Civil Rights Department

Commission on the State of Hate

651 Bannon Street, Suite 200 | Sacramento | CA | 95811
800-884-1684 (voice) | 800-700-2320 (TTY) | California's Relay Service at 711
www.calcivilrights.ca.gov | CSH@calcivilrights.ca.gov

Minutes

Commission on the State of Hate Meeting

September 19, 2025, 9:00 am

Commission members Present

Chair Brian Levin
Vice Chair Andrea Beth Damsky
Commissioner Cynthia Choi
Commissioner Cece Feiler
Commissioner Russell Roybal
Commissioner Erroll Southers

Ex Officio Members Present

Monisha Avery, Ex officio member of the Commission

Civil Rights Department (CRD) Staff Present

Kevin Kish, Director
Julia Parish, Deputy Director of Legislation, Regulation, and Policy
Yvonne Hsu, Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs
Alec Watts, Assistant Deputy Director of Research and Policy
Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist
Kevin Thomas, Research Data Specialist
Erin Glenn, Staff Services Manager

Others Present

An estimated 26 members of the public attended virtually.

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Levin.

Chair Levin welcomed Monisha Avery as the new ex officio member of the Commission, representing the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. He also welcomed Julia Parish and Yvonne Hsu, new Deputy Directors at the Civil Rights Department.

B. Establishment of a Quorum

Alec Watts conducted the roll call.

C. Review of the Agenda

Chair Levin reviewed the agenda and public comment process.

II. Informational Presentation: "What Three Decades of Official Hate Crime Data Tell Us"

Dr. James Nolan, a professor at West Virginia University and former chief of the FBI's Crime Analysis, Research and Development Unit, presented an analysis of hate crime data.

- **Data Limitations and Strengths:** Dr. Nolan explained that official FBI data represents a significant undercount of actual hate crimes but serves as a "stable undercount," making trends from the data reliable over time.
    - **Key Trends:**
        - **California:** The highest number of reported hate crimes occurred in 2001, following the September 11th attacks.
        - **National Events:** Data shows spikes in hate crimes corresponding to national events, such as increased anti-Black hate crimes after the murder of George Floyd and a rise in anti-Jewish hate crimes following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks.
        - **Targeted Groups:** Hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community, particularly anti-transgender crimes, are rising significantly. Anti-Hispanic hate crimes have also been on the rise since 2016.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Southers discussed the challenges of data collection for law enforcement agencies and inquired about best practices to increase reporting of hate crimes to law enforcement.

Commissioner Choi asked how the data presented has been used to inform prevention strategies, particularly considering the findings related to juvenile victims, and expressed concern about potential suppression of data, especially at the national level.

Commissioner Roybal also expressed concern about the potential for federal data collection to be discontinued or politicized and discussed the potential impact of this on the Commission's work.

Vice Chair Damsky shared similar concerns about data, particularly at the federal level, and inquired about how to use data on trends to protect communities in the future.

Chair Levin discussed some of the available data and inquired as to the specifics in the data about the type of hate crime (e.g., aggravated assaults) for specific groups.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

III. Civil Rights Department Report

Director Kish introduced Julia Parish, Deputy Director of Legislation, Regulation, and Policy, and Yvonne Hsu, Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs.

Dr. Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist from the California Civil Rights Department (CRD),

presented data from the CA vs. Hate resource line for the 2024 calendar year.

- **Program Overview:** CA vs. Hate is a multilingual, non-emergency hotline and online portal for reporting hate acts anonymously. It is separate from law enforcement and connects reporters with community-based resources.
- **2024 Data Highlights:**
  - Nearly 1,200 verified reports of hate were received from 49 of California's 58 counties.
  - In more than two-thirds of reports, people requested to receive a follow-up from a care coordinator.
  - Top bias motivations were: race/ ethnicity, gender identity/sex/sexual orientation, followed by religion and disability status.
  - Residential areas were the most frequently reported locations for hate incidents.
  - Verbal harassment or slurs and discriminatory treatment were the most common types of hate acts reported.

Commission Discussion

Vice Chair Damsky expressed interest in the geographic data and asked about the variation in reporting rates across the state.

Commissioner Roybal inquired about future comparisons of this data with data from law enforcement.

Commissioner Choi applauded the efforts of CA vs Hate to address some of the barriers to reporting hate, especially for non-criminal incidents, and inquired about the breakdown of who receives care coordination by type of hate activity reported (e.g., hate crimes vs hate incidents).

Chair Levin expressed a desire to hear more from victims of hate in future meetings.

Commissioner Feiler discussed the reticence of members from certain communities to report hate acts and inquired whether this is reflected in the geographic data. Yvonne Hsu and Erin Glenn provided some context on CRD's efforts to reach these populations.

Chair Roybal discussed some potential collaboration opportunities with other Commissions, including the Racial Equity Commission, to further reach these populations.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

- Vice Chair Damsky moved to approve the July 23, 2025, Commission meeting minutes; Commissioner Feiler seconded
- The minutes were approved.
  - Ayes: Chair Levin, Vice Chair Damsky, Commissioner Choi, Commissioner Feiler, Commissioner Southers
  - Abstained: Commissioner Roybal

- Minutes from the September 5, 2025, Community Forum
    - Commissioner Roybal moved to approve the September 5, 2025, minutes; Commissioner Southers seconded
    - The minutes were approved.
        - Ayes: Chair Levin, Commissioner Choi, Commissioner Feiler, Commissioner Roybal, Commissioner Southers
        - Abstained: Vice Chair Damsky

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

V. Chair and Subcommittee Updates

- **Chair's Report:**
    - Chair Levin congratulated Commissioner Roybal on his term renewal and thanked outgoing Commissioner Cece Feiler for her service. He also shared wishes for a happy Jewish New Year and a happy Hispanic Heritage Month. He condemned recent acts of political violence and expressed concern over federal rhetoric targeting transgender individuals, reaffirming the Commission's commitment to protecting civil liberties.
- **Subcommittee Updates:**
    - Patterns, Trends, and Prevention: Dr. Joe Walther presented findings to the subcommittee from his literature review on responses to online hate.
    - Resources, Support, and Response: A new hate crime training video for law enforcement, developed in partnership with POST, is in post-production and expected to be released in January 2026.
    - Community Forums: The next forum, focusing on hate in K-12 schools, is scheduled for October 25th in Pasadena. A future forum on hate in rural areas is being planned for Shasta County. Following Commissioner Feiler's departure from the Commission, Commissioner Roybal will join this subcommittee.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

VI. Discussion of October Commission Subcommittee Collaboration Meeting

- Subcommittee Collaboration: A joint meeting between the Patterns, Trends, and Prevention Subcommittee and the Community Forums Subcommittee was proposed for October to promote more integration of community feedback into research.

  Assistant Deputy Director Watts discussed the requirements for this new type of meeting and suggested tabling the discussion of the specific goals of the meeting until Commissioner Roybal

returned. He also proposed that staff could meet with one representative from each of the subcommittees that wish to collaborate. Commissioner Choi will serve as representative for the Subcommittee on Patterns, Trends, and Prevention, and Commissioner Cuellar will serve as representative for the Subcommittee on Community Forums.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

VII. Discussion of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

- Chair Levin expressed disappointment regarding a recent Supreme Court ruling that upheld the use of factors including language, appearance, and location by federal officials, which he views as a loophole granting shadow approval to racial profiling.
- He stressed the importance of prioritize protecting civil liberties, including freedom of speech, association, religion, and the right to privacy, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution and relevant laws.
- He voiced concern about the federal government's increasing rhetoric and condemned the demeaning rhetoric and scapegoating aimed at the transgender community.
- He reviewed U.S. Supreme Court precedents related to free expression, including: Texas v. Johnson (1989); Watts v. United States (1969; R.A.V. v. St. Paul (1992); and Wisconsin v. Mitchell (1993).

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

VIII. Commission Member Announcements

- Commissioner Choi: Announced the launch of Stop AAPI Hate's new data blog, "Keeping Count," which provides timely analysis of online hate trends, including a recent rise in anti-South Asian hate and the use of an anti-Asian slur in a reality television program.
- Vice Chair Damsky: Announced a panel discussion organized by Dr. Indranil Banerjee focusing on AAPI immigration issues on October 1st, hosted in person in San Diego and online. She also announced the launch of the LGBTQ+ Jewish Coalition of San Diego, which aims to increase safety and visibility for the community.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

IX. Future Agenda Items

- Chair Levin proposed the following items for future agendas:

  • A presentation by an expert or victim's advocate regarding violence against those in the unhoused community.

  • A reminder that civil Rights and civil Liberties will remain on future agendas.

  • An agenda item to discuss when Commissioners can appropriately make comments as Commissioners within their area of expertise.

Public Comment

No public comment on this agenda item.

X. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

No public comment on this agenda item.

XI. Adjournment of the Meeting

- Prior to moving to adjournment, Chair Levin revisited Agenda item VI that was previously tabled for discussion. Assistant Deputy Director Watts clarified administrative steps for the proposed October collaboration meeting. Watts also noted that the November and December commission meetings would be rescheduled into a single meeting in early December.
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 am.