminded everyone of the CA vs. Hate Resource Line and the California Civil Rights Department's Community Conflict Resolution Unit services.

Links sent in the Chat:

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

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

#### **C. Subcommittee on Patterns, Trends, and Prevention**

There were no updates from the Subcommittee on Patterns, Trends, and Prevention.

#### **D. Subcommittee on Resources, Support, and Response**

Updates provided by Vice Chair Damsky:

- Research Data Specialist Rebecca Goodsell participated in meetings with POST to revise an outdated video on hate crimes.
- Announced her decision to step down from the subcommittee to allow other Commissioners to join.

Research Data Specialist Rebecca Goodsell confirmed the upcoming filming dates in June and August for the training videos with POST, including scenarios and interviews.

#### **E. Subcommittee on Community Forums**

Updates provided by Commissioner Feiler:

- Announced a remote forum on May 22nd focusing on community responses to hate against immigrants.
- Shared that there are plans for another forum to include topics such as dialogue across differences, hate in schools, and hate in rural communities.

#### Commission Discussion

Chair Levin thanked the subcommittee for their work on community forums.

Vice Chair Damsky suggested that the school's forum discuss anti-Jewish bias and anti-trans bias in schools.

### **VII. Remembrance of Pope Francis**

Chair Levin provided a remembrance of Pope Francis and his work in advocacy.

### **VIII. Discussion of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

Chair Levin led a discussion of civil rights and liberties and concerns about current federal legislation.

Commission Discussion:

Vice Chair Damsky thanked Chair Levin for his discussion.

Commissioner Salcedo discussed the complexities of the in-practice work.

Chair Levin emphasized the importance of standing up against discrimination.

**IX. Discussion of Outreach and Publicity**

Chair Levin thanked the CRD Communications team and discussed publicizing the Commission's work.

**X. Commission Member Announcements**

Commissioner Choi shared the release of Stop AAPI Hate's new report.

Chair Levin emphasized the importance of the Stop AAPI Hate report.

Commissioner Salcedo invited everyone to the "Walk for Humanity" on Sunday, August 24th, in Los Angeles.

Chair Levin asked Commissioner Salcedo to provide the website for the "Walk for Humanity" in the chat.

Public comment

A Commenter discussed the systemic mistreatment of Latino workers and requested that the matter be agendized for a public meeting.

Chair Levin noted that the comment is better suited for the following agenda item.

Links sent in the Chat:

<https://stopaapihate.org/2025/04/24/bracing-for-impact/>

<https://walk4humanity.org/>

**XI. Future Agenda Items**

One commenter expressed his frustration and anger about the situation in the country and urged the Commission to recommend specific policy recommendations in response to hate crimes.

**Dedication: Linda Becerra Moran.**

Chair Levin announced that the Commission meeting will be adjourned in memory of Linda Becerra Moran.

Commissioner Salcedo shared words in memory of Linda Becerra Moran.



**XII. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

Research Data Specialist Kevin Thomas read the emailed public comment.

**XIII. Adjournment of the Meeting**

Dedication: Linda Becerra Moran.

Commissioner Salcedo moved to adjourn the meeting in memory of Linda Becerra Moran; Vice Chair Damsky seconded.

This meeting is adjourned at 5:11 pm.