

2024 – 2025 Annual Report

COMMISSION ON THE STATE OF HATE



Civil Rights
Department
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

This report has been prepared pursuant to California Government Code section 8010(k), which requires the Commission on the State of Hate to issue an Annual State of Hate Commission Report.

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Content notice: This report contains explicit descriptions of hate, including hate violence. This content is included to illustrate the impacts of hate in California.



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Overview

The Commission on the State of Hate was established at the Civil Rights Department to assist California with monitoring, preventing, and responding to hate. In this 2024-2025 Annual Report, the Commission recommends – on an interim basis at this time because the Commission’s work is ongoing – the 23 policies and two sets of tools to combat hate listed below. The report explains each recommendation along with the supporting evidence. It also includes a detailed review of the state of hate in California and a summary of the Commission’s key activities from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

Address current patterns and trends in hate

1. Allocate crisis-level investments in anti-hate efforts
2. Invest in community-centered approaches to addressing hate
3. Address hate in schools
4. Address hate on streets and sidewalks
5. Address hate in businesses

Address politically related hate

6. Invest in public education and outreach initiatives
7. Support opportunities for constructive dialogue
8. Address hate on social media
9. Proactively address hate before and after catalytic events

Support interventions to address the mental health impacts of hate

10. Invest in research on mental health interventions to support victims of hate
11. Support training for mental health providers
12. Proactively build a crisis network of mental health providers to address hate

Improve law enforcement responses to hate

13. Address gaps in law enforcement data on hate crimes
14. Require law enforcement to take hate crime training, including the AB 449 training
15. Require law enforcement agencies to designate hate crime coordinators

Prevent and reduce online hate

16. Support empowerment and education initiatives for internet users
17. Increase data access, transparency, and research on online hate
18. Address content moderation and user control on online platforms

Prevent and reduce hate in schools

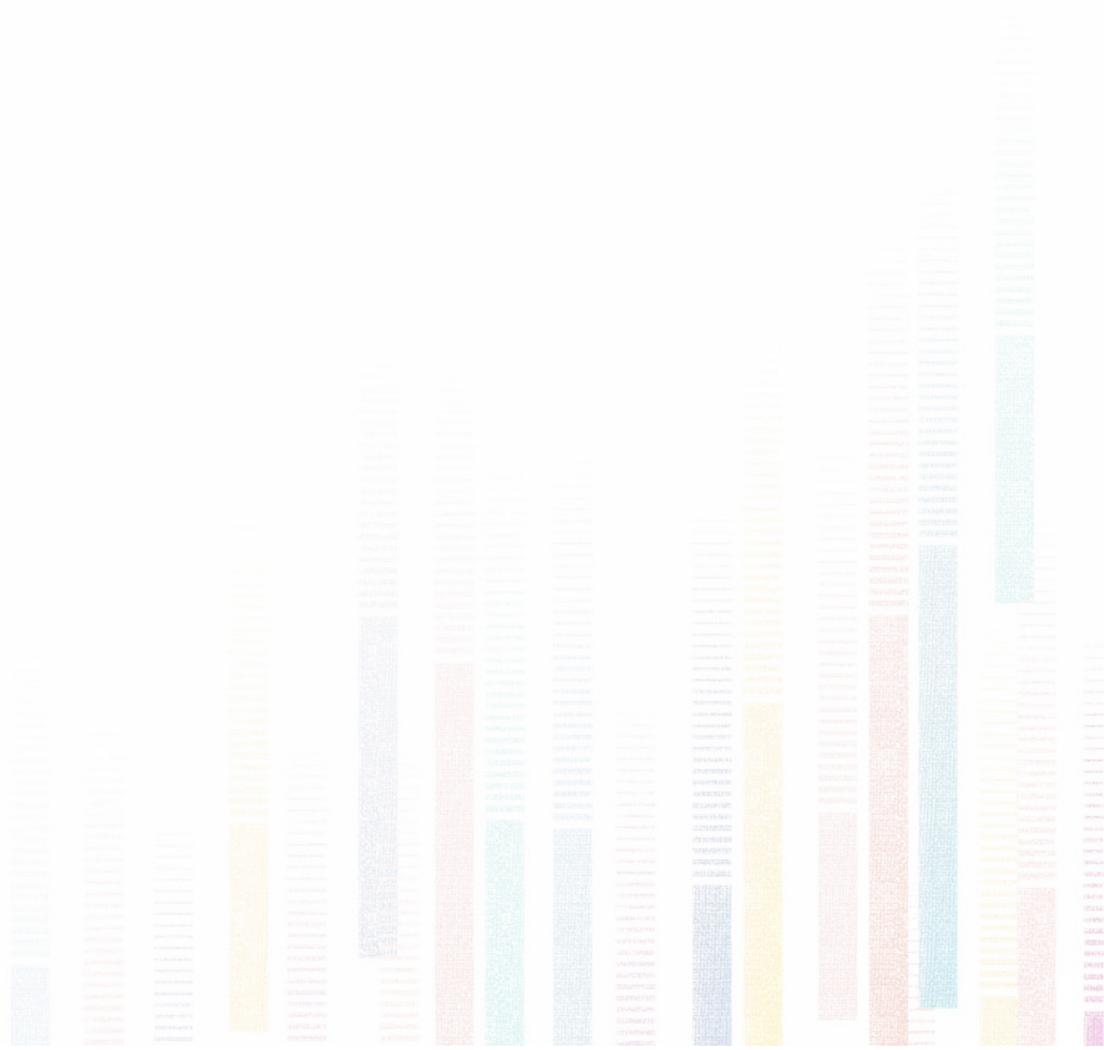
19. Invest in school hate prevention research
20. Improve support and accountability for the implementation of existing policies

- 21. Consider digital literacy curricula requirements
- 22. Provide state support for teacher training
- 23. Provide support for schools to develop and implement approaches to hate prevention

Tools for combating hate

This year’s report refines the following two sets of interim tools introduced in the Commission’s 2023-2024 report to help communities and governments prevent hate:

- 1. Seventeen evidence-based guiding principles for designing and implementing public messaging campaigns to prevent and reduce hate.
- 2. Eleven evidence-based guiding principles for designing and implementing hate prevention programs in schools.



A Message from the Chair

As hate crimes have risen dramatically over the last decade, California has responded in myriad ways. The Commission on the State of Hate is one of those responses. It arose from a series of public expert panels first convened in 2017 by former Assemblymember Richard Bloom's Select Committee on the State of Hate following the murderous, white supremacist-motivated attack in Charlottesville, Virginia. Those panels established a forum for community voices and expert analysis of bias-motivated crime, intergroup aggression, and targeted violence.

The Commission is housed within the California Civil Rights Department, which is dedicated to combating the growing scourge of hate crimes and discrimination. I am proud of the extraordinary work the Commission and its staff have done to lift up community voices and conduct research, resulting in promising, evidence-based policy recommendations.

Various datasets, including my own, have been presented to the Commission showing record levels of hate crimes, targeted violence, and related aggressions. The Commission's partnership with the Civil Rights Department and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research produced a landmark study detailed in this report and presented at our meetings. The extensive dataset was developed using new questions added to the annual statewide California Health Interview Survey, in which respondents were asked about their specific experiences with hate over the past year.

The staggering volume and range of these criminal and noncriminal bias-motivated acts in California are calls to action. Victimization numbered into the millions. An estimated 2.6 million Californians (8% of California's population age 12 and over) directly experienced at least one act of hate in the past year, while an estimated 525,000 Californians (1.6% of California's adult and teen population) reported experiencing a bias-motivated act that was likely criminal, including property damage and/or physical violence. Moreover, these data indicated that there is likely massive underreporting by victims to law enforcement. This problem is particularly acute in vulnerable and underserved communities.

These findings are precisely why the Commission engages in critical outreach across the state by hosting community forums, conducting innovative research, and promoting the Civil Rights Department's pioneering resources, including the California vs Hate Resource Line and Network. The Commission also coordinates with other state bodies and community groups on assistance, training, and data. As a result of these efforts, we developed additional interim recommendations, which we respectfully present in this third annual report.

At this moral moment, when institutions and resources that previously complemented our efforts to eliminate the scourge of bias-motivated violence and extremism are instead being eviscerated or weaponized against vulnerable communities, it is time to peacefully rise to meet the challenge.

When any Californian is harassed, discriminated against, or subjected to hate crimes, it is not only our institutions, but all of us, who must stand with them. Moreover, all within our state need to stand in solidarity in defense of all people's right to live in dignity, with their civil rights

protected, free from intimidation and violence, irrespective of their faith, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, race, nationality, or other important identity or characteristic.

With that in mind, I cordially invite any Californian to partner with the Commission on our vision, evaluate our materials, and participate, live or virtually, in our numerous civic events across the state. Anyone may join the Commission’s email list on our website to access our information as well as to receive invitations to our public meetings and community forums: <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/commission-on-the-state-of-hate/>.

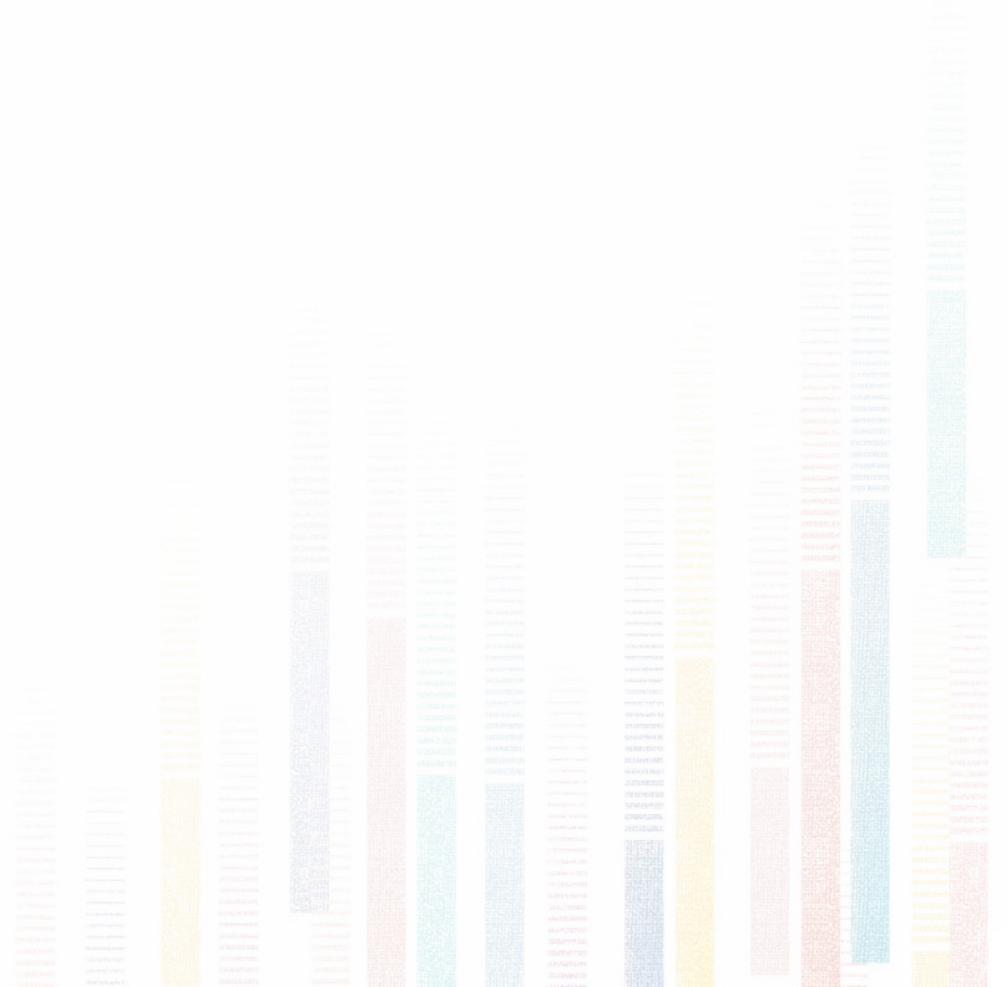
As a civil rights attorney and researcher for many decades, as well as a son of an American prisoner of war brutalized by his Nazi captors, I know very well the risks of allowing hatred and aggression to metastasize unabated. All my exceptional colleagues at the Commission and Civil Rights Department, whom I have learned from and admire so very much, know those risks as well. We are all united and all look forward to working with you to create a state and nation that, as George Washington wrote, “gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.”

Every best wish,

Brian Levin

Professor Emeritus Brian Levin

Chair, Commission on the State of Hate



California Civil Rights Department: Director's Letter

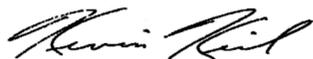
As we look back on the past year, we are reminded that hate continues to impact communities across California. While hate crime statistics vary from year to year, the data are clear: Many of the same communities historically impacted by hate are still being targeted by hate today. This reality underscores the critical importance of our work at the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) and the work of the Commission on the State of Hate. For over half a century, CRD has been working to protect the people of California from hate and discrimination. In recent years, that work has included supporting the Commission on the State of Hate since its launch in 2022.

In this third annual report, the Commission reviews data on hate in California and provides interim recommendations for addressing it. As in previous years, the report also offers an accounting of recent patterns and trends in hate in California. This year, this accounting includes new insights from a research partnership between CRD, California vs Hate, the Commission, and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Among other findings, the research revealed that, in just one year, millions of Californians either witnessed or directly experienced hate. The Commission's report also introduces interim recommendations for preventing and reducing hate, as well as improving resources and support systems for people impacted by hate.

Our department's support of the Commission is one of many efforts at CRD focused on protecting the rights of Californians. Each year, CRD investigates, helps resolve, and prosecutes in court complaints of discrimination and hate that Californians file with our department. In 2024, we observed the first full year of the California vs Hate Resource Line and Network, the first statewide hotline and resource network aimed at combating hate. We also continued to support the work of the Community Conflict Resolution Unit, which is dedicated to responding to conflicts related to hate and discrimination. Additionally, in 2025, we launched Welcome In, a first-of-its-kind statewide pilot program to recognize and support businesses that take steps to foster safe and inclusive environments for customers and staff.

Addressing the ongoing impacts of hate requires sustained commitment and action across a statewide coalition of people dedicated to helping make California safer and more inclusive for all our residents. I am grateful for the commitment of our Commission members, as well as the support of the Governor and the Legislature. Thank you also to the numerous experts, community organizations, advocates, and others who have stepped forward to share their experiences and expertise with the Commission.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kish

Director, California Civil Rights Department

Executive Summary

The Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) was established at the Civil Rights Department (CRD) to assist the State of California with monitoring, preventing, and responding to hate. The Commission has three primary strategic goals:

- Provide a comprehensive accounting of hate activity in California.
- Develop recommendations for enhancing the resources and support for people and communities affected by hate.
- Develop recommendations for reducing hate crimes.

This third annual report of the Commission details our progress on each of our strategic goals, summarizing our findings, recommendations, and key activities from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. We generated the findings through rigorous research, consultations with subject matter experts and community-based organizations, and input from the public. Drawing on the findings, this report introduces 23 interim policy recommendations and two interim recommendations for tools to combat hate in California.

THE STATE OF HATE IN CALIFORNIA: PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND DATA

To identify key patterns and trends in hate in California, the Commission synthesized various sources, including unprecedented, publicly available data on Californians' experiences with hate – the 2023 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) dataset. Our findings from the CHIS data set include:

- An estimated 8% of Californians over the age of 12 (nearly 2.6 million people) experienced at least one act of hate within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023.
- An estimated 15% of Californians (nearly 5 million people) witnessed an act of hate within the same period.
- Teens in California were more than twice as likely to experience hate than adults.
- Nearly 80% of teen victims of hate in California experienced hate at school.
- Nearly half (45%) of adult victims of hate in California experienced hate on a street or sidewalk, and more than one in three (34%) experienced hate at a business within the past year.
- Only about 0.3% of adults and 0.1% of adolescents who experienced hate-motivated physical violence or property damage are recorded in law enforcement data in California.¹

¹ Due to the many differences between the datasets, this analysis should be considered preliminary or approximate. For additional details, see Chapter 2.

The report also describes the impact of hate on different groups and communities across the state. According to our analyses:

- Race or skin color was the most common bias motivation of hate. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of adults and 38% of adolescents who experienced hate were targeted due to their race or skin color.
- A substantial number of Californians who experienced hate were targeted due to multiple aspects of their identity (37% of adult victims of hate and 27% of adolescent victims).
- About one in five adult victims of hate (21%) were targeted because of their ancestry, national origin, and/or language. Other common bias motivations were gender/sex/gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and religion (15%, 15%, 13%, and 11% of adult victims of hate, respectively). Nearly 7% of adults who experienced hate were targeted due to a disability, and 6% experienced hate due to their immigration status.
- A substantial number of adolescents who experienced hate were targeted due to their gender/sex/gender identity, sexual orientation, ancestry/national origin/language, or disability (17%, 13%, 12%, and 12% of adolescent victims of hate, respectively).
- Groups who have been historically targeted by hate continue to experience hate at disproportionate rates. Within a recent one-year period in California, an estimated 14% of Black adults, 7% of Latine adults, 9% of Asian American adults, and 15% of American Indian/Alaska Native adults experienced hate.
- In recent years, reported hate crimes motivated by religious bias have increased significantly. Religious bias hate crime events recorded in the California Department of Justice (DOJ) data increased by 30% in 2023.
- Reported anti-Jewish hate crime events increased by more than 50% between 2022 and 2023.
- Reported anti-Muslim hate crime events increased by 60% between 2022 and 2023.
- Transgender and gender-expansive adults were 2.7 times more likely than cisgender adults to experience any type of hate act (19% vs. 7%).
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or pansexual adults were almost twice as likely as straight or heterosexual adults to be a victim of any type of hate act (12% vs. 7%).
- Adults with a disability were twice as likely as adults without a disability to be a victim of any type of hate act (12% vs. 6%).
- An estimated 21% of adults who have unstable housing were victims of at least one hate act within a one-year period, compared to about 6% of adults with stable housing.

In the Commission's 2023-2024 Annual Report, we proposed two interim recommendations related to understanding the state of hate. This year, we introduce five broad interim recommendations for addressing current patterns and trends in hate:

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING CURRENT PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN HATE

- *Allocate crisis-level investments in anti-hate efforts.* Hate is far more prevalent than law enforcement data suggest, pointing to the need to redouble investments in anti-hate efforts. This report provides guidance for such investments.
- *Invest in community-centered approaches to addressing hate.* Anti-hate efforts will likely be more successful when customized for specific communities. One approach to doing this is sustaining a network of community-based organizations across the state paired with grants to address hate, such as the Stop the Hate Grant Program.
- *Address hate in schools.* California teens experience hate at schools primarily, which can result in severe harms.² To guide efforts to address hate in schools, the Commission developed 11 interim, evidence-based guiding principles described in Chapter 4.
- *Address hate on streets and sidewalks.* For adults in California, the most common locations of hate are streets and sidewalks. Addressing hate on streets or sidewalks could include prevention efforts, such as public messaging campaigns targeted at shifting norms, support for bystander intervention training, and general investments in resources and support for victims.
- *Address hate in businesses.* Over one in three adult victims of hate in California experienced hate at a business. Though hate in businesses could be addressed through anti-hate efforts broadly, the Commission encourages researching novel business-specific initiatives, such as the Welcome In program piloted in 2024 by CRD.³

The Commission examined hate during the 2024 election season and hate directed at public officials. Throughout the 2024 election season, hate-based rhetoric was pervasive, impacting numerous groups in California, including women, people of color, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community. Hate, threats, and harassment are also directed at local officials. A 2024 survey of local elected officials in Southern California found that 66% of elected officials reported experiencing threats and harassment during their terms in office.⁴ These events disproportionately impact women and people of color.⁵

² Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Turner, H. A. (2022). U.S. Hate Crime Investigation Rates and Characteristics: Findings from the National Hate Crime Investigations Study (NHCIS). National Criminal Justice Reference Service. https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/sites/default/files/media/2023-08/summary-report_12.31.21.pdf

³ Additional information about the Welcome In program is available at <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/welcome-in/>

⁴ Porten, J., & Locke, R. (2024). Mapping the Threat Environment of Southern California's Elected Officials. Kroc IPJ Research and Resources. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

⁵ Bridging Divides Initiative and Civic Pulse (2024, November). Threat and Harassment in Local Government. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf6646/files/documents/Threats%20and%20Harassment%20Survey%20Q3%20Benchmarking%20Report.pdf>

In the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, we proposed five interim recommendations for addressing hate and hostility against officials and at public meetings. This year, the Commission recommends four additional policy recommendations.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING POLITICALLY RELATED HATE

- *Invest in public education and outreach initiatives.* Misinformation and knowledge gaps may drive a significant amount of hostility. In one California survey, 50% of local officials supported more public outreach to mitigate threats and harassment toward officials.⁶ Public initiatives could take several forms, including school curricula, information from community leaders, and public awareness campaigns. These initiatives could promote norms of civility, provide information about how government operates, and/or teach important skills, such as critical thinking and techniques for recognizing propaganda.
- *Support opportunities for constructive dialogue.* One source of rising threats and harassment toward officials is discussions about “flashpoint topics,” such as vaccine mandates and school curricula. This suggests there is a need to develop the skills to have civil discussions about controversial topics. A grant program could be established to support training in these skills; governments could partner with organizations to host forums on flashpoint topics; and new school curricula could help students develop these skills.
- *Address hate on social media.* Social media is a key platform for public officials to communicate with the public, but threats and harassment faced by officials reduce the likelihood that they post on social media.⁷ Elected officials and staff could be trained on how to securely manage social media accounts and respond to hostility.
- *Proactively address hate before and after catalytic events.* While some catalytic events cannot be predicted, others, such as elections, are predictable, which allows for proactive preparation. In the run-up to, and aftermath of, known catalytic events, measures could be implemented to promote resources and prevention-oriented messages.

ENHANCING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Interventions to Address the Mental Health Impacts of Hate

Hate can have devastating impacts on victims, including on their mental health. To develop guidance for evidence-based mental health resources for victims of hate, the Commission researched various mental health interventions. We examined their effectiveness, or potential for effectiveness, for helping victims of hate. Our findings include:

⁶ Porten & Locke (2024). <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

⁷ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>; Bridging Divides Initiative (2024). <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/updates/2024/threat-and-harassment-incidents-targeting-local-officials-surge-during-2024-election>

- It is important for mental health services to be available from providers who understand and respect the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices of individuals seeking care.
- There is compelling evidence that many common therapeutic interventions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, prolonged exposure therapy, mindfulness-based therapy, and expressive writing therapy, are effective at addressing many of the mental health conditions that have been found to result from experiencing hate. However, there is a paucity of research measuring the effectiveness of these interventions for victims of hate specifically.
- To varying degrees, many of the mental health interventions we examined can be effective when administered remotely.
- Remote care is a promising approach to ensure that victims of hate have access to providers with the appropriate expertise and cultural understanding.
- Many therapeutic interventions can be effective when administered in group settings, which can be a promising option when providers and resources are limited.
- Digital mental health interventions include a broad range of internet-based approaches to administering mental health care and providing support. Given the diversity of these types of interventions, we cannot make general conclusions about their effectiveness. However, case studies indicate that some may meet the broad spectrum of needs of communities targeted by hate.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HATE

- *Invest in research on mental health interventions to support victims of hate.* Investments could consist of grant funding or other incentives for research on mental health interventions for hate victims, the needs of communities impacted by hate, the scalability of interventions, and the effectiveness of novel mental health interventions.
- *Support training for mental health providers.* Training could address several areas, including the needs of hate crime victims, how to adapt services to meet the needs of different communities, and how to administer services remotely or in group settings.
- *Proactively build a crisis network of mental health providers to address hate.* To address the specialized needs of victims, a statewide network could be developed consisting of providers who have the various skills and competencies needed to help victims of hate successfully. The network could include providers who speak languages and dialects other than English and who have cultural competence training to support specific communities.

Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Hate

The Commission continues to observe gaps in law enforcement responses to hate. Our findings include:

- There continues to be missing and incomplete hate crime data from law enforcement agencies across the state. There were zero hate crime events recorded in 2023 for eight counties in California in the California DOJ's 2023 Hate Crime in California report.
- Many Californians likely do not have access to timely, updated hate crime data from the websites of their local law enforcement agencies. Only 5% of a random sample of law enforcement agency websites contain hate crime data updated monthly. Only 12.5% of websites contained any hate crime data at all.
- The Commission partnered with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, CRD, CA vs Hate, and community-based organizations to develop a new, evidence-based training for law enforcement.⁸

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO HATE

- *Address gaps in law enforcement data on hate crimes.* This includes missing and incomplete hate crime data and the lack of timely, publicly available data on agency websites.
- *Require law enforcement to take hate crime training, including the AB 449 training.* To the Commission's knowledge, there are no active statewide requirements for hate crime trainings after law enforcement officers are appointed or sworn in.
- *Require law enforcement agencies to designate hate crime coordinators.* A hate crime coordinator could improve an agency's hate crime efforts in several ways, such as serving as a resource for other officers, verifying that the agency complies with legal obligations, and researching and implementing best practices and trainings.

CREATING A CALIFORNIA FREE OF HATE: HATE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

There is not a single evidence-based intervention, or set of interventions, to prevent hate statewide. Therefore, the Commission has focused on specific areas of hate prevention. This year's report contains our findings on preventing and reducing hate online, in schools, and through public messaging campaigns.

⁸ The training video is available via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3-z5iAwC9U>

Preventing and Reducing Online Hate

To investigate online hate prevention and reduction, the Commission reviewed research studies and convened scholars and policy experts on the topic in partnership with UCLA's Initiative to Study Hate. Our findings include:

- In California, an estimated 21% of adults and 24% of adolescents who experienced hate within one year experienced at least one act of hate online.
- Historically marginalized groups, including women, racial minorities, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals, are disproportionately targeted by online hate.⁹
- There are few studies demonstrating a direct causal link between online hate and offline hate violence.
- As with other forms of hate, online hate can result in significant mental and physical harms to individuals.¹⁰
- As with other forms of hate, online hate can result in feelings of fear, anger, rejection, and distress, as well as lowered self-esteem, loneliness, and anxiety.¹¹
- When false information is infused with hate speech, it can become more emotionally charged and more persuasive, enhancing the likelihood that people believe and disseminate it.¹²
- Platform features that allow for reach and amplification of social media content can result in hateful messages spreading rapidly and widely.¹³
- Online platforms can facilitate connections between individuals and hate groups in ways that are largely unavailable offline.
- Though automated content moderation systems can be beneficial, they may struggle to grasp the nuances of human language, particularly forms of sarcasm, humor, and culturally specific language.

⁹ Anti-Defamation League (2024, February 6). Hate Is No Game: Hate and Harassment in Online Games 2023. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/hate-no-game-hate-and-harassment-online-games-2023>

¹⁰ Davidson, J., Livingstone, S., Jenkins, S., Gekoski, A., Choak, C., Ike, T., & Phillips, K. (2019). Adult Online Hate, Harassment and Abuse: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. UK Council for Internet Safety. https://research.tees.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/34689333/Adult_Online_Harms_Report_2019.pdf

¹¹ Davidson, J., Livingstone, S., Jenkins, S., Gekoski, A., Choak, C., Ike, T., & Phillips, K. (2019). Adult Online Hate, Harassment and Abuse: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. UK Council for Internet Safety. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-online-hate-harassment-and-abuse-a-rapid-evidence-assessment>; Leets, L., & Giles, H. (1999). Harmful Speech in Intergroup Encounters: An Organizational Framework for Communication Research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1999.11678960>

¹² Brady, W. J., Wills, J. A., Jost, J. T., Tucker, J. A., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2017). Emotion Shapes the Diffusion of Moralized Content in Social Networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1618923114>; Ecker, U. K., Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Schmid, P., Fazio, L. K., Brashier, N., Kendeou, P., Vraga, E. K., & Amazeen, M. A. (2022). The Psychological Drivers of Misinformation Belief and Its Resistance to Correction. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-021-00006-y>

¹³ Stray, J., Iyer, R., & Puig Larrauri, H. (2023). The Algorithmic Management of Polarization and Violence on Social Media. Knight First Amendment Institute. <https://escholarship.org/content/qt9vc329zb/qt9vc329zb.pdf>

- Industry trends among major online platforms appear to be moving toward less content moderation, a greater reliance on user-generated moderation, and restricted access to data for researchers.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ONLINE HATE

- *Support empowerment and education initiatives to equip people with skills to navigate online content.* This includes digital literacy training and counter-messaging strategies.
- *Increase data access, transparency, and research on online hate.* Data and research are critical for developing interventions to address online hate. In fact, many of the studies reviewed by the Commission relied on data provided through data access programs of online platforms. We propose several policies for increasing data access, transparency, and research.
- *Address content moderation and user control.* Active content moderation and features that give users greater control over their online experiences are imperfect but can curb online hate and create safer online environments.

Public Messaging as a Tool to Prevent Hate

INTERIM GUIDING PRINCIPLES: PUBLIC MESSAGING

The report describes 17 interim, evidence-based guiding principles for creating and deploying a public messaging campaign targeted at preventing and reducing hate:

- Convey the prevalence and growth of positive norms.
- Align descriptive and injunctive norms.
- Emphasize norms with institutional support.
- Frame norms as working together.
- Frame action as helping others.
- Highlight relationships across group lines.
- Highlight commonalities between groups.
- Encourage empathy and perspective-taking.
- Emphasize potential for growth.
- Tailor the message to audience identities and values.
- Align and combine approaches.
- Simplify the message and call to action.
- Provide a group-based context for processing messages.
- Deliver messages through persuasive messengers.
- Employ narrative, stories, and entertainment.
- Research messages during development and implementation.
- Create opportunities for community partnerships.

Hate Prevention in Schools

Building on the findings in the Commission’s previous reports, this report introduces additional findings on preventing and reducing hate in K-12 schools. Our findings include:

- Schools are the most common location where teens in California experience hate.
- About 12% of teens in California experienced a hate act at school within a 12-month period and nearly 25% witnessed a hate event at school over the same time frame.
- Teachers are often the first adults to witness signs of children’s engagement with hate-based ideologies and groups.¹⁴
- School safety interventions tend to be more successful when they involve bottom-up grassroots participation by members of the school community, such as teachers, staff, and students.¹⁵
- Prevention efforts are likely more effective when they are locally created and tailored to the needs of the school community.
- Addressing hate requires a comprehensive, multilevel approach that includes programs and curricula for students, trainings for teachers and staff, improvements to reporting mechanisms, enhanced oversight over existing laws, and supporting teachers and staff with the resources to create programs tailored to their schools.

INTERIM GUIDING PRINCIPLES: HATE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

The report describes 11 evidence-based, interim principles to guide efforts to prevent and reduce hate in K-12 schools:

- Support cultural awareness training for students and staff.
- Provide teacher training and support.
- Implement curricula to protect students from online hate.
- Design solutions locally with the school community.
- Develop youth-led approaches to hate.
- Tailor solutions to specific groups.
- Gather data and research.
- Improve procedures and processes for reporting hate.
- Ensure that disciplinary approaches are equitable and respect students’ rights.
- Continually update anti-hate initiatives.
- Implement educational best practices.

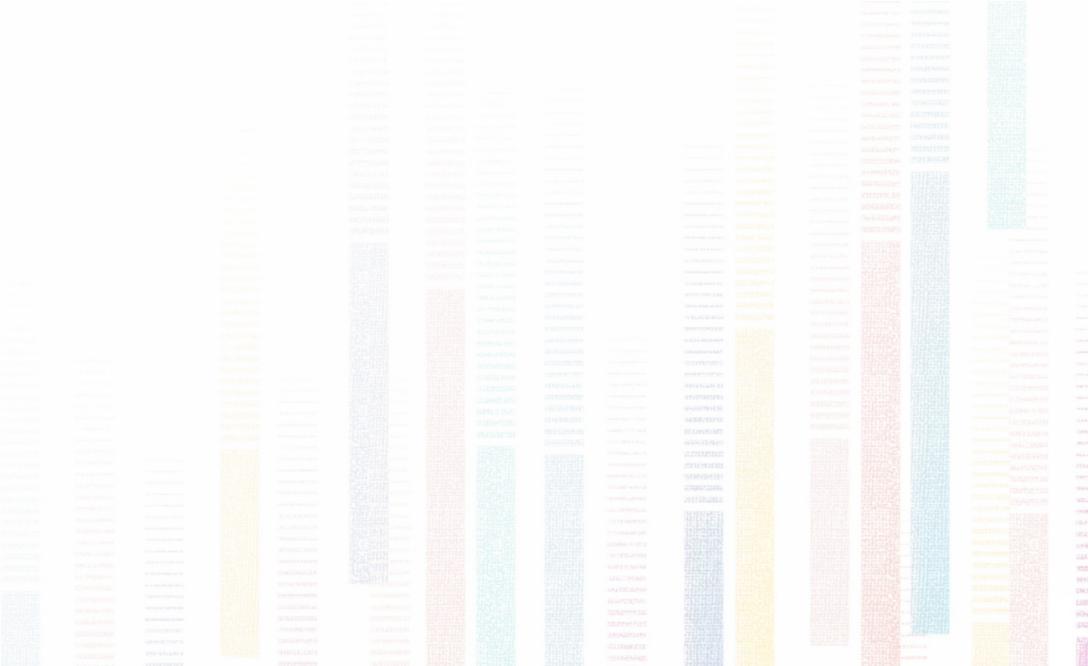
¹⁴ Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (2023). Strategies for Educators. https://perilresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/splc_peril_strategies_for_educators.pdf

¹⁵ Astor, R. A., Meyer, H. A., Benbenishty, R., Marachi, R., & Rosemond, M. (2005). School Safety Interventions: Best Practices and Programs. Children & Schools. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/27.1.17>

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING HATE IN SCHOOLS

- *Invest in school hate prevention research.* There are critical gaps in the research on hate prevention in schools. Investments could include funding research to address these gaps, expanding existing data collection efforts, and facilitating collaborations between researchers and schools.
- *Improve support and accountability for the implementation of existing policies.* Implementation of existing policies could be improved through better training on existing laws, greater transparency about schools’ processes for handling reports of hate, and enhanced oversight requirements.
- *Consider digital literacy curricula requirements.* Digital literacy curricula could educate students on topics such as the harms of online hate, actions to take if they encounter hate online, and skills to recognize disinformation and misinformation.
- *Provide state support for teacher training.* This could include support for the development of evidence-based trainings and interschool visits for staff to exchange information and best practices with each other.
- *Provide support for schools to develop and implement approaches to hate prevention.* To encourage schools to create locally tailored anti-hate programs, a grant program or other forms of support could be established. Such a grant program would allow schools to innovate anti-hate strategies that fit within their specific contexts and meet their needs, while also supporting school autonomy.

The report ends with a summary of Commission activities from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. In the upcoming year, we plan to continue to research significant patterns and trends in hate affecting Californians. To further understand how to enhance resources and support, we plan to examine the needs of hate victims in California and access to resources and services. We will also continue our research on preventing and reducing online hate. The Commission plans to search for evidence of successful hate prevention efforts broadly, including local efforts and efforts in other states. Throughout our work, we will continue to draw on rigorous research and data and learn from subject matter experts, community-based organizations, and members of the public.



Chapter 1

Introduction



In its second full year of operation, the Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) has made critical progress developing policies and tools to better monitor and combat hate in California. To measure recent trends in hate, the Commission partnered with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research to procure unprecedented data on Californians' experiences with hate. The data confirmed what the Commission has heard from communities since it was established: Hate is widespread. The data suggest that nearly 8% of Californians, or 2.6 million people, experienced an act of hate within a recent one-year period. Almost twice as many people witnessed an act of hate in California. The data also reveal that teens were twice as likely to experience hate than adults, and over 12% of California teens experienced hate at school within just one year. Various other datasets, including municipal law enforcement data and national FBI data, indicate that recorded hate crimes have continued to occur at record levels in recent years.

“ Nearly 8% of Californians, or 2.6 million people, have experienced an act of hate within one year. ”

Sadly, recent events across the state remind us of the shocking manifestations of hate. In San Francisco, a man's home was set on fire after he received threatening anti-Black messages, including a voodoo doll depicting a Black person with a noose around its neck.¹⁶ In San Diego, pellet gun shootings targeted people in the LGBTQ+

neighborhood of Hillcrest.¹⁷ A man approached a Palestinian Muslim man in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Mid-Wilshire, said, “I hope they [your children] are dying,” and threw an object at his car window.¹⁸ Also in Los Angeles, a father and his children walking to synagogue were threatened by a man who said “Kill all of you Jews.”¹⁹ Throughout the 2024 election season, political candidates and their associates targeted women, transgender people, immigrants, people of color, religious minorities, and other groups with hate-based rhetoric. Days after Election Day in 2024, racist text messages were sent to Black youth in California, informing them they were selected “to pick cotton at the nearest plantation.”²⁰

¹⁶ Mishanec, N., & Vainshtein, A. (2024, May 21). Fire Erupts at Alamo Square Home of S.F. Dog Walker Who Faced Racist Threats, Hospitalizing His Parents. San Francisco Chronicle. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/hayes-valley-fire-two-injured-19470724.php>

¹⁷ NBC 7 San Diego (2025, January 22). 4 Men Plead to Hillcrest Pellet-Gun Shootings Police Described as ‘Hate-Related’. KNSD. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/4-men-plead-to-hillcrest-pellet-gun-shootings-police-described-as-hate-related/3731782/>

¹⁸ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024). LA County Hate Crime Report 2023. https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/20d12b6c-7e71-4244-802a-ce1fe5103c7e/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

¹⁹ Ellis, R. (2024, December 11). ‘It Is Unacceptable’: L.A. County Hate Crimes Reached an All-Time High Last Year. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-12-11/it-is-unacceptable-l-a-county-hate-crimes-reached-all-time-high-last-year>

²⁰ De Anda, M. (2024, November 10). LAUSD Investigates Racist Texts to Students amid Call for District to Declare State of Emergency. ABC7. <https://abc7.com/post/lausd-investigating-racist-texts-sent-students-la-leader-calls-state-emergency/15534066/>; ABC7 Bay Area (2024, November 9). SF Unified Students Among Victims Who Received Racist Text Messages Across US. KGO-TV. <https://abc7news.com/post/racist-texts-students-san-francisco-unified-school-district-among-victims-received-text-messages-us/15531598/>

Combating hate requires proactive efforts, and the Commission continues to develop evidence-based tools for preventing and reducing hate. In partnership with the UCLA Initiative to Study Hate, we convened scholars and policy experts to discuss evidence-based strategies for preventing hate online and in schools. Key findings from the convening are included in this report. We also identify guiding principles for preventing hate in schools, online, and through public messages.

Robust systems to respond to hate and support victims and communities are critical. To improve law enforcement responses to hate, the Commission partnered with the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, California vs Hate, and the Civil Rights Department on a new training for law enforcement officers.²¹ As described in this report, the evidence-based training features stories of Californians discussing their experiences with hate and information for law enforcement about their legal obligations.

This year's report includes interim, evidence-based recommendations for policies and tools to combat hate. Over the next year, we will build on our findings through continued research and conversations with communities across California. As we do so, we may modify our recommendations. Given the preliminary nature of the deliverables in this report, the Commission and staff at the Civil Rights Department (CRD) may be contacted to advise and provide further context about this report at CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov.

STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATE OF HATE

As reviewed in previous reports, the Commission's vision is for California to be free of hate.²² To guide this vision, we developed the following mission statement:

Strengthen California's efforts to monitor, prevent, and respond to hate activity, as well as support those targeted by hate, through community-informed research, education, and advisement.

The Commission's activities are organized around three strategic goals:

- Provide a comprehensive accounting of hate activity in California.
- Develop recommendations for reducing hate crimes.
- Develop recommendations for enhancing resources and support for people and communities affected by hate.

Though the Commission's activities are not limited to these three strategic goals, they provide a framework for our work. To accomplish these goals, we are continuously gathering research, conducting data analysis, consulting with experts, and learning from members of the public and communities.

²¹ The training video is available via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3-z5iAwC9U>

²² Previous reports of the Commission are available via this link: <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/commission-on-the-state-of-hate/commission-reports/>

THE SCOPE OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

As described in previous reports, hate activity is broad and systemic, which presents challenges to setting precise boundaries around our efforts. Because harm can result from criminal and noncriminal acts of hate, we approach our work with an expansive definition of hate that includes both hate crimes and hate incidents.

The definition of “hate crime” that we use with respect to our work is enumerated in California Penal Code sections 422.55 and 422.56. These sections define a hate crime as a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of one or more actual or perceived characteristics of the victim, including race, ethnicity, color, disability (including mental and physical disability), religion, nationality (including national origin and immigration status), sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and gender expression), and/or because that person is a part of a protected group. A hate crime can also be based on someone’s association with a person or group with one or more actual or perceived protected characteristics.

The Commission's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals



Regarding hate incidents, the Commission is using the following working definition with respect to its work:

- A hostile expression or action committed, in whole or in part, because of a person's actual or perceived identity(ies) or characteristic(s), including race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender, including gender identity, and/or because that person is a part of a protected group.
- There are two main kinds of hate incidents: (1) acts of hate that are not crimes but violate civil rights laws and (2) acts of hate that may not violate the law. Both types cause significant harm to communities.

Hate incidents include, but are not limited to, epithets, distribution of hate material in public places, posting of hate material on public property that does not result in property damage, and the display of hate material on one’s own property. However, if over an extended period of time a person directs numerous bigoted, biased, or prejudiced statements to the same person, such

a pattern of conduct could be determined to be unlawful criminal harassment or stalking under certain criminal laws, including, but not limited to, California Penal Code section 646.9.

HATE INCIDENT

A hostile expression or action committed, in whole or in part, because of a person's actual or perceived identity(ies) or characteristic(s), including race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender, including gender identity, and/or because that person is a part of a protected group.

HATE CRIME

A criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of one or more actual or perceived characteristics of the victim, including race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity), and/or because that person is a part of a protected group. A hate crime can also be based on someone's association with a person or group with one or more actual or perceived protected characteristics.

The definition of hate incidents covers both protected characteristics in existing law and other identities and characteristics that could be the basis for bias-motivated hostile expressions or acts. We chose to use this expansive definition to consider an array of cases that existing law may not cover. As described in the last report, if we do consider cases related to identities and characteristics not covered by existing law, we will proceed carefully and consider the nature of the incidents, the fundamental purposes of hate-related criminal and civil laws, and the broader, community-level consequences of targeted hostile expressions, actions, and crimes.

ANNUAL REPORT

This report begins with a detailed accounting of patterns and trends in hate in California. To develop this overview, we synthesized findings from several sources, including survey data, law enforcement data, and community-based data. We review patterns and trends impacting many different groups and communities in California. Drawing on these findings, we introduce interim policy recommendations for focusing hate prevention and response efforts.

Additionally, we summarize a troubling trend that has continued since the publication of our 2023-2024 report: the intersection of hate and public institutions. Building on our previous findings, we discuss hate-based political rhetoric in the 2024 elections and review new data on hostility toward public officials. Chapter 2 ends with four new interim policy recommendations for addressing the intersection of hate and public institutions.

Chapter 3 summarizes the Commission's findings on resources and support systems for victims of hate. We discuss our findings from our review of research on mental health interventions to support victims of hate and interim recommendations to help build a more robust mental health infrastructure for victims of hate. The Commission continues to observe significant gaps in law enforcement training and data on hate. The chapter reviews these gaps and our recommendations for addressing them. We also provide an overview of a new training for law

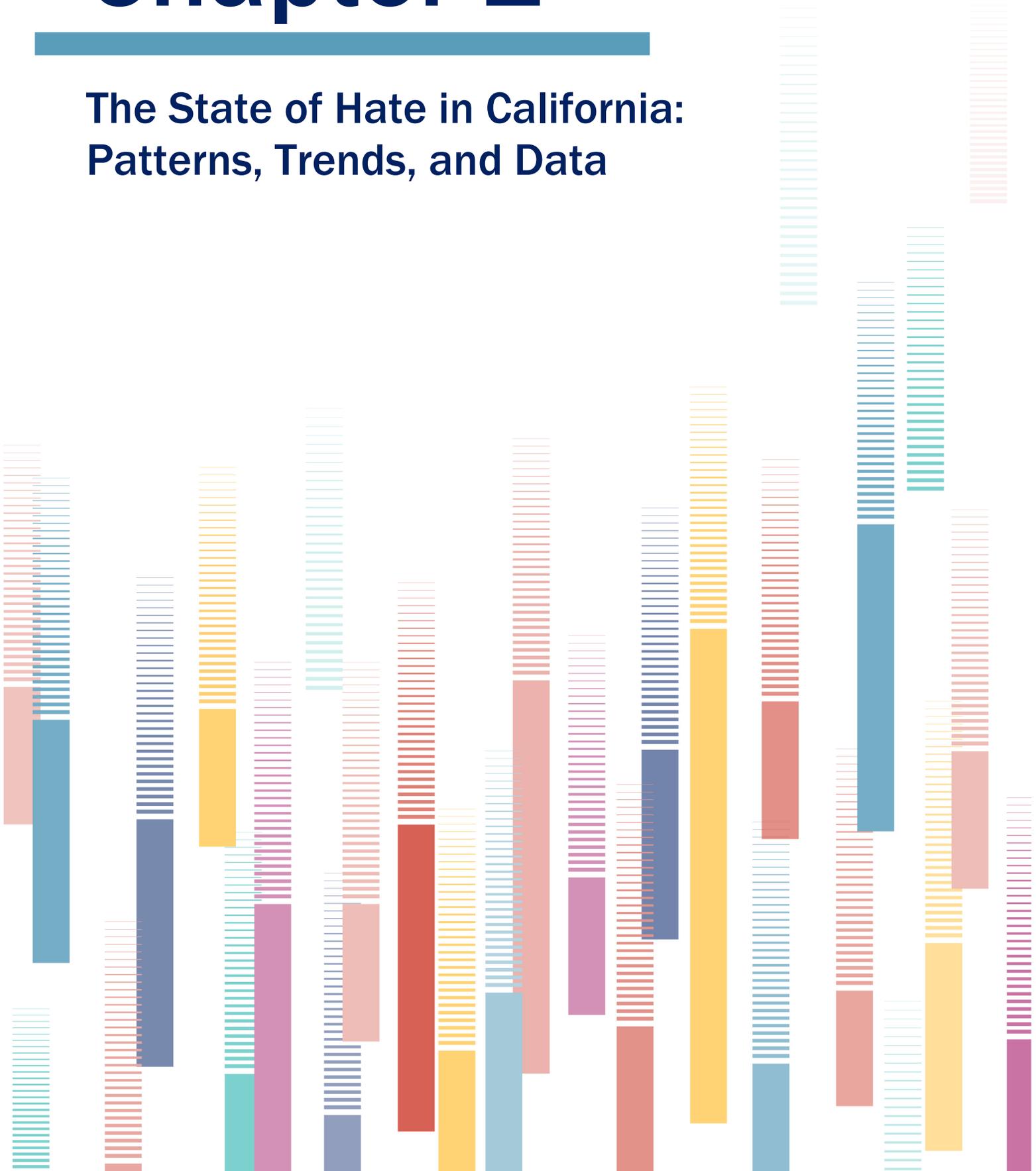
enforcement that the Commission developed with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

Chapter 4 contains an overview of our research and recommendations for preventing hate. We focused on three areas of hate prevention: anti-hate public messaging, hate prevention in schools, and prevention of online hate. With respect to public messages, we continued our work from last year reviewing research on the effectiveness of public messaging campaigns for preventing hate. We build on last year's findings and outline 17 guiding principles for designing and implementing public messaging campaigns to prevent hate. Given the growing prevalence of hate in schools, we continued our work since the last report reviewing research on hate prevention in schools. We describe new insights on this topic and introduce 11 guiding principles and five policy recommendations for preventing hate in schools. Finally, we examined hate online. We introduce preliminary findings on the nature of online hate, the challenges of preventing it, and three potential prevention strategies.

Chapter 5 summarizes the Commission's activities from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. It covers our research projects, community forums, and future activities. The Commission plans to investigate pressing topics over the next year, including the role of the criminal legal system in addressing hate and continued research on online hate prevention. We will also continue to learn from subject matter experts, community leaders, and members of the public to develop recommendations that help build a peaceful, inclusive California free of hate. The report concludes in Chapter 6 with a discussion of future activities.

Chapter 2

The State of Hate in California: Patterns, Trends, and Data



The 2023-2024 Annual Report from the Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) provided an overview of patterns and trends in hate in California, revealing that many groups in California are experiencing widespread and elevated levels of hate, particularly since 2020. The report also examined the complex relationship between hate and public institutions, highlighting how political rhetoric and major events, such as elections, often coincide with surges in hate. Additionally, it described the growing prevalence of hostility directed at public officials.

This year's report begins with an overview of our data framework, outlining how we categorize the various sources of data and information on hate in California. We then describe overall patterns and trends in hate in California, along with notable patterns and trends in hate impacting specific groups and communities. Throughout this section, our findings draw from an unprecedented, publicly available dataset on Californians' experiences with hate – the 2023 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) dataset developed in partnership with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Commission, California vs Hate (CA vs Hate), and Civil Rights Department (CRD) staff.

The final section of this chapter examines the intersection of hate and public institutions. This section discusses the role of hate throughout the 2024 election season and targeted hostility toward public officials. The chapter ends with interim policy recommendations.

DATA ON HATE ACTIVITY IN CALIFORNIA

Several governmental and nongovernmental entities collect data on hate activity in California using varied approaches. The Commission's 2023-2024 report introduced a framework for categorizing these data sources, describing the strengths and limitations of each category. We briefly review this framework below. For a more detailed description of each of these categories, refer to Appendix A, which contains excerpts from the 2023-2024 report.

PRIMARY TYPES OF DATA ABOUT HATE

- Data collected by law enforcement
- Representative data from surveys
- Community-based data
- Administrative data collected by non-law-enforcement governmental entities

Law Enforcement Data

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 13023, law enforcement agencies in California are required to submit reports of data on hate crimes to the California Department of Justice (DOJ). Using this data, the Office of the Attorney General publishes an annual statewide report of hate crime statistics, available online at openjustice.doj.ca.gov/resources/publications.

Law enforcement data are one of the most referenced datasets to understand patterns and trends in hate crimes in California. As with many datasets, however, these data have limitations. The majority of hate crimes are never recorded in law enforcement data. According to one estimate, nationally, law enforcement data may only capture 3% of the total number of hate crimes that actually happen.²³ This estimate may be even smaller for some groups. For instance, one news report found that law enforcement data captured less than 0.5% of anti-disability hate crimes that occur.²⁴ There are many reasons for this undercount. For a detailed discussion, see Appendix A.

“
Nationally, law enforcement data may **only capture 3%** of the total number of hate crimes that actually happen.
”

Law enforcement data are not simply an objective measure of patterns and trends in hate; they are also a reflection of an agency’s efforts to address hate crimes. In 2018, researchers surveyed a nationally representative sample of law enforcement agencies.²⁵ They found that agencies with hate crimes policies and procedures (compared to those without such policies and procedures) reported a greater number of hate crimes, even after the researchers controlled for agency size and type.²⁶ In other words, the number of hate crimes reported by law enforcement agencies was significantly correlated with whether the agency had policies and procedures in place to address hate crimes.

Compounding the limitations of law enforcement data is the uneven transition of data reporting systems across agencies over the past few years. For years, law enforcement agencies in California have been migrating their crime data reporting systems from the Uniform Crime Reporting Program system to meet the requirements of the newer California Incident-Based Reporting System (CIBRS) framework. CIBRS is modeled after the federal framework, the National Incident-Based Reporting System. Though the migration to CIBRS allows agencies to collect and report more detailed crime data, doing so is complex, requiring significant changes

²³ Sill, K., & Haskins, P. A. (2023, September 13). Using Research to Improve Hate Crime Reporting and Identification. Police Chief Online. <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/using-research-improve-hate-crime-reporting-id/#:~:text=Federal%20Data%20Captures%20Roughly%201,5>

²⁴ Ozturk, S. (2024, October 2). ‘Disability Is Everywhere’ – Yet Anti-Disability Hate Crimes Rising. American Community Media. <https://americancommunitymedia.org/stop-the-hate/disability-is-everywhere-yet-anti-disability-hate-crimes-rising/#:~:text=Meanwhile,%20a%2019%20comparison%20of%20FBI%20police%20report,reported%20less%20than%200.5%25%20of%20anti-disability%20hate%20crimes>

²⁵ Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Turner, H. A. (2022). U.S. Hate Crime Investigation Rates and Characteristics: Findings from the National Hate Crime Investigations Study (NHCS). National Criminal Justice Reference Service. https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/sites/default/files/media/2023-08/summary-report_12.31.21.pdf

²⁶ Ibid. https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/sites/default/files/media/2023-08/summary-report_12.31.21.pdf

in software and training of law enforcement staff. As a result, the migration has been inconsistent and slow across agencies in California.

The transition to CIBRS and other factors may have resulted in a particularly high number of law enforcement agencies providing incomplete data, or no data at all, to the California DOJ in 2023 and potentially in previous years. The California DOJ's 2023 Hate Crime in California report lists 28 law enforcement agencies that did not report a full year of hate crime data. As a result, the report cautions against comparing 2023 hate crime statistics to previous years.

Representative Data

As discussed in the Commission's 2023-2024 report, we define representative datasets as those that are created through representative surveys asking a group of respondents about their experiences. Through statistical analyses and systematic sampling, researchers can survey a relatively small number of people to estimate patterns and trends across large populations.

Examples of representative datasets on hate in California include the 2023 California Health Interview Survey (described below); the California Healthy Kids Survey, sponsored by the California Department of Education; Stop AAPI Hate's 2024 national survey of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago; and the AAPI Data/AP-NORC 2023 national poll.

Community-Based Data

A third category of datasets is community-based. These data are primarily gathered by community-based organizations (CBOs) through various methods, such as nonrepresentative surveys, reporting portals that allow anyone to report hate to the organization, or even data from requests that organizations receive from individuals seeking assistance. Some of the community-based datasets on hate include data from Stop AAPI Hate's reporting portal; the Council on American-Islamic Relations' incident report tracker; and the Anti-Defamation League's incident reporting portal.

Non-Law-Enforcement Governmental Data

A fourth category of data consists of administrative data collected by non-law-enforcement governmental entities, including local, state, and federal agencies. For example, the CA vs Hate Resource Line and Network is the state's first-ever statewide hotline and resource network aimed at combating hate. It encourages people in California to report hate and connects them to resources. It then publishes a high-level summary of its data regularly. Other administrative datasets include data on hate crimes compiled by the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, which is supplemented with community-based data, as well as data from the California Department of Social Services on organizations that receive Stop the Hate grants.

MEASURING HATE THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY

Over the past few years, the Commission has partnered with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, CA vs Hate, and CRD to design and enter survey questions into the 2023, 2024, and 2025 California Health Interview Surveys. Administered by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the CHIS is the nation's largest state health survey. Each year, CHIS interviews nearly 20,000 households on a wide range of health matters. By systematically sampling 20,000 households across California, CHIS researchers collect data in a way that allows for estimating generalizable patterns and trends across the state and within most counties in California. The CHIS data make it possible to create estimates about the population of California by using a statistical procedure known as weighting. This procedure corrects for methodological biases that may occur when collecting the survey data, including the overrepresentation or underrepresentation of specific groups in the sample compared to the population overall.²⁷ Throughout this report, we use estimates that are created through this procedure. Because each data point is an estimate, it has some margin of error. Throughout this report, we provide population estimates that are rounded to the nearest 1,000 to signal that they are estimates with a margin of error rather than a precise value.

The questions related to hate in the 2023 CHIS asked respondents if they experienced a hate act within the past year, the specific hate offense(s) they experienced, where the hate act(s) occurred, and why they were targeted. To our knowledge, the data from these questions are the first representative, statewide dataset of Californians measuring their experiences with hate. As such, they provide unprecedented insights into hate in California, which we reference throughout this report. For additional details about the survey, see Appendix B. This report contains our findings from the 2023 CHIS data, which was released in October 2024. Data from the 2024 CHIS was released in October 2025, too late to incorporate into this annual report, and the 2025 CHIS report will be released in October 2026.

PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN HATE IN CALIFORNIA

Drawing on a variety of sources, this section describes patterns and trends in hate in California in recent years. It begins with a description of overall patterns in hate, including how many people are impacted by hate, where hate is happening, and the biases motivating hate acts in California. We then discuss how hate is impacting specific groups and communities.

Our findings in the following sections are drawn from multiple sources, including the 2023 CHIS data and data from the California DOJ, which compiles and publishes annual hate crime data

²⁷ For additional information on the use of weights in the CHIS, see: California Health Interview Survey. CHIS 2023 Methodology Series: Report 5 - Weighting and Variance Estimation. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2024. https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/chis_2023_methodologyreport5_weighting_final_082924.pdf

reported by law enforcement agencies. Additionally, we incorporate insights from CBOs, public comments, and presentations at community forums.²⁸

Synthesizing the information from different sources is complex, given that sources often vary with respect to definitions, data collection methods, populations of focus, time frames, and levels of data aggregation, among other differences. However, we attempt to harmonize data where possible to identify common patterns and trends and describe a more comprehensive understanding of hate in California.

Prevalence of Hate

We first address a foundational question: How many people in California experienced hate in one year? To speak to this question, we rely on self-reports from respondents surveyed by the 2023 CHIS. The 2023 CHIS surveyed people 12 and over in California, asking if they experienced an act of hate within the past year. Because the CHIS was administered on a rolling basis throughout 2023, the one-year period varies across respondents, but it falls between 2022 and 2023. When answering the question, respondents were asked to use the definition of hate provided in the survey, which defined hate broadly to include hate crimes and noncriminal hate incidents.²⁹

It is important to note that the CHIS measures Californians' subjective experiences with hate. Reports of hate in the CHIS are not independently verified. Additionally, the estimates presented from the CHIS data only speak to the number of people who experienced hate, not the number of hate acts that occurred in California. Some proportion of respondents likely experienced multiple acts of hate, in which case the volume of hate acts would be considerably higher than the estimates of the number of people who experienced hate.



An estimated **2.6 million**

Californians experienced at least one hate act within one year.

Source: CHIS 2023

²⁸ Inclusion of an organization's dataset is not an endorsement of the organization, including its activities and positions. In some cases, the data or information from an organization is included to give voice to the constituents of an organization.

²⁹ The definition used in the survey was as follows: "This next set of questions focuses on whether you may have been targeted for hate because of prejudice toward people with certain characteristics or religious beliefs. You may or may not actually have these characteristics or religious beliefs. It is different from someone targeting you for other reasons, such as being angry or wanting to get something from you. Hate incidents can include physical abuse, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, property damage, or something else."

Using the CHIS data to extrapolate to the population, we estimate that 8% of Californians over the age of 12 experienced an act of hate within the year before taking the survey. Nearly twice as many people, or 15%, witnessed an act of hate within the year before taking the survey. Because the CHIS is a representative survey of California, the estimates from the CHIS can be extrapolated to the general population of California. The percentages correspond to an estimated 2.6 million Californians having experienced at least one hate act within the past year and nearly 5 million having witnessed a hate act.

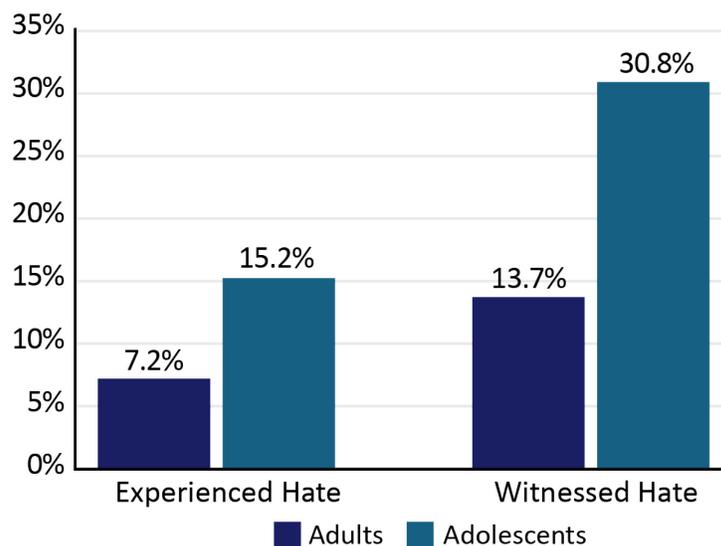
HATE VICTIMIZATION RATES IN CALIFORNIA OVER ONE YEAR

	EXPERIENCED HATE	WITNESSED HATE
Overall	8.0% (2.6 million people)	15.4% (5 million people)
Adults	7.2% (2.1 million people)	13.7% (4 million people)
Adolescents	15.2% (476,000 people)	30.8% (969,000 people)

Note: Estimates are derived from the 2023 CHIS data; respondents were asked if they experienced and/or witnessed a hate act within one year prior to taking the survey.

To understand how adults and adolescents (12 to 17 years of age) experience hate differently, we analyzed data separately for these two groups. We estimate that adolescents in California were more than twice as likely to experience hate than adults (15% of adolescents versus 7% of

Hate Victimization Rate in California:
Adults and Adolescents



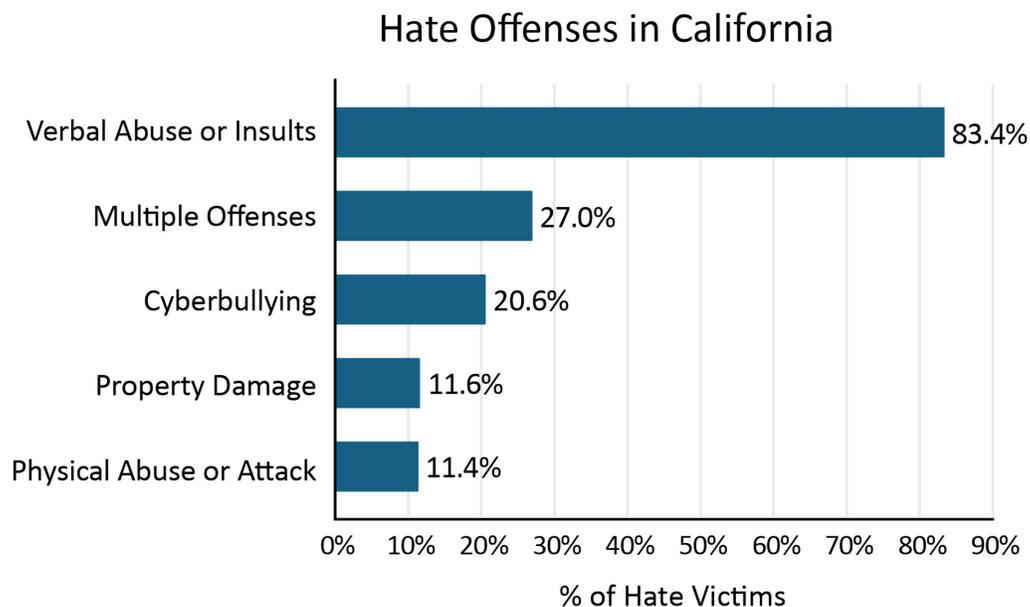
Source: CHIS 2023

adults). Extrapolating to the population suggests that over 476,000 adolescents and 2.1 million adults in California experienced hate within a year. When it comes to witnessing hate, the differences between adults and adolescents are also striking. About 31% of adolescents, (nearly 1 million adolescents) witnessed an act of hate within the past year, versus about 14% of adults (nearly 4 million adults).

Hate Offenses

In the 2023 CHIS, respondents who reported experiencing at least one act of hate within the past year were asked whether they experienced a hate act that consisted of the following offense(s): physical abuse or attack, verbal abuse or insults, cyberbullying, property damage, or “something else.”³⁰

Over 80% of people who experienced hate experienced hate-motivated verbal abuse or insults specifically. This amounts to an estimated 7% of Californians overall, or 2.1 million people, who experienced hate-motivated verbal abuse or insults within a year. A substantial number of people experienced more than one type of hate-motivated offense (27% of hate victims) and cyberbullying (21% of hate victims).



Source: CHIS 2023

Due to the limited nature of the data, we cannot estimate how many people experienced a hate crime specifically. However, two offenses listed in the CHIS survey, property damage and physical abuse or attack, are similar to hate crime offenses that make up about two-thirds of hate crime offenses in the California DOJ’s Hate Crime dataset: destruction/damage/vandalism,

³⁰ Respondents were asked to describe the offense if they selected “something else.” Common offenses that respondents described included “worse service/treatment or rules applied differently”; “emotional or psychological abuse”; “threats and intimidation, other than expressly verbal or physical”; “experienced or witnessed a climate of hate”; “political opposition”; and “some other type.” Less than 3% of respondents reported experiencing each offense.

simple assault, and aggravated assault.³¹ According to the CHIS data, nearly 12% of victims of hate experienced hate-motivated property damage and over 11% experienced physical violence. Within the California population as a whole, we estimate that 1.6% of Californians, or over half a million people, experienced hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence within the year before taking the survey. As with hate acts generally, adolescents are almost twice as likely to experience hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence than adults (2.7% of adolescents versus 1.5% of adults).

Next, we compared the estimates from the CHIS data to the law enforcement data compiled by the California DOJ. We limited our comparison to data points that are as similar as possible across the two datasets. Specifically, we compared the number of people who experienced hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence (based on self-reported responses in the CHIS) to the number of reported victims of destruction/damage/vandalism, simple assault, or aggravated assault, according to the DOJ data. We also addressed the difference in the time periods across the two datasets. Respondents in the CHIS were asked to report their experiences with hate within “the past year,” but this year varies depending on when the respondent took the survey. It could refer to any one-year period between 2022 and 2023. To approximate a one-year period across those two years in the DOJ data, we averaged the number of victims in law enforcement data in 2022 and 2023. Despite our efforts at creating comparable statistics for the sake of comparison, the datasets vary substantially, and our comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

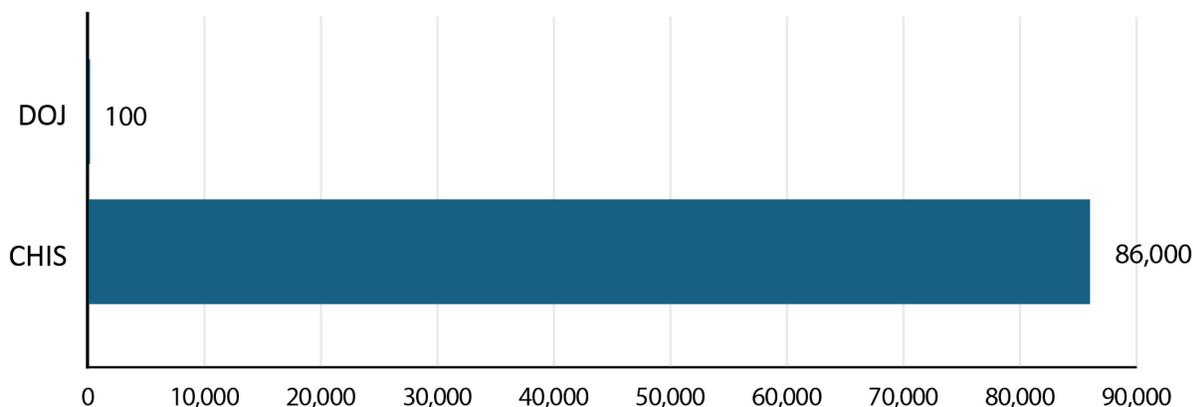
The results suggest there is a vast gap between Californians’ self-reported experiences of hate and hate crimes recorded in law enforcement data in California. Based on the CHIS data, an estimated 439,000 adults and 86,000 adolescents in California experienced hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023.³² These numbers dwarf the number of hate crime victims recorded by law enforcement agencies for similar types of offenses. Across 2022 and 2023, the DOJ data contain an average of 1,215 adult victims and 100 victims under the age of 18 who experienced hate crimes consisting of destruction, damage, vandalism, or physical violence. Comparing the two datasets suggests that only 0.3% of adults and 0.1% of adolescents who experienced hate-motivated physical violence or property damage are recorded in law enforcement data in California.³³ To put it another way, an estimated 99.7% of adult victims and 99.9% of adolescent victims identified by the CHIS are not recorded in law enforcement data.

³¹ For the sake of brevity, we will refer to “physical abuse or assault,” “simple assault,” and “aggravated assault” as ‘physical violence’. This data is available on the California DOJ’s website: <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>; we refer to this data as DOJ data.

³² Each of the CHIS estimates in this report is based on a survey and has some margin of error. In this case, for adults, the margin of error suggests that we are 95% confident that the number of adults who experienced hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence is between 361,000 and 516,000. For adolescents, this range is between 44,000 and 128,000.

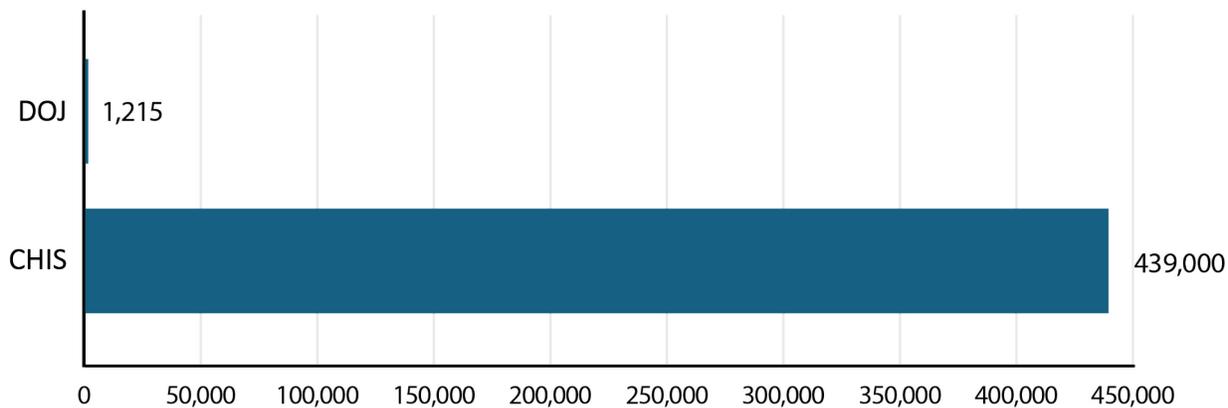
³³ If we consider the margin of error, the gap is between 0.24% and 0.34% for adults, and .08% and .23% for adolescents.

Youth Victims of Hate-Motivated Property Damage or Physical Violence



Source: CHIS 2023 and DOJ 2022/2023

Adult Victims of Hate-Motivated Property Damage or Physical Violence



Source: CHIS 2023 and DOJ 2022/2023

Compared to national estimates of the number of hate crimes underreported in law enforcement data, the gap in the California data is somewhat larger. Recall that one national estimate suggests that law enforcement data only capture about 3% of hate crime victimizations. Our analyses point to an estimate less than one-tenth of that in California. Only about 0.3% of adult and 0.1% of adolescent victims were recorded in California law enforcement data.

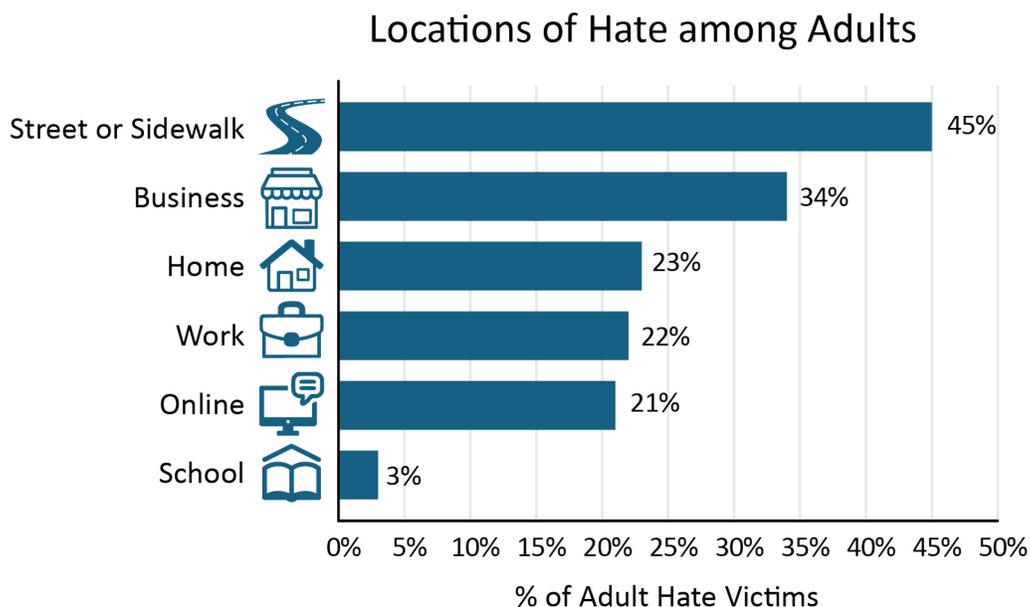
Again, it is important to interpret these results with caution. There are numerous differences between the two datasets, which suggest the gaps may be larger or smaller than our estimates. For example, in the DOJ data, victims would be counted more than once in one year if they experienced more than one hate crime event. From the CHIS data, we can only estimate the number of people who experienced at least one hate act. A person who experienced more than one hate act in one year would only be counted once in the CHIS data. This suggests the gaps

could be larger than our estimates. On the other hand, several differences suggest the gaps are smaller than our estimates. While the law enforcement data contain hate crime victimizations that have been investigated by law enforcement agencies, the CHIS estimates are based on respondents’ subjective experiences with hate and have not been independently verified. In addition, law enforcement data record victims of hate crimes, while the CHIS data contain information about people who experienced hate acts, which includes both crimes and noncriminal acts. While we attempted to address this difference by limiting the comparison to comparable offenses experienced by the victims across the datasets, we are not able to determine whether CHIS respondents experienced a crime specifically.³⁴

Even considering these differences, the magnitude of the gap between the two datasets suggests there may be a substantial number of hate victimizations that are never represented in law enforcement data in California. There are numerous reasons for this gap independent of differences between the datasets. These could include the underreporting of hate crimes to law enforcement, a lack of investigations by law enforcement, and a lack of data reporting by law enforcement. For a detailed discussion of the underreporting of hate crimes in law enforcement data, see Chapter 3. Our findings point to a key takeaway in the 2023-2024 Annual Report: To truly understand the impact of hate on Californians, it is imperative to invest in research and data collection beyond law enforcement data.

Locations of Hate

The CHIS and DOJ data contain information about the type of place (for example, sidewalks, businesses, etc.) where hate occurred. We first discuss the findings from the 2023 CHIS, which



³⁴ Other differences across the datasets include different units of analysis (respondents vs. victims), time periods, and categorization of offenses.

asks respondents who experienced a hate act if the act occurred at any of the following locations: home; work; school; on the street or sidewalk; online; a store, theater, gas station, or other business; or somewhere else.³⁵ Respondents could select multiple locations.

Among adults, public places were the most common locations of hate. Based on the 2023 CHIS data, we estimate that nearly half of adults who experienced hate (45%) experienced at least one hate act on a street or sidewalk within the previous year. This amounts to an estimated 929,000 people. The second most common location was a business, such as a store, theater, or gas station (34% of adults who experienced a hate act). A substantial number of adults who experienced hate were targeted at home (23%), work (22%), and online (21%).

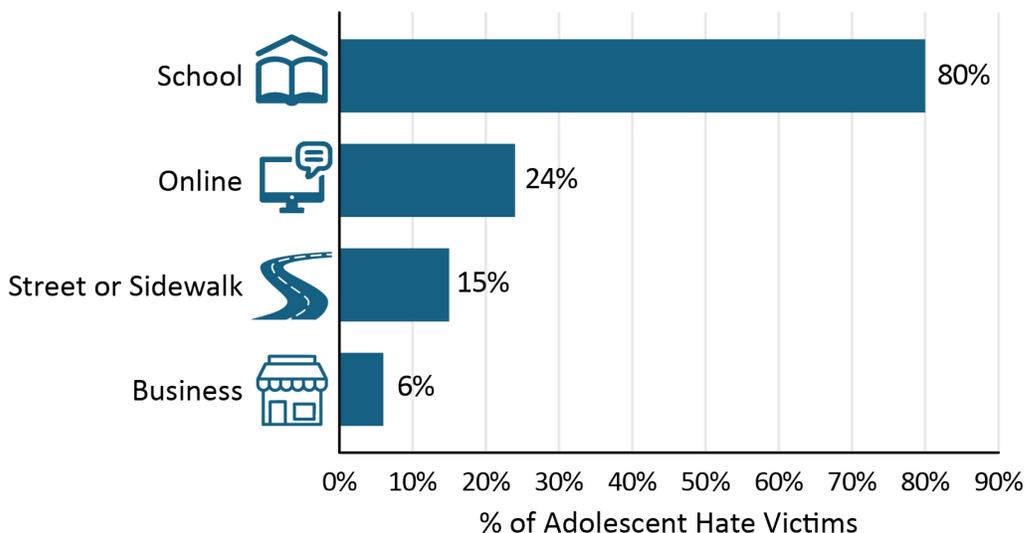


Nearly **80%** of California adolescents who experienced a hate act in the last year were targeted at school.

Source: CHIS 2023

For adolescents, the locations of hate are different. Schools were by far the most common locations. We estimate that nearly 80% of adolescents in California who experienced a hate act, or 380,000 adolescents, experienced at least one hate act at school within the prior year. The second most common location for adolescents to experience hate was online (24% of adolescents who experienced hate), and the third most common location was a street or sidewalk (15%). Due to limitations in the 2023 CHIS data, we are unable to report on the proportions of adolescents who experienced hate at home or work. The DOJ data contain

Locations of Hate among Adolescents



Source: CHIS 2023

³⁵ Respondents were asked to describe the location if they selected “something else.” Common locations described included public transit and public gathering places, such as sporting events, parks, or religious institutions.

detailed information about the locations of hate crimes. To compare the two datasets, we combined the location categories in the DOJ data to approximate those of the CHIS.³⁶ As in the previous section, we averaged the number of victims experiencing a hate crime across 2022 and 2023. Given the limitations of the CHIS data, we are unable to limit the comparison to victims who experience hate-motivated physical violence or property damage. Consequently, results should be interpreted with caution. While the CHIS data measure the number of people who experienced a hate act, which could be criminal or noncriminal, the DOJ data contain victims of hate crimes specifically. Differences in the results between the datasets could be attributable to differences in the locations of hate crimes versus hate acts and/or the differences between the two datasets.

Despite the differences between the two datasets, both point to generally similar patterns of locations of hate. Among adult victims in the DOJ data, the most common location of a reported hate crime is a street, sidewalk, or parking lot (34% of adult victims). The second most common location is a residence (26% of adult victims), and the third is a business (18% of adult victims). These results are similar to those from the CHIS analysis, which identified streets, sidewalks, and businesses as common locations of hate acts. Workplaces and homes are also frequent locations of hate in the CHIS data.

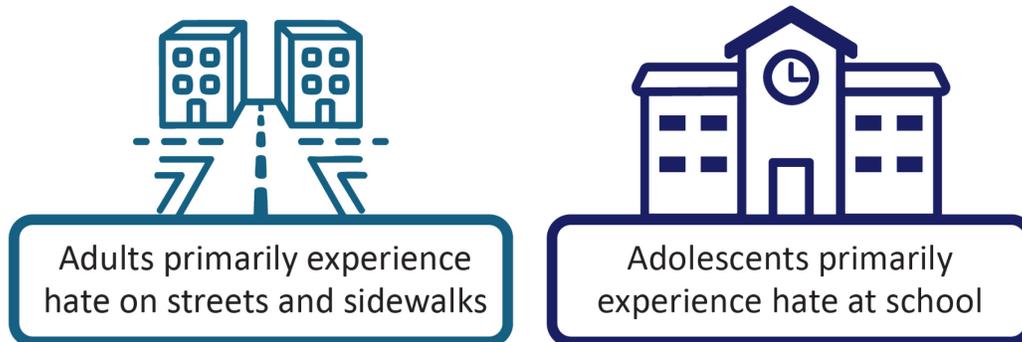
We find two notable differences between the two datasets: hate that occurs online and at work. Victims of online hate make up a much smaller fraction of victims in the DOJ data than in the CHIS data. Only 0.2% of adult victims in the DOJ data across 2022 and 2023 experienced a hate crime online. In the CHIS data, an estimated 21% of adults, or over 428,000 people, experienced hate acts online. Additionally, the proportion of victims of hate crimes at workplaces is lower in the DOJ data compared to the proportion of people who experienced a hate act at work in the CHIS data (3% of adult hate crime victims in the DOJ data versus 22% of adult hate act victims in the CHIS data). As described, these findings may be due to differences in the datasets and/or differences in the locations of hate crimes versus noncriminal hate acts. In this case, hate crimes may be much less likely to occur online or at work compared to noncriminal hate incidents, which could explain the lower rates of victimizations in those locations in the DOJ data.

Next, we reviewed the locations of reported hate crimes committed against youth under the age of 18. Consistent with the CHIS analyses on hate acts, schools are the most common locations of reported hate crimes for youth. Averaging DOJ data across 2022 and 2023, we find that 35% of reported hate crime victims under 18 experienced the crime at school. This is a much smaller proportion of people who experienced hate acts estimated by the CHIS data, which found that 80% of adolescents 12 to 18 who experienced a hate act experienced it at school. A substantial number of victims under 18 in the DOJ data were reported to have experienced a hate crime at home or on a street or sidewalk (24% and 23% of hate crime victims under 18, respectively). As with adult victims, youth victims of online hate may be

³⁶ Due to differences in the location categories between the two datasets, we made several assumptions about the locations to create comparable categories between the two locations. As a result, we recommend that our comparisons be interpreted with caution. For a detailed list of the locations, see Appendix C.

underrepresented in the DOJ data. The DOJ data contains zero reported victims under the age of 18 who were victimized by an online hate crime.

Overall, both datasets reveal some consistent patterns. Roads, streets, and sidewalks appear to be the most common places where hate occurs in California. A substantial number of hate acts occur at a person's home or other residence. Across both datasets, the locations of hate differ for adults and youth. While adults predominantly experience hate on a street or sidewalk, schools are the predominant locations for youth.



Source: CHIS 2023 and DOJ 2022/2023

Despite these common patterns, there are some differences between the two datasets. The differences may stem from differences between the two datasets, but they may also speak to important patterns about the types of hate crimes reported to, and investigated by, law enforcement. For instance, individuals may be less likely to report hate crimes online, at work, or at school, to law enforcement. Overall, the findings suggest that hate in schools, online, and at work may be far more widespread than one might conclude from an analysis of only law enforcement data.

Patterns and Trends in Major Cities

Preliminary data compiled and analyzed by Commission on the State of Hate Chair Brian Levin highlight patterns and trends in hate crimes in major cities in California and nationally.³⁷ The data indicate that hate crimes reported by law enforcement across California's major cities declined somewhat in 2024 but remained high. Aggregating across eight California cities, reported hate crimes declined 3% between 2023 and 2024. However, trends varied across the cities. While there was a decline in reported hate crime events from law enforcement agencies in Santa Ana, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego between 2023 and 2024, there was an increase in events recorded by law enforcement agencies in Irvine, San Jose, and Long Beach.

³⁷ The following analyses are based on Chair Levin's Multi-City Survey (MCS) dataset, which was updated in April 2025. For a detailed report of analyses from an earlier version of this dataset, see <https://crimeandjustice.researchalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Brian-Levin-Hate-Crime-Report-2024.pdf>

HATE CRIMES RECORDED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SELECT CALIFORNIA COUNTIES (2023-2024)

	2023	2024	% Change
Irvine	14	21	50%
San Jose	82	116	41%
Long Beach	28	34	21%
San Bernardino	2	2	0%
Los Angeles	713	658	-8%
San Francisco	63	52	-17%
San Diego	65	59	-9%
Santa Ana	17	10	-41%
Total	984	952	-3%

Note: Los Angeles totals are the number of reported victims and are extrapolated using a multiplier based on past datasets. Other city totals are the number of reported events.

Source: Multi-City Survey from Chair Levin

With respect to Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (LACCHR) conducted an independent analysis of hate crime reports to the LAPD in 2023. This unpublished analysis revealed that there were 713 hate crime victims recorded by the LAPD in 2023, a total much higher than the 442 victims reported in the California DOJ's 2023 Hate Crime in California Report.³⁸ As Chair Levin described, the magnitude of this discrepancy (271 victims) is significant. If the statewide data were adjusted to account for this discrepancy, statewide trends would shift. For instance, the number of reported hate crime victims in the DOJ's Hate Crimes in California Report was 7% less than in 2022. Including the additional 271 hate crime victims identified in the LACCHR analysis would increase the number of recorded hate crime victims statewide in 2023 to a total 4% higher than in 2022.

Preliminary results from Chair Levin also point to national trends in hate crimes. Hate crimes reported by law enforcement in major U.S. cities declined somewhat in 2024 but remained high. Specifically, across 42 major cities, the number of reported hate crime events declined by 1.8% between 2023 and 2024 (from a total of 3,415 to 3,353 events). For the 10 most populous cities, reported hate crimes declined by 8%, partly due to large decreases in Chicago.

Despite these declines, reported hate crimes in 2024 remained at historically high levels. Across the 10 most populous cities in the United States, the number of hate crime events in 2024 was about the same as the number of events recorded in 2021, a year in which hate crimes were at historically elevated levels. Moreover, reported hate crime events in 2024 were 140% higher than 10 years prior (2014), and 60% higher than events five years prior (2019).

³⁸ The results from this analysis were described by Chair Levin in the February 26, 2025, meeting of the Commission on the State of Hate.

National trends in hate crimes recorded by law enforcement vary by bias motivation. In 2024, across major U.S. cities, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish hate crime events recorded by law enforcement increased, according to preliminary analyses from Chair Levin. Across 28 cities, the number of reported anti-Muslim hate crime events rose by 18% in 2024, continuing a year-over-year increase for four consecutive years. In 35 cities, the number of reported anti-Jewish hate crime events increased from 576 in 2023 to 644 in 2024, an increase of nearly 12%. The preliminary results indicate that the number of reported anti-Jewish hate crime events reached record levels in 2024 in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver, Boston, Austin, and Pittsburgh.

The analyses also suggest that reported hate crimes motivated by other types of biases declined somewhat in 2024, though that was from record levels. After a 4.4% increase in 2023, the number of reported hate crime events motivated by anti-Black bias declined slightly in 2024 by 0.65%. Reported hate crime events motivated by anti-Latine bias, which reached a record high in 2023, declined 5.5%, in 2024.³⁹ While reported anti-Asian hate crime events fell by 14.4% in 2024, the number of events was one of the highest over the last three decades. Reported hate crimes motivated by bias against gay men dropped 8% in 2024 after rising 33% in 2023.

Hate Against Communities in California

The following sections examine patterns and trends in hate activity against specific communities, or groups with shared identities, in California. First, we provide a general overview of how hate impacts communities across California by drawing on the data from the 2023 CHIS and the 2023 DOJ data. Next, we provide more in-depth discussions of specific patterns and trends in hate that are not necessarily evident in the quantitative data. To do so, we synthesize evidence from various sources, including community-based data, consultations with community-based organizations, presentations at community forums, news stories, and public comment at Commission events.

35%

of Californians who experienced hate within the past year were targeted because of more than one identity or characteristic.

It is important to note that hate against one group can also impact other groups. In fact, hate can sometimes target multiple groups simultaneously. For example, white supremacist hate speech often targets multiple communities, including people of color, migrants, LGBTQ+ people, and many faith communities. Hate can also target people at the intersections of different identities. Indeed, individuals with intersecting marginalized identities often experience hate and discrimination at high rates. For example, as we

discuss below, an estimated 35% of Californians who experienced hate were targeted because of more than one identity or characteristic within the past year, according to the CHIS data. Unfortunately, the nature of many datasets is that individual experiences are aggregated into single, larger categories like gender, sexual orientation, religion, and race, which can conceal important distinctions in how hate activity is experienced within intersectional identity

³⁹ “Latine” is a gender-neutral term to refer to people of Latin American descent.

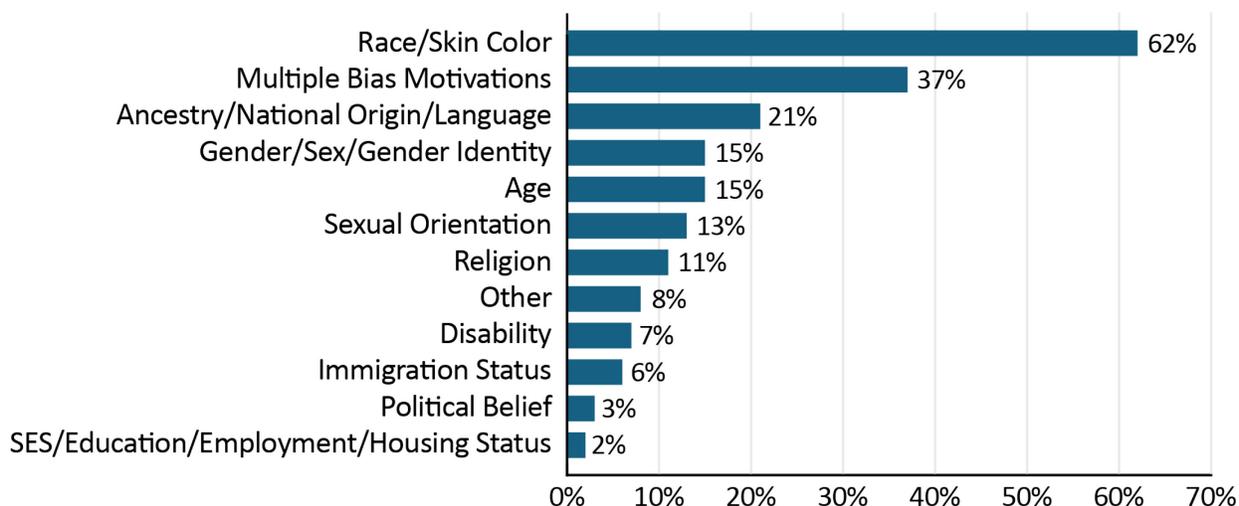
categories. Throughout the following sections, we include information, where available, about intersectional experiences alongside aggregate community-level statistics.

Bias motivations of hate

We first provide a broad overview of the bias motivations of hate in California.⁴⁰ Data from the CHIS and the DOJ both speak to this. We start with analyses from the 2023 CHIS data and then compare the results to hate crime statistics from the DOJ Hate Crimes in California reports. In the CHIS, respondents who reported that they experienced a hate act were also asked why they might have been targeted. They were asked to select from the following options and could select as many options as they preferred:

- Because of your race or skin color
- Because of your sexual orientation
- Because of your gender or sex, including gender identity
- Because of your religion
- Because of your ancestry, national origin, or language
- Because of your disability
- Because of your immigration status
- Because of your age
- Because of some other reason: _____

Bias Motivations of Hate among Adults



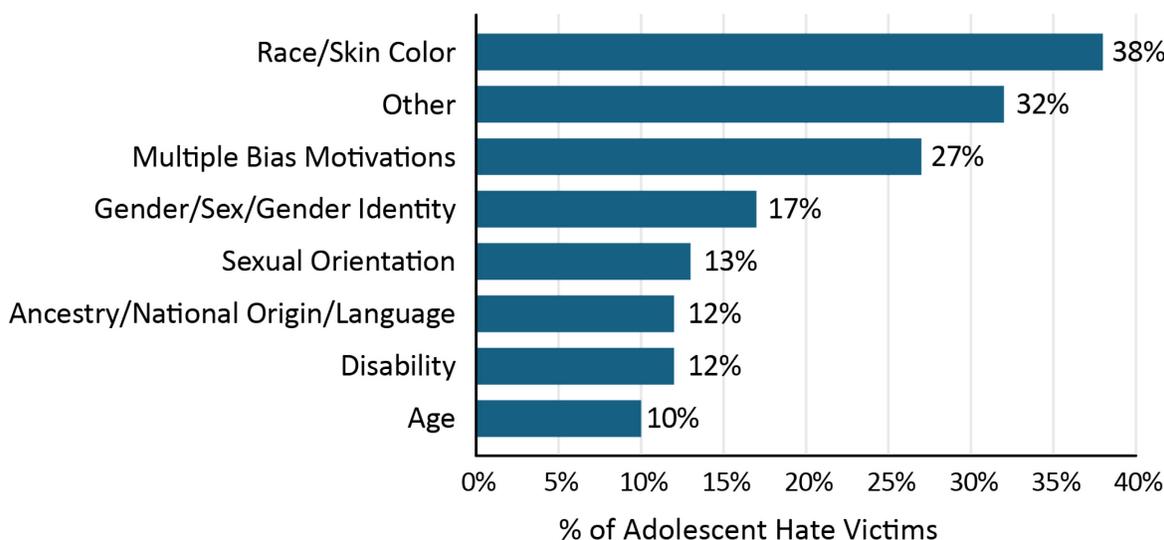
Source: CHIS 2023

Among adults, race or skin color was the most common bias motivation of hate. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of adults who experienced hate within the previous year were targeted due to their

⁴⁰ Bias motivation refers to the protected characteristic (for example, religion, race, ethnicity) that motivated the hate act. Victims may or may not actually possess the characteristic that motivated the crime.

race or skin color. This amounts to nearly 1.3 million Californians. Of adults who experienced hate, over one-third (37%) experienced hate due to more than one bias motivation. In other words, a significant number of people in California who experienced hate were targeted based on biases toward multiple aspects of their identities.⁴¹ About one in five adult victims of hate (21%) were targeted because of their ancestry, national origin, and/or language. Other common bias motivations were gender/sex/gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and religion (15%, 15%, 13%, and 11% of adult victims of hate, respectively). Nearly 7% of adults who experienced hate were targeted due to a disability, and a person’s immigration status was the basis for hate among 6% of adults who experienced hate. Less common bias motivations were a person’s political beliefs (3%) and socioeconomic status (2%).

Bias Motivations of Hate among Adolescents



Source: CHIS 2023

Like adults, for adolescents, race or skin color is the most frequent bias motivation of hate. More than 38% of adolescents who experienced hate were targeted because of their race or skin color. A substantial number of adolescents selected “Other reasons” for the basis of the hate act (32% of adolescent victims). These “other reasons” included being targeted for one’s clothing, weight, or personality. As with adults, many adolescents who experienced hate were targeted for multiple reasons (27% of adolescent victims of hate). A substantial number of adolescents who experienced hate were targeted due to their gender/sex/gender identity, sexual orientation, or ancestry/national origin/language (17%, 13%, and 12% of adolescent victims of hate, respectively). Adolescents are almost twice as likely to experience hate due to a disability

Adolescents are almost **2x** as likely to experience hate due to a disability than adults.

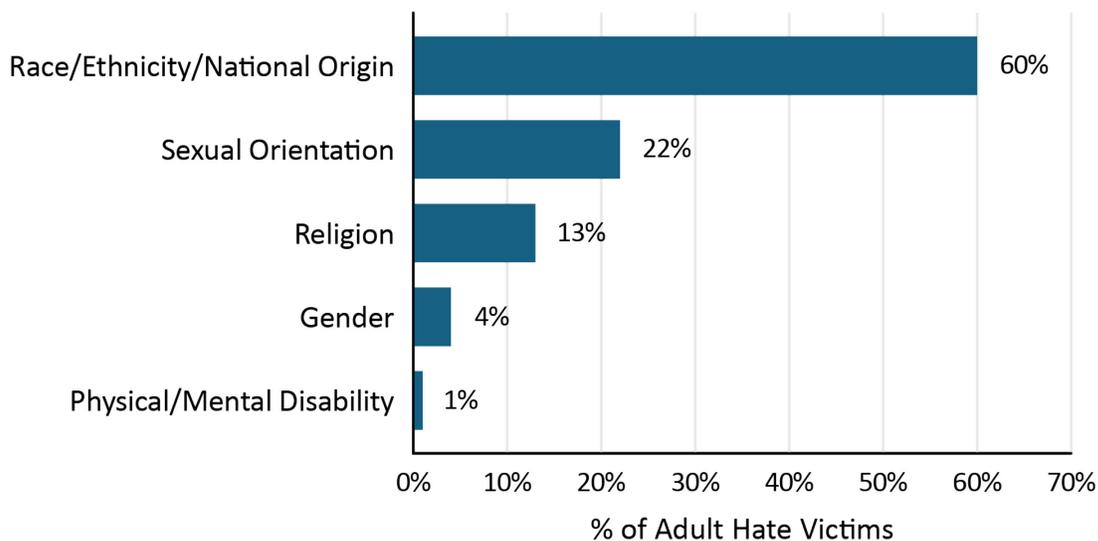
⁴¹ Due to the nature of the data, we cannot determine how many respondents experienced hate acts due to multiple bias motivations in a single event or across separate events.

than adults (12% of adolescent victims of hate compared to 7% of adults).

We compared these results to the average number of reported hate crime victims of each bias motivation across the 2022 and 2023 DOJ datasets. As described above, such a comparison should be interpreted with caution given the myriad differences between the two datasets. For instance, bias motivations are somewhat different in the DOJ data. While the DOJ data records a hate crime motivated by bias against a particular characteristic, the victim may not actually have that characteristic. This contrasts with the CHIS, which asks respondents which aspects of their identities were the basis for the hate acts.

As we observed in the CHIS data, race and ethnicity were the most common bias motivations of hate targeting adults in the DOJ data. Three in five adult hate crime victims (60%) recorded in the DOJ data were targeted by a bias against race, ethnicity, or national origin. More than one in five adult victims (22%) were targeted by sexual orientation bias-motivated crimes. Religious bias-motivated hate crimes targeted about 13% of reported adult victims. Victims targeted by bias against gender/gender identity or disability made up a small fraction of reported adult victims (4% and 1% of victims, respectively). These are much smaller fractions than in the CHIS data, which found that 15% of adult victims of hate were targeted due to their sex or gender identity, and 7% experienced hate due to a disability. Though a substantial number of CHIS respondents reported that they were targeted based on multiple bias motivations, the DOJ data contains very few such hate crime victims. Only 2% of reported adult victims were targeted by hate crimes motivated by multiple biases.

Bias Motivations of Hate among Adults

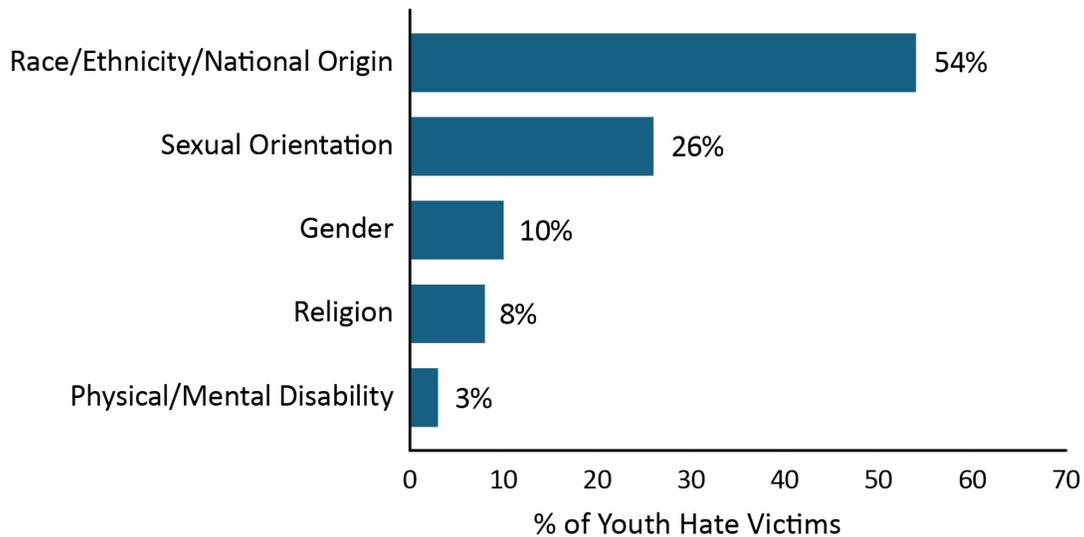


Source: DOJ 2022/2023

Turning to bias motivations of hate crimes against youth, the patterns in the DOJ data are largely similar to the CHIS data. Most reported youth victims (54%) were targeted by race/ethnicity bias-motivated hate crimes, and a reported 26% of youth victims were targeted by sexual orientation bias-motivated hate crimes. Gender bias-motivated hate crimes were somewhat

more common among youth victims, targeting 10% of reported victims (versus 4% among adults). Religious bias-motivated hate crime victims targeted a reported 8% of all youth victims. Disability bias-motivated hate crime victims were 3% of all reported youth victims, a slightly higher percentage than adult victims.

Bias Motivations of Hate among Youth



Source: DOJ 2022/2023

Despite the differences between them, the CHIS and DOJ data point to at least one consistent pattern, which is the prevalence of hate motivated by bias toward a person’s race or ethnicity. Both datasets also find that sexual orientation-motivated and religious-motivated hate are common as well, though to different degrees. Hate crimes motivated by other types of bias are

“
 The CHIS and DOJ data point to at least one consistent pattern, which is the prevalence of hate motivated by bias toward a person’s race or ethnicity.
 ”

less prevalent in the DOJ data than the CHIS dataset. The reasons for these discrepancies are unclear, but they may speak to differences in communities’ willingness to report hate crimes to law enforcement and/or law enforcement’s inclination to recognize and investigate particular types of hate crimes. Next, we describe patterns and trends impacting specific communities and groups in California.

Community-Specific Patterns and Trends

Race, ethnicity, and national origin-based hate

As described above, bias against a person’s race or ethnicity is the predominant motivation for reported hate crimes in California. Law enforcement data published by the California DOJ consistently find that anti-Black bias is the most common bias motivation of hate crime events in California each year. In 2023, though only 5% of Californians identified as Black, anti-Black hate crime events made up over 26% of all hate crime events recorded in the California DOJ’s 2023 Hate Crime in California report.⁴² Estimates from the CHIS data suggest that over 14% of Black adults in California experienced an act of hate within the year prior to taking the survey.⁴³ Extrapolating to the population of California, we estimate that 239,000 Black adult Californians experienced a hate act within a one-year period. Nearly 12% of Black adult Californians experienced hate due to their race, skin color, ancestry, national origin, and/or language within the prior year (198,000 people). In addition, an estimated 2% of Black adult Californians were victims of hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence (34,000 people).

HATE VICTIMIZATION RATES AMONG ADULTS IN CALIFORNIA OVER ONE YEAR: RACE, ETHNICITY, CITIZENSHIP, LANGUAGE, AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

	% Experienced Hate	# Experienced Hate
American Indian/Alaska Native	14.9%	28,000
Black/African American	14.4%	239,000
Asian American	9.4%	449,000
Multiple/All Other Race/Ethnicity	8.4%	385,000
Latine/Hispanic	7.4%	820,000
White	4.7%	529,000
Non-U.S. citizen	8.5%	329,000
U.S. citizen	7.0%	1,769,000
Speaks a language other than English	7.8%	1,037,000
English-only speaker	6.7%	1,061,000
Born outside U.S.	7.3%	707,000
U.S.-born	7.1%	1,391,000

Note: Estimates are derived from the 2023 CHIS data; respondents were asked if they experienced a hate act within the past year.

⁴² U.S. Census Bureau (2024). 2023 American Community Survey 1-year Demographic and Housing Estimates [Data file]. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP05?q=DP05&g=040XX00US06>; California Department of Justice (2023). 2023 Hate Crime in California. https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/Hate%20Crime%20In%20CA%202023f_0.pdf

⁴³ Due to limitations in the CHIS data, many of our analyses on community-specific patterns in hate are only available for adults. Where possible, we report data for both adults and adolescents.

Anti-Black hate acts were reported across the state and often draw on the visual and linguistic history of anti-Black violence. Powerful and chilling messages are sent through a single image or reference, such as a noose, a burning cross, or a reference to a plantation, among other examples. For instance, in Apple Valley, California, racist graffiti was painted on a wall facing a Black family’s home.⁴⁴ It was reportedly

“ Powerful and chilling messages are sent through a single image or reference, such as a noose, a burning cross, or a reference to a plantation. ”

not investigated as a hate crime. More recently, in May 2024, a Black resident of San Francisco received several racist messages at his home by mail, including a voodoo doll depicting a Black person with a noose around its neck.⁴⁵ Weeks afterward, his home was set on fire. After the November 2024 election, anonymous racist text messages were sent to Black students across the country, including in California. The texts addressed the recipient by name and told them they had been selected “to pick cotton at the nearest plantation.”⁴⁶ In Mendocino County, an electronic sign was reprogrammed to display a message reading “N*** AREN’T WELCOME.”⁴⁷

This past year, the Commission continued to hear from community-based organizations about anti-Black bias in schools. When discussing hate impacting Black Californians, several CBOs pointed to the disproportionate use of discipline of Black youth and explained how it is a result of anti-Black prejudice and bias. According to a 2021 report on the use of restraints and seclusion in schools, although Black students made up only 5% of California students, they made up 39% of students who experienced mechanical restraints, 18% of those who were physically restrained, and 24% of those who experienced seclusion.⁴⁸

One explanation for these disproportionately high rates of punishment are biases and stereotypes of Black youth, such as adultification and anger bias. Adultification bias refers to the tendency to perceive some children, especially Black youth, as older, more mature, and less innocent than other children. Anger bias refers to the higher likelihood of perceiving Black

⁴⁴ McMillan, R. (2022, October 5). Racial Slur, Swastika Painted on Apple Valley Home Being Investigated as Vandalism. KABC Television. <https://abc7.com/apple-valley-san-bernardino-county-racist-graffiti-vandalism/12298201/>

⁴⁵ Mishanec & Vainshtein (2024). <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/hayes-valley-fire-two-injured-19470724.php>

⁴⁶ De Anda (2024). <https://abc7.com/post/lausd-investigating-racist-texts-sent-students-la-leader-calls-state-emergency/15534066/>; ABC7 Bay Area (2024). <https://abc7news.com/post/racist-texts-students-san-francisco-unified-school-district-among-victims-received-text-messages-us/15531598/>

⁴⁷ Hartzell, F. (2024, July 16). Electronic Highway Sign in Anderson Valley Hijacked to Beam Racist Message to Drivers. The Mendocino Voice. <https://mendocinovoice.com/2024/07/electronic-highway-sign-in-anderson-valley-hijacked-to-beam-racist-message-to-drivers/>

⁴⁸ Borrelle, R., & Monteiro-Endow, E. (2023). Restraint and Seclusion in California Schools: Findings and Recommendations from the 2021-22 School Year Data. Disability Rights California. <https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/custom-page/restraint-and-seclusion-in-california-schools-findings-and-recommendations-from-the>

youth, relative to other youth, as angry when they are not.⁴⁹ Research has documented how both these biases contribute to excessive use of force against and disproportionate discipline of Black youth.⁵⁰

In 2023, over 10% of all hate crime events reported to law enforcement were motivated by anti-Latine bias. The CHIS data documents relatively high rates of hate experienced by the

An estimated
1 in 14

Latine adult Californians experienced a hate act within one year.



Latine community in California. Based on the 2023 CHIS data, an estimated 7.4% of Latine adult Californians, or 820,000 people, experienced a hate act within a one-year period.⁵¹ Over two-thirds of

adult Latine Californians who experienced a hate act were targeted due to their race, skin color, ethnicity, ancestry, or language specifically (589,000 people). In addition, 2% were victims of hate-motivated physical violence and/or property damage (236,000 people).

Law enforcement data suggest that anti-Latine hate crimes have persisted at elevated levels in recent years. In 2021, reported anti-Latine hate crime events in the DOJ data spiked 30% compared to the previous year (from 152 to 197). Though they have increased and decreased somewhat since then, they have generally remained high ever since. Anti-Latine hate is sometimes intertwined with anti-immigrant hate and assumptions about a person’s immigration status. As one survivor of anti-Latine hate in Texas noted, “It doesn’t matter if I become an American citizen. If your skin color is not white and your English is not perfect, you don’t blend. Bottom line.”⁵² In November 2024 in Orange



It doesn’t matter if I become an American citizen. If your skin color is not white and your English is not perfect, you don’t blend. Bottom line.



- Survivor of anti-Latine hate

⁴⁹ Cooke, A. N., & Halberstadt, A. G. (2021). Adulthood, Anger, Bias, and Adults’ Different Perceptions of Black and White Children. *Cognition and Emotion*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2021.1950127>

⁵⁰ Perillo, J. T., Sykes, R. B., Bennett, S. A., & Reardon, M. C. (2023). Examining the Consequences of Dehumanization and Adulthood in Justification of Police Use of Force Against Black Girls and Boys. *Law and Human Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000521>; Epstein, R., Blake, J. J., & González, T. (2017). *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls’ Childhood*. Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality.

<https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>

⁵¹ For the purposes of this analysis, any survey respondent who reported being Latino or Hispanic was considered to be Latine, regardless of whether this was their primary identification. These respondents may have identified as another race/ethnicity as well.

⁵² Campbell, B., Mendoza, A., Diestel, T., & News 21 Staff. (2018, August 22). Rising Hate Drives Latinos and Immigrants into Silence. The Center for Public Integrity. <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/rising-hate-drives-latinos-and-immigrants-into-silence/>

County, a woman reported being assaulted by a man who told her, “You don’t have rights because you’re Mexican and I can do what I want to.”⁵³ Other anti-Latine hate acts in California include the targeting of a family in Santa Ana whose Mexican flag was ripped down from their porch in the fall of 2024. After the family replaced it, they received a note telling them it was their “last warning” to take down the flag and found “USA” spray-painted on their fence.⁵⁴ In Modesto and Ceres, advocates spoke up in a local board of supervisors meeting about racist graffiti in their community. This graffiti, which included an anti-Latine racist slur, was reportedly perpetrated by a man who was previously arrested for threats, stalking, and harassment of Latine women, as well as racial threats and intimidation of his neighbors.⁵⁵ Later in this section, we discuss additional patterns and trends in anti-immigrant hate. These acts occurred within a broader national context in which political rhetoric targeting migrants and people from Latin America is pervasive. The impact of politically related hate is discussed later in this chapter.

Many datasets point to elevated levels of anti-AAPI hate in California. From the CHIS data, we can estimate rates of hate experienced by Asian American adult Californians specifically.⁵⁶ We

Nearly
1 in 10
Asian American adult Californians
experienced a hate act within one year.



estimate that nearly 1 in 10 (9.4%) Asian American adult Californians experienced a hate act within the prior year (449,000 people), and nearly as many (8.7%) experienced hate due to their race, skin color, ethnicity, ancestry, or language specifically (416,000 people).

An estimated 1% of Asian American adult

Californians were victims of hate-motivated physical violence and/or property damage (58,000 people). The California DOJ report points to comparatively high levels of anti-Asian hate. In 2023, about 125 reported hate crime events in the DOJ data were motivated by anti-Asian bias, continuing a trend of elevated levels of reported anti-Asian hate crimes since 2020. The DOJ data on hate crimes motivated by bias against people who are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander is extremely sparse. Between 2019 and 2023, only one anti-Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander hate crime event was recorded in the DOJ data.

⁵³ Segura, D. (2024, November 13). Man Grabs Woman’s Butt, Says She Has No Rights Because She’s Mexican, CA Police Say. The Sacramento Bee. <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article295499674.html>

⁵⁴ Rodriguez, M. (2024, December 4). Hate Crime Suspect Allegedly Steals Mexican Flag and Leaves Threatening Note for Santa Ana Family. KCAL News CBS Los Angeles. <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/hate-crime-suspect-allegedly-steals-mexican-flag-and-leaves-threatening-note-for-santa-ana-family/>

⁵⁵ Carlson, K. (2024, December 18). Modesto Man Arraigned on Multiple Hate Crime Felonies. Racist Graffiti Sparked Investigation. The Modesto Bee. <https://www.modbee.com/news/local/crime/article296943159.html>;

Carlson, K. (2024, December 6). Stanislaus County Authorities Arrest Man Accused of Posting Racist Signs Threatening Violence. The Modesto Bee. <https://www.modbee.com/news/local/crime/article296684684.html>

⁵⁶ While many organizations present information on the broader Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community together, the 2023 CHIS data only allow us to investigate hate within the Asian community specifically. Planned data collection in future years of the CHIS may allow for analyses of patterns and trends impacting the Pacific Islander community in the future.

Datasets that measure AAPI Californians' experiences with a broad range of hate acts have identified extremely high levels of anti-AAPI hate. One representative survey of AAPI adults found that nearly one in two respondents in California (49%) reported experiencing at least one type of race-based hate act in 2023.⁵⁷ Of those who experienced hate, nearly half (45%) did not share their experience with anyone.⁵⁸ A 2024 survey found that the top reasons why AAPI adults in California did not report a hate act to a formal authority or agency were perceptions that it was not serious enough to report, it would not make a difference, or it would take too much time and effort.⁵⁹ Representative surveys also reveal how anti-AAPI hate intersects with other forms of

hate. In 2024, 54% of AAPI adults in California experienced hate that targeted other aspects of their identity in addition to their race, ethnicity, or nationality. For example, in a report from Stop AAPI Hate, a Hmong woman from California said, "My nephew has been bullied for years, and it has gotten worse. There is now [a social media] page that mocks him and his disability. . . . [The school district has] done nothing to stop the bullying."⁶⁰ Additionally, anti-AAPI hate intersects with anti-immigrant hate and hate against people who speak a language other than English. In a national survey, AAPI respondents who spoke a language other than English were more likely to report experiencing anti-immigrant hate, as well as hate in many different places, including public transit, government settings, residences, and educational institutions.⁶¹

Recent reports of anti-Asian hate in California included a Los Angeles talk radio host who repeatedly referenced anti-Asian racist tropes on his radio show. He also encouraged people to discriminate against Korean people.⁶² Reports provided by Stop AAPI Hate to the Commission illustrate hate-based threats of violence against the AAPI community. An Asian woman in San Francisco reported the following: "I was standing at the bus stop at 7:30 a.m. on Friday when someone came and yelled at me and kept calling me an ugly Chinese ho. She said, 'Get off your phone. I'm going to burn you,' and then she pointed a blow torch at me and at my dog." In another report, an Indian man described the following: "[I was] yelled and spat at from a balcony, told to go back to India, and he made gunshot signs at me with his hands." A recent research study demonstrated the impact of anti-AAPI hate on AAPI seniors. The study

“

My nephew has been bullied for years...There is now [a social media] page that mocks him and his disability...[The school district has] done nothing to stop the bullying.”



”

- Family member of survivor

⁵⁷ Data provided by Stop AAPI Hate to the Civil Rights Department in October 2024.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Data provided by Stop AAPI Hate to Commission staff in April 2025.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Stop AAPI Hate (2024). From Pain to Power: Asian American & Pacific Islander Activation in the Face of Hate. The State of Anti-AA/PI Hate in 2023. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/24-SAH-NationalSurveyReport-F.pdf>

⁶² Randall, Y. (2024, December 11). MANAA Calls for Suspension of LA Host for Anti-Asian Dog Jokes. AsAmNews. <https://asamnews.com/2024/12/11/bill-handel-kfi-iheart-radio-racist-jokes/>

interviewed seniors in the San Francisco Bay Area and found that most expressed concerns about hate. Almost half reported that they “changed their daily lives out of concern for their safety.” Some respondents reported that this fear has discouraged them from leaving their homes more frequently, which has contributed to a sense of isolation and worry. Respondents also described missing medical treatments out of fear of leaving their homes.⁶³

As we discuss in the following section on political rhetoric and hate, the rhetoric of the 2024 election included high levels of South Asian hate.⁶⁴ For example, in some online communities, anti-South Asian slurs doubled between January 2024 and August 2024 after Kamala Harris became the Democratic candidate for president and Usha Vance rose to prominence as the wife of vice presidential candidate JD Vance. These anti-South Asian slurs accounted for the majority of anti-Asian terms used in these online communities.

“ [I was] yelled and spat at from a balcony, told to go back to India, and he made gunshot signs at me with his hands.



”
- Survivor of anti-AAPI hate

As described above, bias against a person’s race or ethnicity can sometimes be connected to assumptions about a person’s immigration or citizenship status. However, there is limited data on hate motivated by immigration or citizenship bias in California. Data from the California DOJ does not record hate crimes motivated by anti-immigrant bias specifically. It does contain hate crimes motivated by “anti-citizenship status,” but the available data is extremely sparse. The DOJ data from 2023 contains only eight anti-citizenship hate crime events. There are many reasons for this lack of data, including a lack of reporting among immigrant communities because of distrust of law enforcement, as well as language and cultural barriers. For a more detailed discussion, see the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report.

6% of hate victims

in California were targeted within the past year because of their immigration status.

According to the 2023 CHIS data, an estimated 6% of hate victims in California, or more than 143,000 Californians, experienced hate due to their immigration status within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023. However, our analyses revealed no statistically significant differences in the rates of hate experienced by people who are not U.S. citizens versus those who are. We also found no significant differences in rates of hate between people

who speak a language other than English (either exclusively or along with English) and those who only speak English. Additionally, rates of hate experienced were not statistically significant between people who were born within the United States and those who were not. One

⁶³ Leah, Anna. (2024). After Fatal BART Shove, Asian Elders Face Damaging Transit Fears. Nichi Bei News. <https://www.nichibeinews.org/2024/07/after-fatal-bart-shove-asian-elders-face-damaging-transit-fears/>

⁶⁴ Stop AAPI Hate (2024). Empowered/Imperiled: The Rise of South Asian Representation and Anti-South Asian Racism. <https://stopaapihate.org/2024/10/09/south-asian-report-oct24/>

explanation for this lack of difference stems from the self-reported nature of the survey and the subjective recognition of hate. Research finds that people who are born within the United States and have lived within the United States for longer are more likely to perceive racial discrimination than their counterparts.⁶⁵ Thus, people who migrate to the United States may be less likely to recognize acts of hate as such and be less likely to report hate.

Within California, sentiment toward immigrant communities has fluctuated in recent years but may have grown more positive in 2025. In a 2025 statewide survey, 72% of California adults agreed with the statement that “immigrants are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills.” In 2023, 66% of adults agreed with this statement, and in 2024, only 60% agreed with the statement.⁶⁶ Nationally, a significant trend impacting migrant communities has been the hostile anti-immigrant political rhetoric of the 2024 election season. In some cases, this rhetoric has contained dehumanizing language against migrant communities and promoted misinformation about migrants.⁶⁷ In the following section on the 2024 election, we discuss this trend in more detail.

To learn directly from migrant communities about their experiences, the Commission held a community forum in Fresno in collaboration with the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs and the Racial Equity Commission in December 2024. The forum was hosted by Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, an organization that supports refugee communities in the Central San Joaquin Valley. It was attended by a broad cross-section of the Fresno community, including many different migrant communities in the area, who shared their experiences. Broadly, four main themes emerged related to the challenges faced by these communities: safety and security, language access, discrimination more generally, and the overall well-being of their communities.

Many community members, including those who described themselves as elderly, discussed a fear of hostility from others in public places such as grocery stores and parking lots. Several attendees described inadequate responses from law enforcement to many types of incidents, including harassment, dog attacks, and hate incidents. Some described feeling that, because of their status as immigrants, law enforcement did not thoroughly investigate these incidents. In addition, some community members expressed uncertainty about their legal status within the country in light of expected federal policy changes.

Many attendees at the forum described how language barriers and inadequate language services prevented them from receiving support from law enforcement. One attendee shared a

⁶⁵ Brondolo, E., Rahim, R., Grimaldi, S. J., Ashraf, A., Bui, N., & Schwartz, J. C. (2015). Place of Birth Effects on Self-Reported Discrimination: Variations by Type of Discrimination. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.10.001>

⁶⁶ Baldassare, M., Bonner, D., Mora, L., & Thomas, D. (2025). PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/ppic-statewide-survey-californians-and-their-government-february-2025/>

⁶⁷ Within this report, “disinformation” refers to false information deliberately intended to mislead, while “misinformation” refers to content that is inaccurate or factually incorrect, regardless of intent.

story in which they could not report an issue with gangs to law enforcement because the officers only wanted to speak with someone who spoke English. Community members described receiving language interpretation services that were biased or incomplete. One attendee shared that an interpreter had only interpreted selectively during the attendee's conversation with an officer and had left out important information, leading her to conclude that the interpreter had provided ineffective interpretation, and, in so doing, had discriminated against her based on the color of her skin.

Attendees shared several other stories of discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. For example, one attendee described being at a store when she was asked where she was from. When she responded that she was from Khmer, or Cambodia, they told her to go back to where she was from. Discrimination based on religious attire and cultural practices was raised as well. An attendee pointed out that she was turned down from two jobs because she wore a hijab. Another attendee described how her husband and son have been experiencing hostility in public because they wear turbans and have longer beards as part of their religious practices.

In addition to concerns of hate and discrimination, some attendees raised economic concerns, including housing insecurity. Many expressed a desire for more resources for their communities and discussed the critical role that community-based organizations play in supporting them with essential services, including translation services, assistance working with government, and providing a safe space to discuss discrimination. Participants also highlighted the need for government and institutions to engage in culturally aware outreach to migrant communities, particularly in languages other than English, and expressed a desire to hold public officials accountable for the well-being of their communities.

More than

1 in 7 

American Indian/Alaska Native adult Californians experienced a hate act within one year.

Turning to hate targeting Indigenous people in California, we identified a general lack of data on this topic, as discussed in our 2023-2024 report. In 2023, the DOJ data contained only three hate crime events motivated by

anti-American Indian or Alaska Native bias. While the CHIS provides some information about hate impacting the American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) population in California, the data is somewhat sparse and less reliable than data for other groups. In next year's report, we expect to be able to conduct more reliable analyses by supplementing the data from the 2023 CHIS with data from the 2024 CHIS. The following analyses should be interpreted with caution, as they are preliminary.

The CHIS data indicate that an estimated 15% of AIAN adult Californians were a victim of hate within the past year (28,000 people), and about half of these victims experienced hate-motivated physical violence and/or property damage (over 14,000 people). These preliminary estimates are extremely high relative to other groups. They suggest that AIAN adults may be

almost twice as likely to experience a hate act as the general adult population of California and over four times more likely to report experiencing hate-motivated physical violence and/or property damage within the past year.

As discussed in the 2023-2024 report, the AIAN population in California continues to be impacted by the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people (MMIP). California has the fifth highest number of reports of missing and murdered indigenous people in the country, who are disproportionately women, girls, Two-Spirit individuals, and LGBTQ+ individuals.⁶⁸ The rate of solved murders of Indigenous women in California is also extremely low; only 9% of murders of Indigenous women have been solved, compared to 60% of murders in the greater population.⁶⁹

Murders of Indigenous women in California are almost **7X** less likely to be solved than homicides involving all other victims.

Source: CalMatters

To learn more about hate impacting the AIAN community in California, the Commission partnered with the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians to host a community forum. Commissioner Regina Cuellar serves as chairwoman of the Shingle Springs Band of

Miwok Indians. Speakers included Morning Star Gali, executive director of Indigenous Justice, a group that advocates for Indigenous people in California. Public officials also presented, including Assemblymember James C. Ramos and officials from the Governor’s Office of Tribal Affairs: Tribal Affairs Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari and Deputy Tribal Affairs Secretary Loretta Miranda. Assemblymember Ramos pointed out that it is a misconception that Indigenous communities share similar cultures and have similar needs, describing how different tribes have diverse cultural practices, languages, and experiences. He emphasized the lasting impacts of historical trauma endured by Indigenous communities in California, with the MMIP crisis as one example of these impacts. Gali advocated for more thorough response to and investigations of MMIP cases by law enforcement. She described several cases of violence against Indigenous women that were not adequately investigated by law enforcement. She also explained that violence against Native women is extraordinarily high – more than four out of five Native women report experiencing some form of violence within their lifetime. Speakers also discussed the pervasiveness of prejudice against Indigenous people. Gali called for more education and awareness to counter underlying prejudices. Ramos explained efforts to remove the term “sq***” from the names of geographic features and places in California with Assembly Bill 2022 (Ramos, Chapter 479, Statutes of 2022). Other speakers and

⁶⁸ Sharp, A. (2023, November 21). The Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People in California and the Push for Change. CBS13 Sacramento. <https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/news/the-crisis-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-people-in-california-and-the-push-for-change/>; Angelino, A. C., Burns, J., LaForme, C., & Giroux, R. (2023). Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People: A Paediatric Health Crisis. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-4642\(23\)00135-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-4642(23)00135-9)

⁶⁹ Du Sault, L. (2023, April 19). “Pervasive Failure to Investigate:” Report Finds Lack of Scrutiny in Cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. CalMatters. <https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2020/08/unsolved-missing-indigenous-women/>

commenters described how this law has been met with resistance. Gali explained that groups of people are organizing to keep the slur in official names, despite its painful history as a derogatory racial slur against Indigenous women.

Secretary Snider-Ashtari and Deputy Secretary Miranda discussed their work with the California Truth and Healing Council (Council), which was established by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2019 via Executive Order N-15-1. It was designed to “clarify the historical record” of the relationship between the State of California and California Native Americans by gathering narratives from California Native American people throughout California. Immediately following the forum, the Council held a regional hearing to bear witness to and record these narratives from attendees.

The Commission heard from members of the public during the forum. The comments shed light on the cultural, legal, and social challenges Indigenous communities face. Many called for systemic change and greater recognition of rights and representation. Some of the commenters called for better data about Indigenous communities to ensure that their experiences are heard. Commenters addressed issues related to justice and inclusion, including a desire to revise the curriculum in schools to include Indigenous history and correct the narratives of missions in California. Comments also discussed injustices related to the criminal legal system, with some calling for the application of hate crime enhancements by prosecutors. Others emphasized the urgent need for more resources to address the MMIP crisis, including the need to increase awareness of the Feather Alert system, a resource that law enforcement agencies can use to provide immediate information to the public for cases of missing Indigenous people.

Hate against religious communities

Among people who experienced a hate act in California, more than 1 in 10 were targeted because of their religion, according to the CHIS data. Based on these results, more than one quarter of a million Californians (271,000) were targeted by hate acts because of their religion within a one-year period. According to the DOJ data, in 2023, reported hate crime events motivated by bias against a particular religion accounted for about 20% of all events. Of these hate crime events, about 73% were motivated by anti-Jewish bias. Reported hate crime events motivated by anti-Islamic (Muslim) bias accounted for about 10% of all antireligious hate crime events.

More than **1 in 10**
hate victims in California were
targeted because of their religion.

Hate motivated by bias toward other religions is less common in existing datasets. The CHIS does not ask respondents about their faiths. In the 2023 DOJ data, hate crime events motivated by anti-Catholic bias accounted for 4% (15 events) of all hate crime events involving religious bias. Hate crime events motivated by anti-Protestant bias, anti-Sikh bias, and bias against atheism and agnosticism each accounted for about 1% or less of all religious bias hate crime events. Reported hate crime events motivated by bias against any other religion accounted for 10% of all religious bias hate crime events. These other religions are not specified in the 2023 Hate Crime in California report. Though statistics on anti-Hindu hate crimes are not available in

the California DOJ Hate Crimes Report, the FBI’s Crime Reporting Program contains 10 anti-Hindu hate crime incidents in California in 2023.⁷⁰

CHANGES IN REPORTED RELIGIOUS BIAS HATE CRIMES IN 2023: STATEWIDE AND LOS ANGELES

	2022	2023	% Change
Religious bias-motivated hate crime events (DOJ)	303	394	30%
Religious bias-motivated hate crimes (LACHR)	153	290	90%
Anti-Jewish Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	189	289	53%
Anti-Jewish Hate Crimes (LACHR)	127	242	91%
Anti-Islamic/Muslim Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	25	40	60%
Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes (LACHR)	7	19	171%
Anti-Catholic Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	20	15	-25%
Anti-Protestant Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	12	1	-
Anti-Christian Hate Crimes (LACHR)	1	6	-
Anti-Sikh Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	4	5	-
Anti-Atheism/Agnosticism/Etc. Hate Crime Events (DOJ)	1	0	-
Anti-Jehovah's Witness Hate Crime (LACHR)	2	9	-
Anti-Other Religion (DOJ)	48	40	-17%

Note: We do not report trends for smaller numbers of hate crime events, which are less statistically reliable for understanding trends.

In recent years, reported hate crimes motivated by religious bias have increased significantly. Religious bias hate crime events recorded in the DOJ data increased by 30% in 2023, building on substantial increases of 39% in 2022 and 21% in 2021. Data from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations documents a 90% increase in religious bias-motivated hate crimes in Los Angeles in 2023.⁷¹

“ Data from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations documents a 90% increase in religious bias-motivated hate crimes in Los Angeles in 2023. ”

As noted in the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, a wave of hate was triggered after the tragic attacks by Hamas in Israel on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza. A rise in hate crimes and incidents was reported throughout California targeting members of the Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, Israeli, and Arab communities, as well as

⁷⁰ This data point was generated using the FBI Crime Data Explorer at <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>

⁷¹ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024). https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/600d7f30-4ad4-44c0-a5f7-0bcea2b95ea9/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

those who were perceived as belonging to or allied with those communities.⁷² Since the previous report, additional data were released that documented this wave of hate after October 7. Hate crime data from the California DOJ found that reported anti-Jewish hate crime events increased more than 50% in 2023, from 189 in 2022 to 289 in 2023. Though data on anti-Muslim hate crimes is sparse, reports of anti-Muslim hate crime events increased 60%, from 25 in 2022 to 40 in 2023. Moreover, these increases may be much larger than the data suggests, given the high volume of missing and incomplete law enforcement data in 2023. Similar to the DOJ data, data from the Los Angeles County of Human Relations finds that anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate crimes made up the largest share of reported religious bias hate crimes.⁷³ Both increased substantially in 2023. Anti-Jewish hate crimes increased by 91%, from 127 in 2022 to 242 in 2023. Anti-Muslim hate crimes increased 171%, from 7 to 19. The report also found that hate crimes in which there was “specific language regarding conflict in the Middle East” rose from 2 in 2022 to 64 in 2023. Such hate crimes made up 5% of all hate crimes recorded in 2023 by Los Angeles County.

Data from community groups also document the increases in hate after October 7, 2023.⁷⁴ During the year after the events of October 7, 2023, the statewide legal team of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) California received nearly double the number of intakes as the previous year. Specifically, they received 1,275 intakes (70 of which were for potential hate crimes and 194 for potential hate incidents) from October 7, 2023, to October 6, 2024, as opposed to 694 intakes (19 of which were for potential hate crimes and 34 for potential hate incidents) in the same one-year period the years before. Nationally, CAIR documented 8,061 complaints in 2023, with over 44% of these complaints reported in the final three months of 2023. Over 600 of these complaints were categorized as hate crimes and incidents.⁷⁵ In the months after October 7, 2023, the Anti-Defamation League recorded about 4.8 times more anti-Semitic incidents in California, as compared to the same period in the previous year. In 2024, the organization recorded 1,344 anti-Semitic incidents in California, a 6% rise from 2023. This included a reported 311 incidents of vandalism and 33 incidents of assault.⁷⁶ One national

⁷² It is important to note that hate against a particular community can harm individuals who do not identify with that community. For example, perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate often target members of the Sikh community due to an incorrect confusion of the Sikh and Muslim faiths.

⁷³ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024). https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/600d7f30-4ad4-44c0-a5f7-0bcea2b95ea9/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

⁷⁴ As mentioned previously, inclusion of an organization’s data is not an endorsement of the organization, including its activities and positions. Inclusion of an organization’s data should also not necessarily be considered an endorsement of the organization’s methodology. We include data and information from various organizations to give voice to the perspectives of the constituents of an organization.

⁷⁵ Council on American-Islamic Relations (2024). Fatal: The Resurgence of Anti-Muslim Hate. CAIR Foundation. <https://islamophobia.org/civil-rights-reports/2024-civil-rights-report-fatal-the-resurgence-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

⁷⁶ Anti-Defamation League (2025, April 22). Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2024. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>

2024 survey found that 7% of Jewish respondents reported being threatened or attacked in 2023, compared to 5% in 2020.⁷⁷

The Commission observed reports of antireligious hate affecting communities from a range of faiths throughout the state. In San Francisco, families who had gathered at a public park in San Francisco to celebrate an important Muslim holiday were verbally assaulted and threatened by an unknown individual.⁷⁸ In Los Angeles, a man threatened another man with anti-Semitic remarks and waved a knife in the air, telling him, “Come outside. I got something for you.”⁷⁹ Business owners in the San Diego neighborhood of Hillcrest reported swastikas and anti-LGBT slurs spray-painted in the neighborhood.⁸⁰ At a Fresno festival in 2024, a man verbally and physically assaulted three women after expressing his dislike of Hamas.⁸¹ One woman was wearing a hijab and a keffiyeh and carrying a Palestinian flag. In Yolo County in August 2024, a shooting targeted a Sikh leader and two other men and is being investigated as motivated by anti-Sikh bias.⁸² In Palermo, a man targeted a small Seventh-day Adventist school, shooting and critically wounding two young boys.⁸³

Antireligious hate often involved targeting houses of worship. The California DOJ recorded 79 hate crime events that took place at a church, synagogue, or temple in 2023. News reports of hate against houses of worship have included hate-motivated vandalization of Hindu temples in Sacramento, Chino Hills, and Hayward; graffiti tagging an Episcopal church in San Diego; attempted arsons of Catholic churches in both Sacramento and Los Angeles; and multiple cases of synagogues and mosques being targeted across the state.⁸⁴ For example, on December 24,

⁷⁷ Sheskin, I. (2025). Antisemitism in the United States: The Impact of October 7. <https://combatantisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/CAM-Antisemitism-in-US-Survey-Since-October7.pdf>

⁷⁸ Hassan, A. (2024, June 18). San Francisco Muslims Attacked with Hate Speech at Eid Holiday Prayer. ABC7 Bay Area KGO-TV. <https://abc7news.com/post/san-francisco-muslims-attacked-hate-speech-eid-holiday/14972607/>

⁷⁹ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024).

⁸⁰ City News Service & Henry, K. (2024, August 4). San Diego Police Investigating Hillcrest Hate Crime Targeting LGBT+ Community. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/san-diego-police-investigating-hillcrest-hate-crime-targeting-lgbt-community/3586618/>

⁸¹ Garcia, N. (2024, April 29). Man Arrested for Hate Crime Incident at 'Porchfest' in Fresno's Tower District, Police Say. KFSN-TV. <https://abc30.com/fresno-tower-district-porchevent-hate-crime-man-arrested/14742867/>

⁸² Kaleem, J., & Garrison, J. (2024, August 24). Shooting Attempt on 'Khalistan' Activist Raises Fears Among Northern California Sikhs. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-08-24/khalistan-shooting-sikh-northern-california>

⁸³ Hallas, E. (2024, December 5). Seventh-day Adventist School Where Two Kids Were Wounded Was Likely Religious Target: Sheriff. MSN-Washington Examiner. <https://www.denvergazette.com/2024/12/05/seventh-day-adventist-school-where-two-kids-were-wounded-was-likely-religious-target-sheriff>

⁸⁴ Ghazali, M. (2024, September 26). Temple Defaced with Anti-Hindu Graffiti in US, Second Time in 8 Days. NDTV World. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/baps-shri-swaminarayan-mandir-in-sacramento-temple-defaced-with-anti-hindu-graffiti-in-us-second-time-in-2-weeks-6651673>; Bharath, D. (2025, March 17). Southern California Hindu Temple Desecrated with Anti-India and Anti-Hindu Graffiti Calls for Peace. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/us-hindu-temple-attacks-hate-crime-california-36e29bdbc74816b02352afa0057c066>; Vara, J. (2025, January 27). Two Places of Worship Targeted with Hate Tags. Fox5 KUSI News. <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/two-places-of-worship-targeted-with-hate-tags/>; Ellison, J. (2024, August 12). Man Accused in Sacramento Church Arson Could Face Hate Crime Charge. ABC10 Sacramento. <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/crime/man-accused-in-sacramento-church-arson-hate-crime-charge/103-3ecf9ab9-5cdf-4a74-a5be-6b1ed50fb8ae>

2024, a man stood in front of a mosque in San Francisco for nearly an hour harassing mosque attendees and ripping pages out of the Quran.⁸⁵ A representative from the mosque said that the man had repeatedly targeted the mosque in the past. In January 2025, a synagogue in San Diego was tagged with hate graffiti.⁸⁶ The executive director of the synagogue immediately had the writing covered up because she did not want children entering the synagogue to be impacted by the messages.

“

How do I make myself small enough to make people comfortable? What if I make someone else uncomfortable? What if I get shot for what I’m wearing?”

—

 - Statement from a study of Stanford’s Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities

Hate against faith communities has numerous adverse impacts, including deterring the practice and expression of one’s faith. The founder of a vandalized synagogue reported that the unease felt among congregants led one family to stop attending services. He expressed concern about losing additional congregants.⁸⁷ Several studies demonstrate how the wave of hate after October 7, 2023, has resulted in people hiding or concealing their identities. One national survey found that more than a quarter (27%) of Jewish respondents reported hiding or not disclosing their identity since October 7.⁸⁸ A study of the experiences of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian

students at Stanford University demonstrated the fear and vulnerability students felt in 2023 and 2024. One interviewee described this fear, asking “How do I make myself small enough to make people comfortable? What if I make someone else uncomfortable? What if I get shot for what I’m wearing?”⁸⁹

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate

Several data sources point to high rates of anti-LGBTQ+ hate in California. Using data from the 2023 CHIS, we first estimated the prevalence of hate against transgender and gender expansive (TGE) adults. The data point to alarming rates of hate faced by TGE adults in California. Nearly one in five

Nearly **1 in 5**  transgender/gender expansive adult Californians experienced a hate act within one year.

⁸⁵ Kukara, J. (2024, December 27). SF Mosque Attendees Harassed With Hateful Acts on Christmas Eve. <https://sfist.com/2024/12/27/sf-mosque-attendees-harassed-with-hateful-acts-on-christmas-eve/>

⁸⁶ Vara (2025). <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/two-places-of-worship-targeted-with-hate-tags/>

⁸⁷ Rust, S. (2024, July 29). Man Vandalizes Hollywood Synagogue as Accomplice Records It, Security Video Shows. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-07-29/suspects-vandalize-hollywood-synagogue-record-it-security-video-show>

⁸⁸ American Jewish Committee (2024, June 10). AJC Survey Shows American Jews Are Deeply and Increasingly Connected to Israel. <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-survey-shows-american-jews-are-deeply-and-increasingly-connected-to-israel>

⁸⁹ Stanford Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Communities Committee (2024). Rupture and Repair. https://news.stanford.edu/data/assets/pdf_file/0031/156586/MAP-final-report-2024.pdf

(19%) TGE adults experienced hate within a one-year period throughout 2022 and 2023, compared to 7% of cisgender adults.⁹⁰ In other words, TGE adults were 2.7 times more likely to experience a hate act than cisgender adults in California. Based on these analyses, we estimate that 76,000 TGE adults in California experienced a hate act within the past year. An estimated 12% of TGE adults in California, or 47,000 people, experienced hate within a one-year period due to their gender identity specifically.

**HATE VICTIMIZATION RATES IN CALIFORNIA OVER ONE YEAR:
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

	% Experienced Hate	# Experienced Hate
Transgender/Gender Expansive Adults	19.3%	76,000
Cisgender Adults	7.0%	2,011,000
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Pansexual	12.2%	350,000
Straight/Heterosexual	7.5%	2,024,000

Note: Estimates are derived from the 2023 CHIS data; respondents were asked if they experienced a hate act within the past year.

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or pansexual (LGBP) are also disproportionately at risk of experiencing hate. Over 12% of LGBP people experienced hate within a one-year period, compared to 7.5% of straight or heterosexual people. About 2.2% of LGBP people were a victim of hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence, compared to 1.6% of straight or heterosexual people. In other words, compared to straight or heterosexual Californians, LGBP Californians are over 60% more likely to experience a hate act and over 30% more likely to experience hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence. Over 7% of LGBP people in California experienced hate due to their sexual orientation specifically within a one-year period.

Nearly
1 in 8 
lesbian, gay, bisexual, or pansexual Californians experienced a hate act within one year.

Data from the California DOJ finds that hate crimes targeting sexual orientation accounted for a significant share of all hate crime events reported to law enforcement in 2023 (21%). Over half (57%) of these hate crimes were classified as “anti-gay male.” Reported hate crime events motivated by bias against transgender and gender nonconforming people collectively accounted for about 4% of all hate crime events reported to law enforcement.

⁹⁰ Due to data limitations, we cannot estimate the rate at which TGE adolescents experience hate, nor can we estimate the rate at which TGE adults and adolescents experienced hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence specifically. In next year’s report, we expect to be able to provide such estimates by supplementing the 2023 CHIS data with data from the 2024 CHIS.

An analysis of reported anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime events over time suggests that anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes have generally increased. The total number of all hate crime events related to anti-LGBTQ+ bias motivations more than doubled between 2014 and 2023, from 208 to 481 events.⁹¹ In 2021 specifically, there was an increase in many types of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime events. In 2023, the total number of reported anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime events reached their highest levels. This increase is especially significant, given that data from 2023 is somewhat more incomplete than other years. This suggests that the record number of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime events in 2023 may be higher.

REPORTED HATE CRIME EVENTS BY LGBTQ+ BIAS MOTIVATIONS: 2014-2023 (CA DOJ)										
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total anti-LGBTQ+ related events	208	211	230	269	257	264	264	348	460	481
Anti-gay (male)	78	108	152	172	169	172	162	211	271	231
Anti-lesbian	27	25	18	20	24	22	18	27	33	17
Anti-LGBTQ+*	79	48	32	45	41	35	21	61	81	151
Anti-bisexual	2	4	1	3	3	3	4	4	4	6
Anti-transgender	22	24	25	27	19	29	54	38	59	65
Anti-gender nonconforming	0	2	2	2	1	3	5	7	12	11

**This category was renamed in 2023 from "Anti-homosexual."*

As discussed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, national data suggest that TGE people of color are disproportionately at risk of experiencing violence and hate. The Human Rights Campaign compiles data on fatal violence against TGE people each year, which includes hate crimes. The organization found that, in 2024, nearly 4 in 5 (78%) of TGE victims of fatal violence were people of color, and more than half (56%) were Black transgender women.⁹²

One of the most significant recent trends impacting members of the LGBTQ+ community has been the national rise of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and policies, particularly against people who are transgender and gender expansive. A national survey found a gradual decrease in support for LGBTQ nondiscrimination laws since 2022.⁹³ Throughout the 2024 election, anti-LGBTQ+

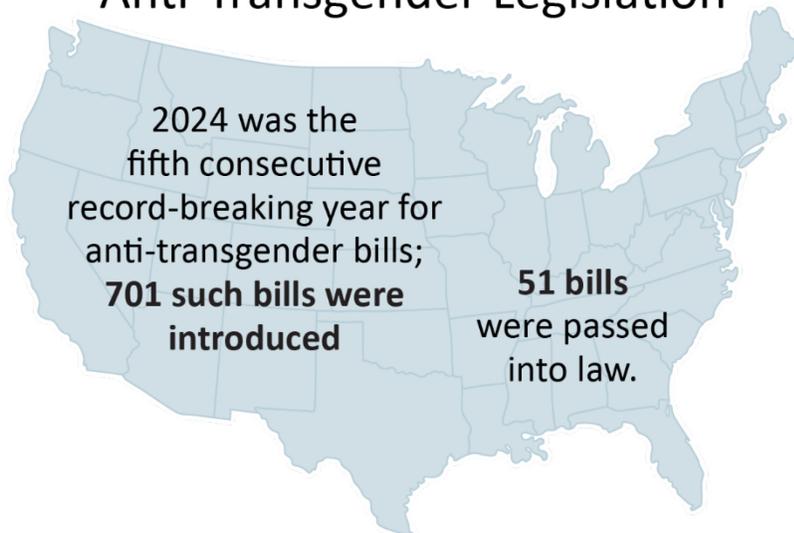
⁹¹ Following modifications implemented at the national level, the California DOJ modified the “anti-homosexual” bias category to be “anti-LGBTQ+” bias in 2023. It is unclear how this change impacts between-year comparisons of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes. Differences between 2023 and other years should be interpreted with caution.

⁹² The Human Rights Campaign (2025). Fatal Violence against the Transgender and Gender-Expansive Community in 2024. HRC Foundation. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-and-gender-expansive-community-in-2024>

⁹³ PRRI (2025). LGBTQ Rights Across All 50 States: Key Insights from PRRI’s 2024 American Values Atlas. <https://prri.org/research/lgbtq-rights-across-all-50-states-key-insights-2024-prri-american-values-atlas/>

political rhetoric was pervasive, a trend we discuss in more detail in the section below on politically related hate.

Anti-Transgender Legislation



Advocacy groups have tracked hundreds of anti-LGBTQ+ state and federal bills in 2024.⁹⁴ One group reported that 2024 was the fifth consecutive record-breaking year for anti-transgender bills; 701 such bills were introduced and 51 were passed into law.⁹⁵ These state bills, as well as federal policies, pose grave risks to transgender people by excluding them from public life, dismissing their identity, and restricting access to health care. Policies banning

access to gender-affirming health care have proliferated as well, including a federal prohibition on such care for people under the age of 19.⁹⁶ Though it is less common for such bills to be introduced in the California Legislature, this wave of national anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and policies harms Californians. A recent news report documents these impacts, pointing to the normalization of prejudice in California and the increase in mental health stressors experienced by transgender youth.⁹⁷

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate violence continues to impact communities throughout the state, particularly in public spaces. In 2024, a series of pellet gun shootings targeted people outside LGBTQ+ establishments in the San Diego Hillcrest community.⁹⁸ In South Los Angeles, a Black trans woman was attacked by two men outside of a tire shop. The suspects assaulted her and then chased her while yelling anti-LGBTQ+ and racist slurs.⁹⁹ Anti-LGBTQ+ hate also targets businesses and other places that support the LGBTQ+ community. In December 2024, a new

⁹⁴ ACLU (2024, December 6). Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024.

<https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024>; Trans Legislation Tracker (2025). 2024 Anti-Trans Bills Tracker. <https://translegislation.com/bills/2024>

⁹⁵ Ibid. <https://translegislation.com/bills/2024>

⁹⁶ Wiener, J., & Hwang, K. (2025, March 5). 'Will I Be Safe'? Transgender California Youth Feel Threatened by Trump's Executive Orders. CalMatters. <https://calmatters.org/health/mental-health/2025/03/trump-transgender-mental-health/>

⁹⁷ Ibid. <https://calmatters.org/health/mental-health/2025/03/trump-transgender-mental-health/>

⁹⁸ NBC 7 San Diego (2025). <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/4-men-plead-to-hillcrest-pellet-gun-shootings-police-described-as-hate-related/3731782/>

⁹⁹ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024). https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/600d7f30-4ad4-44c0-a5f7-0bcea2b95ea9/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

LGBTQ+ pub in Santa Cruz was vandalized in an event that is being investigated as a hate crime. The entrance to the pub was set on fire, and a homophobic slur was carved into the glass.¹⁰⁰

The simple act of flying a pride flag has been targeted by hate violence in California. In 2023, a clothing store owner in Cedar Glen was shot and killed by a gunman after he tore down a pride flag outside her business and made homophobic remarks.¹⁰¹ In June 2024, a man stole the pride flag flying in honor of Pride Month outside the Humboldt County Courthouse.¹⁰² In September 2024, a delivery driver tore down a pride flag in a pizzeria in Roseville and yelled a homophobic slur. The driver later returned with two additional men who started a physical altercation with employees.¹⁰³

In 2024, multiple bomb threats targeted the TransLatin@ Coalition in Los Angeles.¹⁰⁴ Commissioner Bamby Salcedo serves as president of the TransLatin@ Coalition, which provides services to transgender, gender nonconforming, and intersex people. Commissioner Salcedo responded to the event with a reminder of the normalization of hate against the transgender and gender-expansive community, stating, “We are experiencing scary moments. . . . But for all of us, it’s an everyday thing. Every day that we walk out of our doors – if we have a home – we’re targets of physical violence, oftentimes sexual violence. For many of us, this is not new.”¹⁰⁵

Anti-disability hate

In the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, we noted that anti-disability hate is often underrepresented in existing datasets, including law enforcement data. About 1% of reported hate crime events (18 events) in the 2023 DOJ data were motivated by anti-disability bias. Of these events, 12 were motivated by bias against physical disability and 6 were motivated by bias against mental disability. The 18 events are likely a substantial undercount. As discussed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, there are many reasons why anti-disability hate crimes are underrepresented in law enforcement data. These include the barriers people with disabilities might face when reporting to law enforcement, including a lack of cultural awareness and

¹⁰⁰ Kinebrew, B. (2024, December 12). Newly Opened LGBTQ+ Pub in Downtown Santa Cruz Targeted in Hate Crime. KSBW Action News 8. <https://www.ksbw.com/article/lgbtq-pub-downtown-santa-cruz-california-hate-crime/63176665>

¹⁰¹ Hutchinson, B. (2023, August 21). Suspect Identified in Shooting Death of Store Owner Over Pride Flag: Police. ABC News Network. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/california-store-owner-shot-dead-dispute-displaying-pride/story?id=102408818>

¹⁰² Eureka Police (2024, June 20). Press Release - Pride Flag Stolen from Humboldt County Courthouse. <https://www.eureka.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=183>

¹⁰³ Desai, I. (2024, September 20). Trio Beat Up Employees after Man Ripped Down LGBTQ Pride Flag at Eatery, Roseville Police Say. The Sacramento Bee. <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/crime/article292821854.html>

¹⁰⁴ Hernandez, A. O. (2024, April 12). Trans-Led Coalition Targeted by Multiple Bomb Threats: ‘How Can There Be People So Cruel?’ Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/delos/story/2024-04-12/translatina-coalition-bomb-threats>; TransLatin@ Coalition (2024, April 3). The TransLatin@ Coalition Targeted by Bomb Threats and Hate Mail. <https://www.translatinacoalition.org/blog/2024/4/3/the-translatin-coalition-targeted-by-bomb-threats-and-hate-mail>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. <https://www.latimes.com/delos/story/2024-04-12/translatina-coalition-bomb-threats>

sensitivity among law enforcement and a lack of proper accommodations.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, anti-disability hate is often not recognized as such and thus may not be investigated as a hate crime specifically.

About **1 in 12**

Californians who experienced a hate act were targeted due to a disability.

The CHIS data provide important new insights into the prevalence of anti-disability hate in California. Based on the 2023 CHIS data, an estimated 8% of people in California who experienced a hate act within the year prior to taking the survey were targeted due to a disability. This amounts to over 200,000 Californians

who experienced anti-disability hate in a one-year period. More broadly, compared to adults without a disability, adults with a disability were almost twice as likely to be a victim of any type of hate act (6% vs. 12%) and about three times more likely to be a victim of hate-motivated physical violence or property damage (1% vs. 3%).

HATE VICTIMIZATION RATES AMONG ADULTS IN CALIFORNIA OVER ONE YEAR: DISABILITY

	% Experienced Hate	# Experienced Hate
Living with Disability	11.6%	652,000
Not Living with Disability	6.1%	1,446,000

Note: Estimates are derived from the 2023 CHIS data; respondents were asked if they experienced a hate act within the past year.

National data document the disproportionate rates of violence targeting people with disabilities. The National Crime Victimization Survey found that, between 2009 and 2015, individuals with disabilities were more than twice as likely to be victims of violence than those without a disability.¹⁰⁷ Between 2011 and 2015, one in five crime victims with disabilities were targeted specifically because of their disability.¹⁰⁸ These data also find that violence against individuals with disabilities is primarily committed by someone the victim knows; almost 95% of victims of violent crime with a disability could identify their perpetrators.¹⁰⁹ A recent high-profile national incident illustrates this point. In 2024, a former patient care technician was

¹⁰⁶ Community Relations Service (2023, May 11). CRS Facilitates Virtual Dialogue to Address Hate Crimes Against Disability Community. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/crs/highlights/hate-crimes-against-disability>

¹⁰⁷ Office for Victims of Crime (2018). 2018 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Resource Guide: Crime and Victimization Fact Sheet. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/ncvrw2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVRW_VictimsWithDisabilities_508_QC.pdf

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/ncvrw2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVRW_VictimsWithDisabilities_508_QC.pdf

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/ncvrw2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVRW_VictimsWithDisabilities_508_QC.pdf

sentenced to 10 years in federal prison after committing hate crimes against 13 severely disabled residents of a facility in Pennsylvania.¹¹⁰

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations documented six reported disability-motivated hate crimes in 2023 in Los Angeles County, compared to three in the previous year.¹¹¹ Among these incidents was a violent encounter experienced by a woman with a wheelchair. She was attacked by two men who yelled “You really aren’t handicapped, and you can walk.” They then assaulted her, knocking her out of her wheelchair, and throwing the wheelchair at her before leaving the scene. Advocates point to caregiver abuse of people with disabilities as one form of anti-disability hate. A 2024 investigation into caregiver facilities for people with developmental disabilities documented ongoing, egregious reports of abuse.¹¹²

Because of the historic absence of attention to anti-disability hate, the Commission hosted a forum with the California Civil Rights Council to learn from subject matter experts and members of the public about this topic. Speakers included Eric Harris, associate executive director of external affairs of Disability Rights California; Professor Karen Nakamura of the University of California, Berkeley; and Greg deGiere, civil rights advocate at the Arc of California.

At the forum, speakers and public commenters voiced concerns about anti-disability discrimination and hate crimes. They described the deep-rooted stigma that people with disabilities often endure. Professor Nakamura illustrated this point: “In many communities, particularly Asian American [communities], identifying with a psychiatric disability is not traditionally common...[D]isability is viewed as a karmic responsibility, so it reflects bad things about one’s ancestors, and one’s family as a whole gets stigmatized.” Harris pointed out that stigma can deter a person from getting needed accommodations, explaining, “Even though they have existed all over the world throughout history, many people with mental health disabilities still choose not to disclose them often because of the stigma. They don’t get the accommodations they need to do their job better because they don’t want to be viewed differently or denied opportunities.” Harris emphasized that open conversations are key to addressing stigma. He stressed the importance of disability education in school curricula and the need for disability perspectives to be considered at every level of policymaking.

The speakers described how disability intersects with other aspects of individuals’ identities. Harris pointed out that hate crimes disproportionately target those at the intersection of disability and other marginalized identities, yet these incidents are often misclassified or

¹¹⁰ Western District of Pennsylvania (2024, April 19). Former Employee of Beaver County Health Care Facility Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison Following Conviction on Federal Hate Crime Charges Related to Assaults Against Disabled Residents. U.S. Attorney’s Office. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdpa/pr/former-employee-beaver-county-health-care-facility-sentenced-10-years-prison-following>

¹¹¹ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2024). https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/600d7f30-4ad4-44c0-a5f7-0bcea2b95ea9/2023%20Hate%20Crime%20Report_FINAL.pdf

¹¹² Ellis, R. (2024, March 26). Adults with Autism Faced ‘Torture’ at This L.A. Group Home. Their Moms Want Justice. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-03-26/autistic-adults-abuse-group-homes>

underreported. He highlighted an example of a Black disabled person who experiences a hate crime. In this case, he said, it may be unclear whether to report it as a hate crime against a Black person or a disabled person, but it is important not to diminish one aspect of a person's identity to elevate another. Professor Nakamura echoed this point and advocated for hate crime reporting systems to allow for selecting multiple identity categories, ensuring more accurate and inclusive data.

Speakers identified gaps in law enforcement's response to anti-disability hate and suggested some solutions. They pointed to the underrepresentation of anti-disability hate crimes in law enforcement data and the marginalization of people with disabilities in the criminal legal system. Professor Nakamura explained that police interactions can be very dangerous to people with psychiatric disabilities. For example, a Washington Post investigation found that a disproportionately high number of fatal police shootings (about one quarter) involve Americans with mental illness.¹¹³ Proposed solutions included requiring law enforcement agencies to adopt comprehensive policies to address senior and disability victimization, as authorized by state law. Other proposals included strengthening collaborations between law enforcement and disabled communities of color to improve officers' understanding of mental health issues impacting these communities. DeGiere suggested creating a dedicated hotline for reporting disability- and elder-related abuse.

Speakers also emphasized the importance of comprehensively addressing crimes against seniors and people with disabilities. DeGiere pointed to high rates of crimes against people with disabilities, explaining that they are often not recognized as hate crimes. He also highlighted the financial exploitation of older adults, who collectively lose billions of dollars each year to fraud and abuse. DeGiere explained that these problems have been inadequately addressed and highlighted the work of senior and disability groups who developed recommendations for a comprehensive plan to address senior and disability victimization.¹¹⁴

During the public comment portion of the forum, there was a robust response from attendees. Many of the commenters described their personal experiences with anti-disability discrimination, exclusion, and hate. A common issue raised was the bullying and stigma faced by individuals with disabilities in various settings, including the unhoused population. Another common issue was the exclusion of children with disabilities in school activities, such as field trips. Commenters also described difficulties navigating the process of obtaining resources for their children and the devastating impact that exclusion has had on them and their children.

¹¹³ Lowery, W., Kindy, K., Alexander, K. L., Tate, J., Jenkins, J., & Rich, S. (2015, June 30). Distraught People, Deadly Results. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2015/06/30/distraught-people-deadly-results/?utm_term=.a263183cf8bc

¹¹⁴ This plan is available via this link: <https://files.constantcontact.com/eb101a2f101/6a195acb-c9db-4fc2-b1a0-a9c80990627d.pdf?rdr=true>

Hate against the unhoused

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report we described stories of unhoused individuals in California being targeted by violence. Because housing status is not a protected characteristic under existing hate crimes law, hate targeting individuals because of their housing status is not recorded in the DOJ data on hate crimes. The CHIS data does not directly measure hate experienced by people because they are unhoused. However, it does contain data on hate experienced by people due to their socioeconomic status and among people who report being housing insecure. We estimate that about 1.5% of people who experienced an act of hate (38,000 Californians) experienced hate due to their socioeconomic status, education, and/or housing status.

About

1 in 5



adult Californians who have unstable housing experienced a hate act within one year.

The CHIS data reveal extremely high rates of hate acts among adults who have unstable housing. Based on the CHIS data, about one in five adults (21%) who have unstable housing were a victim of a hate act within a one-year period in 2022 and 2023, compared to 6.5% of

adults with stable housing. That is, adults with unstable housing were over three times more likely to experience hate than adults with stable housing. The differential is even higher when examining hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence. Adults with unstable housing were nearly six times more likely to experience hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence than people with stable housing.

HATE VICTIMIZATION RATES IN CALIFORNIA OVER ONE YEAR: HOUSING STABILITY

	% Experienced Hate	# Experienced Hate
Has Unstable Housing	21.2%	295,000
Has Stable Housing	6.5%	1,792,000

Note: Estimates are derived from the 2023 CHIS data; respondents were asked if they experienced a hate act within the past year.

As discussed in the 2023-2024 report, unhoused individuals have been targeted by shootings and other violent attacks across California. A recent investigation documented the violence experienced by unhoused individuals in shelters, finding many incidents of sexual assault and other forms of abuse by private security guards.¹¹⁵ In Los Angeles, extraordinarily high levels of discrimination and violence against the homeless population were documented in a 2024

¹¹⁵ Hepler, L. (2024, April 10). Meth, Death and Abuse: Inside the Private Security Forces Patrolling California’s Homeless. CalMatters. <https://calmatters.org/housing/homelessness/2024/04/homeless-shelter-private-security/>

study.¹¹⁶ Nearly one in three unhoused individuals surveyed in Los Angeles experienced daily discrimination. Unhoused people who were surveyed also face sharply disproportionate rates of violence. Compared to the general population in U.S. cities, unhoused individuals in Los Angeles were about five times more likely to be victims of physical violence (16% vs. 3%) and 31 times more likely to experience sexual violence (7.5% vs. 0.24%).

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING CURRENT PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN HATE

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING CURRENT PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN HATE

2023-2024 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish ongoing funding for developing a comprehensive accounting of hate • Increase information and data sharing between public entities and community-based organizations
2024-2025 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate crisis-level investments in anti-hate efforts • Invest in community-centered approaches to addressing hate • Address hate in schools • Address hate on streets and sidewalks • Address hate in businesses

In the Commission’s 2023-2024 report, we proposed two interim recommendations for understanding the state of hate, as noted in the text box above. The Commission continues to support these recommendations. In this year’s report, we introduced an unprecedented new dataset on hate in California, which provided important new findings on hate in California. However, the funding for this data is temporary. Given the importance of reliable, comprehensive data on hate in California, it is critical to establish consistent resources for the measurement of hate on an ongoing basis. Additionally, to focus government resources and services, it is vital to support CBOs’ data collection efforts and institutionalize appropriate information-sharing channels between CBOs and public entities. As trusted entities and service providers in their communities, many CBOs collect a wealth of data about hate crimes and incidents, including the experiences and the needs of their communities. For a more detailed discussion of these recommendations, see the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report.

¹¹⁶ Padwa, H., Chien, J., Henwood, B. F., Cousins, S. J., Zakher, E., & Kuhn, R. (2024). Homelessness, Discrimination, and Violent Victimization in Los Angeles County. *American Journal for Preventive Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2024.06.016>

Our research in this year's report points to five new recommendations for addressing recent patterns and trends in hate, listed in the text box above and described below.

Allocate Crisis-Level Investments in Anti-Hate Efforts

Our findings point to the need to redouble investments in anti-hate efforts, including prevention efforts and resources and support systems for impacted individuals and communities. We found that hate is more prevalent than law enforcement data might suggest. Based on self-reports from Californians, we estimate that over 2.6 million Californians experienced hate within just one year, and over half a million were victims of hate-motivated property damage and/or physical violence. An even greater share of Californians (nearly 5 million) witnessed hate, which can also have adverse impacts. Our research also revealed how the national political context is increasingly impacting communities in California.

To address the various manifestations of hate and to help communities that are impacted, anti-hate efforts should be varied and include non-law-enforcement responses to hate, such as CA vs Hate and CRD's Community Conflict Resolution Unit, as well as community-based solutions to hate, such as those funded by the Stop the Hate grant program. To guide these efforts, the Commission is continually researching and developing recommendations related to prevention, resources, and support. Our research and recommendations are contained in this year's report and the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Invest in Community-Centered Approaches to Addressing Hate

Our analyses revealed what many have intuited since the establishment of the Commission: Hate continues to disproportionately impact nearly every community historically affected by hate and other forms of targeted injustice. Anti-hate efforts will likely be more successful when customized for specific communities and tailored to address the forms of hate they experience. One approach to creating such customized solutions is to sustain a network of CBOs across the state paired with grants to address hate, such as the Stop the Hate grant program and the CA vs Hate Resource Line and Network. A consistent theme throughout our work is the important role CBOs play in understanding how hate impacts their communities, preventing hate, and providing support to community members impacted by hate. In fact, many of the patterns and trends identified in this report were derived from the data collection efforts and insights of CBOs. Investments in CBOs to develop locally tailored anti-hate efforts are thus essential for a strategy to successfully combat hate statewide.

Address Hate in Schools

Our analyses suggest that 15% of adolescents in California experience hate within a one-year period. This is nearly double the rate among adults. Adolescents report experiencing hate at school primarily. An estimated four in five adolescents who experienced hate, or 380,000 adolescents, were targeted at school. Victimization can have severe adverse impacts on youth, affecting them emotionally, psychologically, physically, and educationally, and these negative effects can persist into adulthood.¹¹⁷ Community-based organizations and research point to the

¹¹⁷ Jones et al. (2022). https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/sites/default/files/media/2023-08/summary-report_12.31.21.pdf

consequences of anti-Black bias in schools, which results in striking inequities in school disciplinary practices.¹¹⁸

Together, our findings underscore the importance of preventing and reducing hate in schools. To guide State efforts, the Commission has been researching evidence-based programs and interventions for hate prevention in schools. This report and the 2023-2024 report contain our findings and evidence-based guiding principles for the design and implementation of programs to prevent and reduce hate in schools. See Chapter 4 for additional details.

Address Hate on Streets and Sidewalks

For adults in California, the most common locations of hate are streets and sidewalks. We estimate that nearly half of adult victims of hate (45%) were targeted on a street or sidewalk. This finding is consistent with law enforcement data, which identifies highways, roads, alleys, and streets as the most common locations of reported hate crime events in 2023. Addressing hate on streets or sidewalks should include prevention efforts, such as public messaging campaigns targeted at shifting norms and general investments in resources and support for people who are targeted. One specific approach to addressing hate in public places is bystander intervention training, which the Commission has been researching over the past year. We found that such trainings can be effective at increasing the confidence of trainees to intervene and creating norms of intervening. Our findings are forthcoming.

Address Hate in Businesses

Over one in three adult victims of hate in California experienced hate at a business. Data from Stop AAPI Hate also find that businesses are common locations of anti-AAPI hate.¹¹⁹ Though hate in businesses could be addressed through general anti-hate efforts, novel business-specific initiatives could also be developed. For example, Stop AAPI Hate conceived of a pilot program to train employees to respond to hate and certify businesses as safe and welcoming spaces.¹²⁰ This pilot program was codified into law, and the California Civil Rights Department launched it in 2024 as the Welcome In program.¹²¹ An evaluation of the program is ongoing. Given the novelty of this program, it is critical to continue investments in research on the program's effectiveness. This research could point to opportunities for refining the program and additional innovative programs for addressing hate in businesses.

¹¹⁸ Owens, J., & McLanahan, S. S. (2019). Unpacking the Drivers of Racial Disparities in School Suspension and Expulsion. *Social Forces*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soz095>; Riddle, T., & Sinclair, S. (2019). Racial Disparities in School-Based Disciplinary Actions Are Associated with County-Level Rates of Racial Bias. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.180830711>

¹¹⁹ Stop AAPI Hate (2024). <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/24-SAH-NationalSurveyReport-F.pdf>

¹²⁰ Stop AAPI Hate (2021). California State Policy Recommendations to Address AAPI Hate: A Starting Point for Taking Action. https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SAH-State-Policy-Agenda-10.13.21-w_urls-2.pdf

¹²¹ Additional information about the Welcome In program is available at <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/welcome-in/>

HATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Commission’s 2023-2024 report discussed the intersection of hate and public institutions. We noted that, during high-profile events, such as significant elections, there is an elevated risk of increased hate crimes and incidents. We described how political rhetoric can impact communities in California. We also reviewed how public officials are increasingly targeted by hate-motivated threats and harassment. In this year’s report, we review additional evidence on these topics. The following sections discuss updated evidence on the correlation between hate and high-profile events by highlighting the role and impact of hate in the 2024 elections. We also discuss new research on the hate-motivated targeting of public officials.

Hate During the 2024 Election

As discussed in the Commission’s 2023-2024 report, researchers have noted a consistent correlation: Spikes in hate violence often occur around high-profile “catalytic events.”¹²² Such events include highly charged political elections, international conflicts, and other notable events such as 9/11 and the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2024 election could be considered a catalytic event that consisted of increases in hate-based rhetoric. Political candidates and other high-profile leaders espoused and perpetuated harmful rhetoric targeting many groups and communities, including immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, people of color, and women. Though much of this targeting occurred on the national stage and in races outside of California, it nevertheless impacted communities in California. Throughout the following section, we discuss the political, hate-based targeting of specific groups and communities and describe their impacts.

Immigration-related political rhetoric was common throughout the 2024 election season. One report found that over \$680.5 million was spent on immigration-focused television ads across 12 states.¹²³ Importantly, the campaign rhetoric was not limited to policy discussions. It was not uncommon for political leaders to use dehumanizing and hostile language when referring to immigrants. For example, compared to previous years, political ads in 2024 were more likely to refer to migration as an “invasion,” a dehumanizing word that experts say has the potential to stoke violence.¹²⁴

In some cases, the political rhetoric consisted of disinformation and conspiracy theories. For instance, in the months leading up to Election Day, activists and candidates strategically pushed the conspiracy theory that Democrats wanted migrants to “replace” those born in the United States and that millions of noncitizens would vote in the election, giving Democrats an electoral

¹²² Levin, B., Nolan, J., & Perst, K. (2022). U.S. Hate Crime Trends: What Disaggregation of Three Decades of Data Reveals about a Changing Threat and an Invisible Record. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol112/iss4/3/>

¹²³ Catalyze Citizens (2024). 2024 Cycle Right-Wing Playbook: Immigration Ads and Narratives. https://catalyze.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/cc_2024-right-wing-spending-and-narratives-report.pdf

¹²⁴ Ulloa, J. (2024, April 26). Talk of an Immigrant ‘Invasion’ Grows in Republican Ads and Speech. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/us/politics/republicans-immigration-ads-election.html>

advantage.¹²⁵ This rhetoric echoed the Great Replacement Theory, a white supremacist conspiracy theory arguing that elites want to “replace” and disempower the white population in the United States.¹²⁶ The Great Replacement Theory was also referenced in manifestos of the perpetrators of mass shootings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; El Paso, Texas; Buffalo, New York; and Christchurch, New Zealand.¹²⁷

This anti-immigrant rhetoric fomented prejudice among members of the public and harmed communities. After false claims about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, at least 33 separate bomb threats were made against schools and government offices in the city.¹²⁸ In response to the threats, several government buildings and schools were evacuated. Law enforcement resources swept city schools each day for bombs and installed security cameras throughout the city. Due to safety concerns, the city cancelled its annual festival celebrating diversity, arts, and culture.¹²⁹ In a February 2025 presentation to the Commission, Chair Levin reviewed data demonstrating that the false claims were correlated with a spike in race-motivated hate crimes in Springfield in September 2024. In California, news reports suggest that anti-immigrant rhetoric contributed to increasing levels of anxiety and fear among migrants and anti-immigrant bullying in schools.¹³⁰ These reports are consistent with findings from the California Health Interview Survey finding a correlation between rising anti-immigrant sentiment and adverse mental health impacts on immigrants in California. The survey found that the rate of psychological distress among recent immigrants in California increased by 140% for those surveyed in 2019 through 2021 relative to those surveyed in 2015 through 2017.¹³¹

From 2015 to 2021,
psychological distress among
recent immigrants in California
increased by an estimated **140%**.



¹²⁵ Berzon, A. (2024, September 5). Republicans Seize on False Theories About Immigrant Voting. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/05/us/politics/immigrant-noncitizen-voting-republicans.html>

¹²⁶ Ibid. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/05/us/politics/immigrant-noncitizen-voting-republicans.html>

¹²⁷ Eligon, J. (2019, August 7). The El Paso Scream, and the Racist Doctrine Behind It. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/07/us/el-paso-shooting-racism.html>; Jones, D. (2022, May 16). What Is the 'Great Replacement' and How Is It Tied to the Buffalo Shooting Suspect? NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/16/1099034094/what-is-the-great-replacement-theory>

¹²⁸ Aftoora-Orsagos, P., & Rubinkam, M. (2024, September 16). Ohio State Police to Protect Schools After Furor over Haitian Immigrants in Springfield. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/trump-vance-haitian-immigrants-springfield-ohio-threats-d74b7ff56f9a45d9389d8ebee4af1652>

¹²⁹ Ibid. <https://apnews.com/article/trump-vance-haitian-immigrants-springfield-ohio-threats-d74b7ff56f9a45d9389d8ebee4af1652>

¹³⁰ Ozturk, S. (2024, August 5). With Escalating Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric, California Farmworkers Fear the Future. *American Community Media*. <https://americancommunitymedia.org/stop-the-hate/with-escalating-anti-immigrant-rhetoric-california-farmworkers-fear-the-future/>

¹³¹ Padilla-Frausto D. I., Pereira, N., Gutiérrez, Á., & Tan, S. (2023). Immigrants in California Have Increased Psychological Distress and High Rates of Unmet Need for Mental Health Care. *UCLA Center for Health Policy Research*. <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/2023-12/californias-immigrant-adults-report-increased-psychological-distress-and-high-rates-of-unmet-need-for-mental-health-care-policy-brief-december-2023.pdf>

The impact of this political rhetoric did not end on Election Day. Rather, the results of the election may have emboldened supporters of hateful rhetoric. As described above, days after the election, anonymous racist text messages were sent to Black students across the country, including in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and the Central Valley.¹³² The texts addressed the recipient by name and told them they had been selected “to pick cotton at the nearest plantation.” Some texts also mentioned the results of the election.

The political discourse in the 2024 election targeted transgender rights relentlessly. Some of the rhetoric and policy proposals questioned, if not altogether dismissed, the fundamental legitimacy of transgender identity. One report estimated that by October 9, 2024, nearly one-third of all television ad spending by Republican groups was spent on anti-LGBTQ+ television ads.¹³³ This political rhetoric inflamed anti-transgender prejudice and heightened fear and anxiety among transgender people.¹³⁴ As one transgender advocate pointed out after the election, “I just went through an election where I couldn’t watch a sports event on TV without seeing a commercial where trans people were portrayed as monsters. . . . This hurts more than any other moment I can remember.”¹³⁵ These ads may have even shifted public opinion away from acceptance of transgender people. A randomized control trial study found that viewing one anti-transgender campaign ad led to viewers being less comfortable with accepting a friend or family member who is transgender.¹³⁶

The impacts extended to LGBTQ+ youth. As discussed in the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, a nationwide survey found that political debates about restricting the rights of LGBTQ young people resulted in adverse mental health consequences, harassment, and violence. In the survey, 29% of LGBTQ youth experienced cyberbullying or online harassment, 19% experienced bullying at school, and 6% reported physical assault, all as a direct result of anti-LGBTQ policies

¹³² De Anda (2024). <https://abc7.com/post/lausd-investigating-racist-texts-sent-students-la-leader-calls-state-emergency/15534066/>; ABC7 Bay Area (2024). <https://abc7news.com/post/racist-texts-students-san-francisco-unified-school-district-among-victims-received-text-messages-us/15531598/>; Denyer, L. A. (2024, November 8). Sacramento Students Receive Racist Mass Text Message; FBI Investigating. KCRA 3.

<https://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-students-receive-racist-mass-text-message/62856803>; Associated Press (2024, November 10). Racist Text Messages Raise Alarms and Prompt Investigations in Multiple States, Including California. Times of San Diego. <https://timesofsandiego.com/crime/2024/11/10/racist-text-messages-raise-alarms-and-prompt-investigations-in-multiple-states-including-california/>

¹³³ Alfonseca, K., & Kim, S. R. (2024, October 21). Trump and Allies Are Pouring Millions into Anti-Trans Election Ads as Election Nears. ABC News Network. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/trump-spends-millions-anti-trans-ads-despite-polls/story?id=115001816>

¹³⁴ Crary, D. (2024, November 15). Transgender-Rights Advocates Say the Election of Trump and His Allies Marks a Major Setback. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/election-2024-transgender-rights-lgbtq-donald-trump-3bb3ace81ff32b6dec382b486ec6a772>

¹³⁵ Ibid. <https://apnews.com/article/election-2024-transgender-rights-lgbtq-donald-trump-3bb3ace81ff32b6dec382b486ec6a772>

¹³⁶ Ground Media (2024, October 24). Ground Media Study Finds Trump’s Anti-Trans Ad Fails Politically, but Dangerously Erodes Public Support for Trans People. <https://www.ground.media/news/ground-media-study-finds-trumps-anti-trans-ad-fails-politically-but-dangerously-erodes-public-support-for-trans-people>

and debates.¹³⁷ As anti-LGBTQ+ political rhetoric increased, calls to support lines increased as well. The Rainbow Project, a nonprofit that provides crisis response and counseling to LGBTQ+ youth, reported a 40% increase in calls in 2023 compared to 2022. The most common reason callers identified for calling was anti-LGBTQ+ “political rhetoric.”¹³⁸

Political rhetoric in the 2024 election season also consisted of statements that denigrated women. A political action committee funded an ad that referred to Vice President Harris as “a C Word,” suggesting a misogynistic slur. A few seconds later, the ad revealed that the word was “communist.”¹³⁹ One analysis found a rise in online content throughout the election season advocating for the repeal of women’s right to vote.¹⁴⁰ Immediately after Election Day, a high-profile online content creator posted “Your body, my choice. Forever.” This was a subversion of the phrase “my body, my choice,” a rallying cry used to support reproductive rights. The phrase proliferated online. One report recorded a 4,600% increase in mentions of the phrase on the online platform X.¹⁴¹ In some cases, the phrase was also used in conjunction with targeted threats of violence and harassment against women online. There were also reports of students repeating the phrase in schools, including groups of boys chanting the phrase at girls.¹⁴²

Hate, Threats, and Harassment Against Public Officials

In addition to the hate-based rhetoric from political leaders, hate is also directed toward public officials. In the 2023-2024 Commission report, we reviewed data on the growth of hate and other forms of hostility toward public officials. This trend has continued since then. Researchers documented an increase in threats and harassment against local elected officials and a surge in the lead-up to Election Day in 2024. In a national survey of local elected officials, researchers documented almost 600 incidents of threat and harassment targeting local officials from January to November 2024, a 19% increase compared to the same time period in 2023, and a 108% increase compared to 2022.¹⁴³ In California, a 2024 survey of local elected officials in San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial counties found that two-thirds of elected officials reported experiencing threats and harassment during their terms in office, and almost 20% reported

¹³⁷ The Trevor Project (2023). Issues Impacting LGBTQ Youth: Polling Presentation.

https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Issues-Impacting-LGBTQ-Youth_Morning-Consult-Poll_Jan-2023_Public.pdf

¹³⁸ Meckler, L., Natanson, H., & Harden, J. D. (2024, March 13). In States with Laws Targeting LGBTQ Issues, School Hate Crimes Quadrupled. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2024/03/12/school-lgbtq-hate-crimes-incidents>

¹³⁹ Fahrenthold, D. A. (2024, October 29). Musk’s PAC Hints at Vulgar Taunt Against Harris in Ad. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/29/us/politics/elon-musk-pac-harris-videos.html>

¹⁴⁰ Frances-Wright, I., & Ayad, M. (2024, November 8). “Your Body, My Choice:” Hate and Harassment Towards Women Spreads Online. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/your-body-my-choice-hate-and-harassment-towards-women-spreads-online/

¹⁴¹ Ibid. https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/your-body-my-choice-hate-and-harassment-towards-women-spreads-online/

¹⁴² Ibid. https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/your-body-my-choice-hate-and-harassment-towards-women-spreads-online/

¹⁴³ Bridging Divides Initiative (2024, December 19). Threat and Harassment Incidents Targeting Local Officials Surge During 2024 Election. Princeton University. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/updates/2024/threat-and-harassment-incidents-targeting-local-officials-surge-during-2024-election>

experiencing threats and harassment weekly.¹⁴⁴ Though not all threats and harassment are necessarily motivated by bias, news reports describe how these events often target women and people of color. For instance, during the 2024 election, several Asian American candidates in California had their political signs and banners defaced with words conveying anti-Asian sentiments.¹⁴⁵ One candidate expressed the fear that can result from these acts, saying, “I don’t know how far people would take it, so I’m very careful of my surroundings.”¹⁴⁶

In some cases, hate against public officials is driven by political leaders and other officials. The 2024 election illustrated this relationship. In 2024, researchers documented a surge in South Asian slurs related to the ascendance of Vice President Harris and the Republican vice-presidential candidate’s wife, Usha Vance, both of whom are South Asian women. Within hate groups online, anti-South Asian slurs doubled from around 23,000 in January 2023 to over 46,000 in August 2024.¹⁴⁷ Researchers also observed a 17% increase of online threats of anti-Asian violence in 2024, 75% of which were directed at South Asian communities.¹⁴⁸ In September, a political activist and former political candidate posted online that if Harris wins the election “the White House will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call center.”¹⁴⁹

The impacts of threats and harassment against public officials are manifold. On an individual level, experiencing threats and harassment poses direct harms to the officials targeted. In the survey of Southern California officials, 64% reported that threats and harassment resulted in

In a survey of Southern California officials:

64% reported that threats and harassment resulted in a fear of personal safety

Nearly **18%** were fearful for their families

Nearly **15%** reported that threats and harassment result in less time speaking with constituents



fear about personal safety, and 18% were fearful for their families.¹⁵⁰ After experiencing hostility, elected officials are less likely to interact with the public and continue service. Nearly 15% of Southern California officials surveyed reported that threats

¹⁴⁴ Porten, J., & Locke, R. (2024). Mapping the Threat Environment of Southern California’s Elected Officials. Kroc IPI Research and Resources. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁴⁵ Chu, J. (2024, October 30). Milpitas Police Investigating Defaced Election Signs as Hate Crime. San Jose Spotlight. <https://sanjoespotlight.com/milpitas-police-investigating-defaced-election-signs-as-hate-crime/>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. <https://sanjoespotlight.com/milpitas-police-investigating-defaced-election-signs-as-hate-crime/>

¹⁴⁷ Moonshot analysis cited in SAH report. <https://stopaapihate.org/2024/10/09/south-asian-report-oct24/>

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. <https://stopaapihate.org/2024/10/09/south-asian-report-oct24/>

¹⁴⁹ Allison, N., & McGraw, M. (2024, September 11). Trump Ally Laura Loomer Swatted Down After Posting Bigoted Attack on Harris. Politico. <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/09/11/laura-loomer-trump-mtg-00178815>

¹⁵⁰ Porten & Locke (2024). <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

and harassment result in less time speaking with constituents.¹⁵¹ National data mirrors this finding, revealing that fear of hostility lowers the likelihood that local officials post on social media and spend time in public spaces.¹⁵² Concerns about hostility also lower the likelihood that an official works on controversial topics, attends public events, and plans to run for reelection.¹⁵³

Acts of hostility directed toward political officials can also have ripple effects, impacting officials who are not directly targeted. Researchers found that the assassination attempt of then-candidate Donald Trump in July 2024 led to significant spikes in concerns about experiencing hostility, which, as described, can result in less involvement in public life.¹⁵⁴ Witnessing acts of hostility directed toward colleagues could lead to similar impacts.

These impacts disproportionately affect local officials who are women and/or people of color.¹⁵⁵ For instance, nationally, 41% of local officials who are people of color reported that, because of hostility, they are less likely to be in public spaces when not working compared to 30% of white officials.¹⁵⁶ In other words, threats and harassment are more likely to push women and people of color out of public spaces and, potentially, out of office altogether. As researchers from the University of San Diego point out, these impacts pose risks to democracy itself: “If elected officials choose to leave public service as a result of abuse, this undermines the voice of those who elected them in the first instance, thereby undermining a core tenet of representational democracy.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁵² Civic Pulse & Bridging Divides Initiative (Accessed April 28, 2025). Experience with Hostility Increases Worry Among Local Officials, Negatively Impacting Willingness to Engage in Political Processes. Princeton University. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/experience-hostility-increases-worry-among-local-officials-negatively-impacting-willingness-engage>

¹⁵³ Ibid. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/experience-hostility-increases-worry-among-local-officials-negatively-impacting-willingness-engage>

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/experience-hostility-increases-worry-among-local-officials-negatively-impacting-willingness-engage>

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/experience-hostility-increases-worry-among-local-officials-negatively-impacting-willingness-engage>

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/updates/2024/local-elected-officials-report-increase-harassment-lead-election>

¹⁵⁷ Porten & Locke (2024). <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

Interim Recommendations for Addressing Politically Related Hate

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING POLITICALLY RELATED HATE

2023-2024 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance training and resources for public officials and staff • Enhance security for public officials and public meetings • Explore amendments to open meeting laws • Invest in data and research on hate against public officials • Engage in efforts to shift norms and reassure communities
2024-2025 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in public education and outreach initiatives • Support opportunities for constructive dialogue • Address hate on social media • Proactively address hate before and after catalytic events

In our 2023-2024 Annual Report, we proposed five interim recommendations for addressing hate and hostility against officials and at public meetings, as noted in the text box above. The Commission continues to support these recommendations, and new research points to the urgency of implementing them. This year, the Commission recommends four additional policy recommendations, listed in the text box above and described below, to address politically related hate more broadly.

Invest in public education and outreach initiatives

In a survey of elected officials in Southern California, 50% supported more public outreach as a solution for mitigating threats and harassment they experience.¹⁵⁸ Misinformation and lack of knowledge may drive a significant amount of hostility. Local officials often report being targeted because of policies over which their body has no jurisdiction.¹⁵⁹ In addition, as discussed above, misinformation, including conspiracy theories, is a common component of hate-based political rhetoric. Unfortunately, local news outlets, which could potentially counter misinformation and provide education to the public, have been steadily declining.¹⁶⁰

Public education and outreach initiatives to address politically related hate could take a number of forms, including school curricula, information from influential leaders, and public awareness campaigns. Among other objectives, these initiatives could aim to promote norms of civility, debunk misinformation, provide information about how government operates, and/or teach important skills, such as critical thinking and techniques for recognizing propaganda and other forms of disinformation.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁶⁰ Ahn, A. (2024, July 24). California's News Industry Is Shrinking While Misinformation Spreads. Here's What the Numbers Tell Us. The Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-07-24/here-are-five-charts-that-explain-californias-struggling-news-industry>

Support opportunities for constructive dialogue

One source of rising threats and harassment is growing support for political violence and reactions to “flashpoint topics,” such as vaccine mandates and school curricula.¹⁶¹ This suggests that there may be a need for education on how to have civil, nonviolent conversations about controversial topics, as well as opportunities to use those skills. The California Threats and Harassment Initiative has compiled a list of many initiatives designed to equip people with the skills to engage in peaceful, empathetic dialogue on challenging topics, including UC Berkeley’s Bridging Differences Playbook, UC Riverside’s Digital Civics Toolkit, and many more.¹⁶²

Governments could support opportunities for learning and implementing these skills. For example, a grant program could be established to support initiatives that train the public in these skills. Governments could also partner with existing organizations to host forums on challenging topics. New school curricula could also help students develop and practice these skills.

Address hate on social media

One study found that 55% of local officials surveyed in Southern California who experienced threats or harassment during their service experienced them at least monthly on social media.¹⁶³ Elected officials’ fears of being targeted leads to a lower likelihood they post on social media.¹⁶⁴ While this is an understandable reaction, doing so means potentially withdrawing from a key platform for communicating with constituents and providing information to the public.

Many of the Commission’s recommendations for addressing politically related hate in the 2023-2024 Annual Report and this year’s report can be extended to address hate on social media. For example, in the 2023-2024 Commission report, we recommended enhancing training and resources for public officials and staff. These trainings and resources should include information on how to securely manage social media accounts and respond to hostility, including how to report and track incidents. The Commission has also researched strategies for preventing hate online generally. See Chapter 4 for a review of our findings and recommendations, many of which could be promising for reducing hate against public officials.

Proactively address hate before and after catalytic events

The 2024 election appears to have been a catalytic event that led to increases in hate-based rhetoric targeting specific groups. While some catalytic events cannot be predicted, others, such as elections, are predictable, which allows for proactive preparation. In the run-up to, and

¹⁶¹ Kleinfeld, R. (2022, March 31). The Rise in Political Violence in the United States and Damage to Our Democracy. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/03/the-rise-in-political-violence-in-the-united-states-and-damage-to-our-democracy?lang=en>

¹⁶² For a list of such initiatives, see Appendix B in Porten, J., & Locke, R. (2024). <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁶³ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=ipj-research>; Civic Pulse & Bridging Divides Initiative (Accessed April 28, 2025). <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/experience-hostility-increases-worry-among-local-officials-negatively-impacting-willingness-engage>

aftermath of, known catalytic events, measures could be implemented to prepare the public and mitigate potential increases in hate. For example, during election years, the State could implement hate prevention campaigns to promote positive norms to counter hate and to publicize resources, such as CA vs Hate.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we reviewed patterns and trends in hate in California. We described unprecedented findings on the reach of hate in California, finding that hate directly impacted an estimated 2.6 million Californians in a single year. Moreover, nearly twice as many Californians witnessed hate. As discussed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, hate not only impacts the millions of individuals targeted but also entire communities, resulting in adverse mental, physiological, and economic impacts. Additionally, simply witnessing an act of hate may perpetuate hate by suggesting a perceived norm of acceptance or permissiveness of hate.

We also found that adolescents are more than twice as likely to experience hate as adults in California, with nearly four in five adolescent hate victims experiencing a hate act in school in a single year. Our comparisons to DOJ data reveal the vast gap between Californians' self-reported experiences with hate and hate crimes recorded in law enforcement data. Our analysis of community-specific patterns and trends reveals the varied manifestations and impacts of hate. Hate is also intersectional and multifaceted, with about one in three victims of hate targeted because of multiple identities or characteristics.

We found that hate and misinformation throughout the 2024 election impacted a number of California communities. Threats and harassment continue to impact public officials at high rates across the country, including in California. This hostility deters public officials, particularly women and people of color, from engaging with the public and continuing in public service. Our research underscored the importance of our recommendations from the 2023-2024 Annual Report and pointed to nine additional interim policy recommendations.

Chapter 3

Enhancing Resources and Support



Government Code section 8010(k) requires the Commission on the State of Hate (Commission) to develop recommendations for enhancing responses to hate crimes. These recommendations must include policy recommendations as well as recommendations for improving law enforcement and community responses to hate. In the Commission’s 2023-2024 report, we described the multifaceted impacts of hate, including its impacts on the mental and physical health of both individuals and communities. We also discussed gaps in law enforcement responses to hate and provided guidance on improving responses to mass casualty events. We introduced seven policy recommendations for enhancing responses to hate in California.

This chapter begins with a review of research on mental health interventions to help victims of hate. From this review, we introduce three interim policy recommendations. Then we discuss new evidence of gaps in law enforcement responses to hate. We also introduce a new law enforcement training developed in collaboration between this Commission, Civil Rights Department (CRD) staff, California vs Hate (CA vs Hate), and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. We end with six policy recommendations for improving law enforcement training and data related to hate.

INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HATE

One of the collateral consequences of hate is its impact on mental health. As described in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, hate can lead to feelings of anger, fear, and shame for victims, as well as psychological distress, race-based traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹⁶⁵ Hate crimes have the potential to impact the mental health of entire communities. Witnessing or hearing about hate crimes against a member of one’s own community can lead to psychological harm.¹⁶⁶ In some cases, this may be the point – hate

¹⁶⁵ Reichelmann, A., Hawdon, J., Costello, M., Ryan, J., Blaya, C., Llorent, V., Oksanen, A., Räsänen, P., & Zych, I. (2020). Hate Knows No Boundaries: Online Hate in Six Nations. *Deviant Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2020.1722337>; Hansen, H., Riano, N. S., Meadows, T., & Mangurian, C. (2018). Alleviating the Mental Health Burden of Structural Discrimination and Hate Crimes: The Role of Psychiatrists. *American Journal of Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.17080891>; Hein, L. C., & Scharer, K. M. (2013). Who Cares If It Is a Hate Crime? Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Hate Crimes—Mental Health Implications and Interventions. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6163.2012.00354.x>; Jackson, S. D. (2017). “Connection Is the Antidote”: Psychological Distress, Emotional Processing, and Virtual Community Building Among LGBTQ Students After the Orlando Shooting. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000229>; Craig-Henderson, K., & Sloan, L. R. (2003). After the Hate: Helping Psychologists Help Victims of Racist Hate Crime. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1093/clipsy.bpg048>

¹⁶⁶ Bell J. G., & Perry B. (2015). Outside Looking In: The Community Impacts of Anti-Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Hate Crime. *Journal of Homosexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.957133>; Jackson (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000229>; Lannert, B. K. (2015). Traumatogenic Processes and Pathways to Mental Health Outcomes for Sexual Minorities Exposed to Bias Crime Information. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014526067>

crimes may be committed as symbolic acts of violence designed to send messages to entire communities.¹⁶⁷

Mental health services are critical for responding to hate. To develop guidance for evidence-based mental health resources and supports, the Commission partnered with PhD candidate Dillon Trujillo at the Initiative to Study Hate (ISH) at the University of California, Los Angeles. We reviewed research on therapeutic interventions and evaluated their effectiveness, or potential for effectiveness, for addressing the mental health effects of hate.

This review begins with describing the importance of culturally aware mental health services. We then describe several commonly used therapeutic interventions and examine the evidence of their effectiveness in helping victims of hate. We also describe other approaches for addressing the mental health impacts of hate. As we will discuss, evidence of the effectiveness of many of these interventions for helping victims of hate specifically is sparse. However, many of the interventions have been shown to be effective at addressing the kinds of mental health symptoms that can arise from experiencing hate, such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD. We end with recommendations for building a more robust mental health infrastructure to better meet the needs of people impacted by hate.

Culturally Aware Care

The Commission has heard repeatedly from community-based organizations about the importance of accessible, culturally aware resources and services available in the languages of people impacted by hate. This includes mental health services. To provide these services effectively, providers should be able to understand, respect, and effectively address the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices of individuals seeking care.¹⁶⁸ The need for such training is particularly important given the disproportionate rates of hate experienced by a diverse range of communities in California, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The ability to administer effective mental health interventions remotely provides important flexibility for ensuring providers are available to meet the needs of those seeking support, such as language needs and

Administering mental health interventions remotely provides important flexibility for meeting the needs of those seeking support.



¹⁶⁷ Lockwood, S., & Cuevas, C. A. (2020). Hate Crimes and Race-Based Trauma on Latinx Populations: A Critical Review of the Current Research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020979688>; Wu, C., Qian, Y., & Wilkes, R. (2020). Anti-Asian Discrimination and the Asian-White Mental Health Gap During COVID-19. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1851739>

¹⁶⁸ Sue, S., Cheng J. K. Y., Saad C. S., & Chu, J. P. (2012). Asian American Mental Health: A Call to Action. *American Psychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028900>; Bhui, K., Warfa, N., Edonya, P., McKenzie, K., & Bhugra, D. (2007). Cultural Competence in Mental Health Care: A Review of Model Evaluations. *BMC Health Services Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-7-15>; Hansen et al. (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.17080891>

cultural competence. Remote support is also helpful for specific situations, such as responding to the widespread mental health impacts of mass casualty events. Throughout this report, we describe the effectiveness of various interventions when administered remotely.

The therapeutic interventions we discuss over the following sections include cognitive behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, prolonged exposure therapy, mindfulness-based therapy, expressive writing therapy, and wraparound care, among others.¹⁶⁹ This is not an exhaustive list of mental health interventions. Instead, we focus on a few of the therapeutic interventions that are commonly used and appear promising for helping communities impacted by hate. We also discuss trauma recovery centers, peer support programs, digital mental health interventions, and the mental health benefits of restorative justice programs. The table below includes a brief description of each intervention we explore.

¹⁶⁹ For more background on the following therapies, see:

Cognitive behavioral therapy: Ellis, A. (1962). Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1963-01437-000>; Beck, A. T. (1970). Cognitive Therapy: Nature and Relation to Behavior Therapy. Behavior Therapy. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894\(70\)80030-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(70)80030-2); Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: Shapiro, F. (1989). Efficacy of the Eye Movement Desensitization Procedure in the Treatment of Traumatic Memories. Journal of Traumatic Stress. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490020207>; Prolonged exposure therapy: Foa, E. B., & Kozak, M. J. (1986). Emotional Processing of Fear: Exposure to Corrective Information. Psychological Bulletin. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.99.1.20>; Mindfulness-based therapy: Kabat-Zinn, J. (1982). An Outpatient Program in Behavioral Medicine for Chronic Pain Patients Based on the Practice of Mindfulness Meditation: Theoretical Considerations and Preliminary Results. General Hospital Psychiatry. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343\(82\)90026-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343(82)90026-3); Expressive writing: Pennebaker, J. W., & Beall, S. K. (1986). Confronting a Traumatic Event: Toward an Understanding of Inhibition and Disease. Journal of Abnormal Psychology. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.95.3.274>; Wraparound Care: Brown, R. A., & Hill, B. A. (1996). Opportunity for Change: Exploring an Alternative to Residential Treatment. Child Welfare. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1996-02264-003>

PROMISING MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Type	Description
Cognitive behavioral therapy	Structured, goal-oriented talk therapy to manage negative mental health conditions by identifying how thoughts affect one's emotions and actions
Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy	Uses bilateral stimulation to help the brain reprocess the traumatic memory, reducing the associated emotional intensity and distress
Prolonged exposure therapy	Uses four elements: repeated revisiting of the trauma memories, repeated exposure to avoided situations, education about common reactions to trauma, and breathing retraining to reduce overall physiological arousal
Mindfulness-based therapy	Uses mindfulness practices to promote present-moment awareness and nonjudgemental acceptance of experiences
Expressive writing therapy	Encourages the processing of difficult emotions through writing about thoughts, feelings, and experiences
Trauma recovery centers and wraparound care	Trauma recovery centers follow a wraparound model of care that includes clinical care, case management, and crisis intervention to address the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of trauma survivors.
Social support interventions and group therapy	Social support interventions, including peer support groups and community-based programs, aim to reduce social isolation and improve overall well-being by building and strengthening support networks, including by fostering connections among individuals with similar experiences.
Digital mental health interventions	A broad category of innovative approaches to fostering community support and supporting mental health using online platforms
Restorative justice practices	Though not limited to a focus on mental health, restorative justice practices have mental health benefits by facilitating open and structured dialogue between victims and offenders. Approaches generally aim to create safe spaces for victims to express their emotions, confront their offenders, and receive acknowledgment of the harm done.

Common Therapeutic Interventions

Cognitive behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a structured, evidence-based therapy and one of the most recognized and effective methods of therapy to treat a number of mental health symptoms, including anxiety and depressive disorders.¹⁷⁰ As a result, it can help address both the immediate and long-term psychological consequences of trauma from experiences such as hate and other forms of victimization.¹⁷¹ CBT interventions focus on identifying, challenging, and restructuring the negative thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors that can lead to emotional distress in order to promote healthier behavioral responses to stressors. They can alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors, as well as sleep disturbances.¹⁷²

One study examined a CBT-based program specifically designed to address sexual orientation-related stress among young gay and bisexual men.¹⁷³ The program, titled Effective Skills to Empower Effective Men, is a structured set of 10 sessions and is designed to address minority stress, which is the additional stress that members of historically marginalized groups face due to prejudice and discrimination.¹⁷⁴ An evaluation of the program indicated that it reduced symptoms and behaviors that commonly co-occur with minority stress, including depression and anxiety symptoms, alcohol use problems, and risky sexual behaviors.¹⁷⁵

These studies indicate that cognitive behavioral therapy may be effective in reducing the psychological impacts of hate because of its effectiveness in mitigating the negative health consequences that can arise due to hate.¹⁷⁶ A meta-analysis of remotely provided cognitive

¹⁷⁰ Ellis (1962). <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1963-01437-000>; Beck (1970). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894\(70\)80030-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(70)80030-2)

¹⁷¹ Tolin, D. F. (2010). Is Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy More Effective than Other Therapies?: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Clinical Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.05.003>; Hein & Scharer (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6163.2012.00354.x>; Shipherd, J. C., Berke, D., & Livingston, N. A. (2019). Trauma Recovery in the Transgender and Gender Diverse Community: Extensions of the Minority Stress Model for Treatment Planning. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2019.06.001>

¹⁷² Shipherd et al. (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2019.06.001>; Li, J., Cai, Z., Li, X., Du, R., Shi, Z., Hua, Q., Zhang, M., Zhu, C., Zhang, L., & Zhan, X. (2021). Mindfulness-Based Therapy Versus Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for People with Anxiety Symptoms: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Random Controlled Trials. *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.21037/apm-21-1212>

¹⁷³ Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Rendina, H. J., Safren, S. A., & Parsons, J. T. (2015). LGB-Affirmative Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Young Adult Gay and Bisexual Men: A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Transdiagnostic Minority Stress Approach. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000037>

¹⁷⁴ Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2023). Minority Stress Theory: Application, Critique, and Continued Relevance. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsy.2023.101579>

¹⁷⁵ Pachankis et al. (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000037>

¹⁷⁶ Hein and Scharer (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6163.2012.00354.x>; Carvalho, S. A., Castilho, P., Seabra, D., Salvador, C., Rijo, D., & Carona, C. (2022). Critical Issues in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with Gender and Sexual Minorities. *The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1754470X21000398>; Allwood, M., Ghafoori, B., Salgado, C., Slobodin, O., Kreither, J., Waelde, L. C., Larrondo, P., & Ramos, N. (2021). Identity-Based Hate and Violence as Trauma: Current Research, Clinical Implications, and Advocacy in a Globally Connected World. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22748>

behavioral therapy interventions indicates that they can be just as beneficial as in-person therapy for people who are experiencing negative mental health symptoms such as major depression, panic disorder, social phobia, or generalized anxiety disorder.¹⁷⁷

This is particularly important given that victims of hate seeking treatment may face more barriers to accessing mental health treatment, such as shame, stigma, or simply a lack of access to culturally competent providers. Although the strengths of CBT are well-documented, to deliver CBT effectively, mental health professionals must undergo rigorous training and meet strict requirements. Additionally, the intensity of cognitive behavioral therapy, which often involves extended exposure to distressing memories and emotions, may also be challenging for some individuals and may dissuade them from this type of intervention.

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy is commonly used to help individuals process and recover from traumatic experiences.¹⁷⁸ It can also be used to treat anxiety, depression, and addiction. EMDR consists of bilateral stimulation, which is a rhythmic stimulus that is presented to both sides of the body, to help the brain reprocess distressing memories to be less emotionally stimulating. Bilateral stimulation is often achieved through guided eye movements, but therapists can also use auditory bilateral stimulation through taps or tones. This intervention can be effective in treating trauma because it allows traumatic memories to be integrated, which enables individuals to reprocess and reframe their emotional responses to future triggers of their distress.¹⁷⁹ Research indicates that remotely administered EMDR can be effective in reducing negative mental health symptoms, including anxiety.¹⁸⁰

The main limitations of this intervention are that it may be difficult to access a provider trained in EMDR and that the intervention does expose the patient to memories of the traumatic event, which may potentially activate feelings of powerlessness or other heightened emotions. Given

¹⁷⁷ A meta-analysis, which consists of compiling studies on a specific topic and analyzing the results across multiple studies at once. Andrews, G., Cuijpers, P., Craske, M. G., McEvoy, P., & Titov, N. (2010). Computer Therapy for the Anxiety and Depressive Disorders Is Effective, Acceptable and Practical Health Care: A Meta-Analysis. *PLOS ONE*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0013196>

¹⁷⁸ Shapiro (1989). <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490020207>

¹⁷⁹ Liou, H., Lane, C., Huang, C., Mookadam, M., Joseph, M., & DuVal, J. H. (2022). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing in a Primary Care Setting: Assessing Utility and Comparing Efficacy of Virtual Versus In-Person Methods. *Telemedicine and e-Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2021.0454>; Goga, N., Boiangiu, C., Vasilateanu, A., Popovici, A., Drăgoi, M., Popovici, R., Gancea, I. O., Pîrlog, M. C., Popa, R. C., & Hadăr, A. (2022). An Efficient System for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy: A Pilot Study. *Healthcare*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10010133>; Diehle, J., Opmeer, B. C., Boer, F., Mannarino, A. P., & Lindauer, R. J. L. (2015). Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing: What Works in Children with Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms? A Randomized Controlled Trial. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-014-0572-5>; Lewey, J. H., Smith, C. L., Burcham, B., Saunders, N. L., Elfallal, D., & O'Toole, S. K. (2018). Comparing the Effectiveness of EMDR and TF-CBT for Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-018-0212-1>

¹⁸⁰ Liou et al. (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2021.0454>

this, it is important that EMDR therapists take steps to ensure that clients feel psychologically and emotionally safe and consider incorporating culturally aware components into their treatment, such as when processing events related to racial trauma.¹⁸¹

Prolonged exposure therapy

Prolonged exposure therapy is an intervention designed to address symptoms of trauma.¹⁸² It involves four elements: repeated revisiting of the trauma memories; repeated exposure to avoided situations; education about common reactions to trauma; and breathing retraining to reduce overall physiological arousal.¹⁸³ This intervention has empirical support for its effectiveness in treating symptoms of PTSD, and it has also been adapted to specifically address race-related trauma in clinical settings.¹⁸⁴ Although this is a recognized effective intervention to treat trauma, there is potential for emotional distress during sessions, which may deter some individuals from seeking this form of treatment. An assessment of a web-based administration of this intervention indicated that remote administration of this intervention can be effective, especially if individuals are seeking out prolonged exposure therapy.¹⁸⁵

Mindfulness-based therapy

Another intervention is guided mindfulness-based therapies, which use mindfulness practices to improve mental health.¹⁸⁶ These practices include promoting awareness of the present moment and nonjudgmental acceptance of one's own experiences. This type of intervention has been rigorously evaluated and is recognized as an effective form of therapy to address anxiety, depression, and stress.¹⁸⁷ This intervention can be used alone or in conjunction with other interventions, such as with cognitive behavioral therapy. For example, one program pairs

¹⁸¹ Ashley, W., & Lipscomb, A. (2020). Addressing Racialized Trauma Utilizing EMDR and Antiracist Psychotherapy Practices. *Go With That Magazine*. https://www.emdria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GWT.2020.Vol_.25.Issue_.3.RacialTrauma.ALL_.pdf

¹⁸² Foa & Cozak (1986). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.99.1.20>

¹⁸³ Peterson, A. L., Foa, E. B., & Riggs, D. S. (2019). Prolonged Exposure Therapy. *Treating PTSD in Military Personnel: A Clinical Handbook*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-09244-003>; Peterson, A. L., Foa, E. B., Resick, P. A., Hoyt, T. V., Straud, C. L., Moore, B. A., Favret, J. V., Hale, W. J., Litz, B. T., Rogers, T. E., Stone, J. M., Villarreal, R., Woodson, C. S., Young-McCaughan, S., Mintz, J., & STRONG STAR Consortium. (2020). A Non-Randomized Trial of Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy for Combat-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in a Deployed Setting. *Behavior Therapy*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2020.01.003>

¹⁸⁴ Foa, E. B., Hembree, E. A., & Rothbaum, B. O. (2007). *Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD: Emotional Processing of Traumatic Experiences: Therapist Guide*. Oxford University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780195308501.001.0001>; Williams, M. T., Malcoun, E., Sawyer, B. A., Davis, D. M., Nouri, L. B., & Bruce, S. L. (2014). Cultural Adaptations of Prolonged Exposure Therapy for Treatment and Prevention of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in African Americans. *Behavioral Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs4020102>

¹⁸⁵ McLean, C. P., Foa, E. B., Dondanville, K. A., Haddock, C. K., Miller, M. L., Rauch, S. A. M., Yarvis, J. S., Wright, E. C., Hall-Clark, B. N., Fina, B. A., Litz, B. T., Mintz, J., Young-McCaughan, S., Peterson, A. L., & STRONG STAR Consortium. (2021). The Effects of Web-Prolonged Exposure Among Military Personnel and Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000978>

¹⁸⁶ Kabat-Zinn (1982). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343\(82\)90026-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343(82)90026-3)

¹⁸⁷ Khoury, B., Lecomte, T., Fortin, G., Masse, M., Therien, P., Bouchard, V., Chapleau, M., Paquin, K., & Hofmann, S. G. (2013). Mindfulness-Based Therapy: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2013.05.005>

mindfulness techniques with cognitive behavioral therapy and has been found to decrease the negative mental health symptoms associated with PTSD among Latine and Southeast Asian refugee populations.¹⁸⁸

One research review provides compelling evidence of the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapies.¹⁸⁹ Comparing mindfulness-based therapies to CBT, the review found no significant differences between the two in terms of their impact on anxiety, depression, and sleep quality. The review even suggests that mindfulness-based interventions could be considered as an alternative intervention to CBT to treat anxiety symptoms.

Mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) can also be conducted remotely. A review of online MBIs found that they significantly reduce stress and have small but meaningful benefits for depression, anxiety, and overall well-being.¹⁹⁰ The stress-reducing effects were much stronger when the interventions were guided rather than self-directed. Additionally, the overall benefits were greater when participants completed more sessions. However, even though remote versions of this intervention were effective, their impacts on depression and anxiety were generally less than those found for face-to-face MBI, suggesting that online versions are not as effective for these conditions.¹⁹¹

Expressive writing therapy

Expressive writing therapy involves exploring and processing difficult emotions by writing about thoughts, feelings, and experiences, especially those that are emotionally charged or traumatic in nature.¹⁹² Through this process, individuals can express and process deeply held thoughts. One type of expressive writing therapy uses what is known as benefit-finding writing, which encourages participants to find positive aspects or benefits from their traumatic experiences. Expressive writing therapy may also use traumatic disclosure writing, which involves disclosing traumatic experiences and expressing emotions related to those experiences. The mechanisms of these interventions are rooted in theories of disinhibition and self-regulation. Disinhibition theory posits that unresolved or undisclosed feelings are mentally and physically harmful and that releasing these feelings through writing can improve well-being.¹⁹³ Self-regulation theory

¹⁸⁸ Hinton, D. E., Pich, V., Hofmann, S. G., & Otto, M. W. (2013). Acceptance and Mindfulness Techniques as Applied to Refugee and Ethnic Minority Populations with PTSD: Examples from "Culturally Adapted CBT". *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2011.09.001>

¹⁸⁹ Li et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.21037/apm-21-1212>

¹⁹⁰ Spijkerman, M. P. J., Pots, W. T. M., & Bohlmeijer, E. T. (2016). Effectiveness of Online Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Improving Mental Health: A Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomised Controlled Trials. *Clinical Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2016.03.009>

¹⁹¹ Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2016.03.009>

¹⁹² Pennebaker & Beall (1986). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.95.3.274>; Baikie, K. A., & Wilhelm, K. (2005). Emotional and Physical Health Benefits of Expressive Writing. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*. <https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.11.5.338>

¹⁹³ Crowley, J. P. (2014). Expressive Writing to Cope with Hate Speech: Assessing Psychobiological Stress Recovery and Forgiveness Promotion for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer Victims of Hate Speech. *Human Communication Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12020>

suggests that developing a coherent narrative around traumatic events can bring a sense of closure and mastery, promoting psychological recovery.¹⁹⁴

Although these writing interventions may have benefits for individuals from many different communities who have experienced trauma, one study examined their effectiveness to help LGBTQ individuals cope with the negative impacts of experiencing hate speech.¹⁹⁵ It found that benefit-finding writing promoted forgiveness and reduced cortisol levels, a physiological stress marker. Traumatic disclosure writing accelerated cortisol recovery, indicating its effectiveness in reducing physiological stress. These findings suggest that expressive writing interventions can significantly improve mental health outcomes by promoting forgiveness and reducing physiological stress.

While this remote intervention has not been tested in the context of hate crime survivors specifically, a recent study using the robust evaluation method of randomized control trials indicates that this intervention shows promising results in reducing stress and improving quality of life, especially for those who do not have as much access to mental health providers, such as those in rural areas.¹⁹⁶ Research examining the effectiveness of a remote version of this intervention for survivors of intimate partner violence also finds that the remote option can be effective for reducing symptoms of PTSD such as self-blame and catastrophizing.¹⁹⁷

The primary strengths of expressive writing interventions are their accessibility and versatility, as they can be implemented with minimal resources and adapted to various contexts. Expressive writing interventions can also be effective when implemented remotely. However, there is a potential for retraumatization during the writing process, as recalling and writing about traumatic events can be distressing for some individuals. Moreover, the interventions require a certain level of literacy and cognitive functioning, which may limit their accessibility for certain groups. There is also a lack of research on the specific mechanisms by which these interventions exert their effects.

Other Approaches

Trauma recovery centers and wraparound care

Trauma recovery centers are an innovative approach that uses a wraparound model of care to help victims of violence. These centers are primarily focused on helping people in low-income communities who may have a distrust of traditional mental health care treatments. Trauma recovery centers follow a model that includes clinical care, case management, and crisis intervention to provide support for trauma survivors. They address the physical, emotional, and

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12020>

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12020>

¹⁹⁶ Shin-Cho, L. J., Choi, E., Dawkins-Moultin, L., Wong, C. C. Y., Borjas, M., Fei, F., Xu, Y., Chen, M., Barcenas, C. H., Li, Y., & Lu, Q. (2025). Feasibility and Acceptability of an Online Expressive Writing Intervention for Rural Breast Cancer Survivors: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejon.2025.102790>

¹⁹⁷ Park, S., & Ko, Y. (2024). Implementing Expressive Writing Therapy in a Virtual Setting: A Feasibility Trial for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2024.102197>

psychological needs of trauma survivors by offering coordinated, trauma-informed mental health treatment and support services.¹⁹⁸

One report found that these centers have been found to be effective at reducing homelessness and the likelihood of depression among people who experienced violence.¹⁹⁹ A psychiatric expert described the holistic approach of trauma recovery centers, explaining how the model involves trust-building and resource-sharing to address material needs in combination with specific mental health interventions, such as therapy.²⁰⁰ An evaluation of the effectiveness of this model using studies from several sites found that those who completed the mental health services portion of the program experienced beneficial outcomes in terms of symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, and depression.²⁰¹ According to a pilot study, these centers increase the likelihood that victims use mental health services, as compared to victims who received other types of care.²⁰² Those who received treatment from trauma recovery centers were also more likely to return to work compared to victims who did not receive services from trauma recovery centers.²⁰³

The strengths of these types of interventions include their comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing the spectrum of needs victims of violence have. The multifaceted care management model ensures that patients receive a wide range of services, from diagnosis to ongoing support, enhancing the overall quality of care. However, these wraparound interventions face significant funding challenges, with some centers expressing concern about the sustainability of their services.²⁰⁴ There is also a need for extensive training and cross-disciplinary communication, and this approach may require a cultural shift within health care institutions, which can be challenging to achieve and maintain.²⁰⁵

Social support interventions and group therapy

Social support interventions, including peer support groups, community-based programs, and group therapy, may also be promising approaches to helping victims of hate. They have been

¹⁹⁸ Mullins, S. F., & Hawken, A. (2023). Trauma Recovery Centers in the United States. Social Science Research Network (SSRN). <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4568018>

¹⁹⁹ Bellafante, G. (2024, April 20). This Therapy Helps Victims of Violent Crime. Who Will Pay for It? New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/20/nyregion/trauma-recovery-center-nyc-funding.html>

²⁰⁰ Ibid. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/20/nyregion/trauma-recovery-center-nyc-funding.html>

²⁰¹ Dekker, A. M., Wang, J., Burton, J., & Taira, B. R. (2024). A Scoping Review of the Trauma Recovery Center Model for Underserved Victims of Violent Crime. AIMS Public Health. <http://doi.org/10.3934/publichealth.2024064>

²⁰² Ibid. <http://doi.org/10.3934/publichealth.2024064>

²⁰³ National Alliance of Trauma Recovery Centers (2020). Trauma Recovery Centers: Addressing the Needs of Underserved Crime Survivors. <https://safeandjust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TRAUMA-RECOVERY-CENTERSAddressing-the-Needs-of-Underserved-Crime-Survivors.pdf>

²⁰⁴ Mullins & Hawken (2023). <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4568018>

²⁰⁵ Hansen et al. (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.17080891>; Meredith, L. S., Eisenman, D. P., Green, B. L., Kaltman, S., Wong, E. C., Han, B., Cassells, A., & Tobin, J. N. (2014). Design of the Violence and Stress Assessment (ViStA) Study: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Care Management for PTSD Among Predominantly Latino Patients in Safety Net Health Centers. Contemporary Clinical Trials. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2014.04.005>

found to effectively reduce social isolation and improve overall mental health.²⁰⁶ These programs are also used to process trauma, improve self-perception, and reduce the impact of stigma and discrimination.

Social support interventions often include efforts to build and strengthen social support networks. This leads to improved mental health outcomes by fostering connections among individuals with similar experiences. This social support can significantly reduce the effects of stigma-related stress, which is often experienced by minority populations.²⁰⁷ These interventions also provide an opportunity for individuals to share their experiences and receive emotional validation, which can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation and promote an improved sense of belonging and self-perception.

The primary strength of social support interventions is their ability to create a sense of community and mutual support. This communal aspect can be particularly empowering for individuals who have experienced social rejection or discrimination.²⁰⁸ These interventions can be tailored to meet the specific needs of different communities, making them versatile and adaptable. For instance, peer support groups can be organized around shared experiences of victimization, such as hate crimes, allowing participants to find common ground and to support each other in meaningful ways.

Specific types of therapeutic interventions can be used in a group setting. This allows therapists to work with more people than they would otherwise, which is a significant benefit in terms of cost savings. This is also beneficial for areas where there is limited availability of mental health practitioners.²⁰⁹ One rigorously evaluated group-based intervention, called FRIENDS, uses cognitive behavioral therapy strategies deployed through activities and play.²¹⁰ It has been adapted for people of all ages, from preschool through adulthood, and has been found to be

²⁰⁶ Schwartze, D., Barkowski, S., Strauss, B., Knaevelsrud, C., & Rosendahl, J. (2017). Efficacy of Group Psychotherapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Psychotherapy Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503307.2017.1405168>

²⁰⁷ Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2009). How Does Sexual Minority Stigma “Get Under the Skin”? A Psychological Mediation Framework. *Psychological Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016441>; Metzger, I. W., Anderson, R. E., Are, F., & Ritchwood, T. (2020). Healing Interpersonal and Racial Trauma: Integrating Racial Socialization into Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for African American Youth. *Child Maltreatment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559520921457>; Schwartze et al. (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503307.2017.1405168>

²⁰⁸ Meyer, I. H. (2015). Resilience in the Study of Minority Stress and Health of Sexual and Gender Minorities. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000132>; Sloan, D. M., Bovin, M. J., & Schnurr, P. P. (2012). Review of Group Treatment for PTSD. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23015580/>

²⁰⁹ Wolgensinger, L. (2015). Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy for Anxiety: Recent Developments. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2015.17.3/lwolgensinger>

²¹⁰ Fisak, B., Griffin, K., Nelson, C., Gallegos-Guajardo, J., & Davila, S. (2023). The Effectiveness of the FRIENDS Programs for Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Mental Health & Prevention*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2023.200271>; Barrett, P., & Turner, C. (2001). Prevention of Anxiety Symptoms in Primary School Children: Preliminary Results from a Universal School-Based Trial. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466501163887>

effective at reducing anxiety and promoting resilience. One study found that, among children, it can be just as effective at reducing anxiety as individual treatment.²¹¹

Initial research on the effectiveness of this remote intervention indicates that it is potentially just as effective in reducing negative mental health symptoms as in-person group interventions. For example, a pilot study of a remote, group-based cognitive behavioral intervention designed to reduce depression and anxiety symptoms for rural adults found an improvement in both depression and anxiety symptoms after an average of eight sessions, an effect that lasted three months after the program ended.²¹²

There are several challenges and potential limitations in the implementation of social support interventions. First, these interventions require highly skilled facilitators who are capable of effectively managing group dynamics and providing support. It is also essential to have sustained participation and engagement over time, which may be challenging. Additionally, those who are deeply affected by trauma may initially resist joining group activities due to fear of further stigmatization or reluctance to share their experiences publicly.²¹³ Another limitation of peer support groups specifically is that they can vary in effectiveness.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Liber, J. M., Van Widenfelt, B. M., Utens, E. M. W. J, Ferdinand, R. F., Van der Leeden, A. J. M., Van Gastel, W., & Treffers, P. D. A. (2008). No Differences Between Group Versus Individual Treatment of Childhood Anxiety Disorders in a Randomised Clinical Trial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.01877.x>

²¹² Weaver, A., Zhang, A., Landry, C., Hahn, J., McQuown, L., O'Donnell, L. A., Harrington, M. M., Buys, T., Tucker, K. M., Pfeiffer, P., Kilbourne, A. M., Grogan-Kaylor, A., & Himle, J. A. (2022). Technology-Assisted, Group-Based CBT for Rural Adults' Depression: Open Pilot Trial Results. *Research on Social Work Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315211044835>; see also: Weintraub, M. J., Ichinose, M. C., Zinberg, J. L., Bearden, C. E., & Miklowitz, D. J. (2023). In-person versus Remote CBT Groups during COVID-19 for Adolescents with Mood Disorders or Psychosis-Risk Syndromes. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.08.119>; Milosevic I. M., Cameron D. H., Milanovic M., McCabe R. E., & Rowa K. (2021). Face-to-face Versus Video Teleconference Group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Anxiety and Related Disorders: A Preliminary Comparison. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07067437211027319>

²¹³ Tong, J., Simpson, K., Alvarez-Jimenez, M., & Bendall, S. (2019). Talking About Trauma in Therapy: Perspectives from Young People with Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms and First Episode Psychosis. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.12761>; Köhler, M., Schäfer, H., Goebel, S., & Pedersen, A. (2018). The Role of Disclosure Attitudes in the Relationship Between Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Severity and Perceived Social Support Among Emergency Service Workers. *Psychiatry Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2018.10.049>; Sylaska, K. M., & Edwards, K. M. (2014). Disclosure of Intimate Partner Violence to Informal Social Support Network Members: A Review of the Literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838013496335>; Delisle, V. C., Gumuchian, S. T., Kloda, L. A., Boruff, J., El-Baalbaki, G., Körner, A., Malcarne, V. L., Thombs, B. D., & the Scleroderma Support Group Project Advisory Team (2016). Effect of Support Group Peer Facilitator Training Programmes on Peer Facilitator and Support Group Member Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *BMJ Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-013325>

²¹⁴ Smit D., Miguel C., Vrijisen J. N., Groeneweg B., Spijker J., & Cuijpers P. (2023). The Effectiveness of Peer Support for Individuals with Mental Illness: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Psychological Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291722002422>; Haines, K. J., Beesley, S. J., Hopkins, R. O., McPeake, J., Quasim, T., Ritchie, K., & Iwashyna, T. J. (2018). Peer Support in Critical Care: A Systematic Review. *Critical Care Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1097/CCM.0000000000003293>; Delisle et al. (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-013325>; Wolgensinger (2015). <https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2015.17.3/lwolgensinger>

Digital mental health interventions

Digital mental health interventions encompass a broad range of internet-based approaches to administering mental health care and other forms of support. They include innovative apps and platforms and use various approaches such as text-based support and the creation of virtual communities. There is evidence that some digital mental health interventions show promise in helping traditionally underserved and historically marginalized groups.²¹⁵

There are several examples of digital mental health interventions intentionally designed for and by communities in response to hate and violence. One program, Compassionate Home, Action Together (CHATogether), was a digital program developed specifically to support the mental health of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in response to anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹⁶ This program included interactive theater, which consisted of role play guided by a professional, as well as Zoom sessions to practice perspective-taking and communication. The platform also provided mental health education, peer support, and mentorship within the AAPI community. Research on the program pointed to its benefits, including that it allowed for creative expression, enhanced connections among people who may have otherwise experienced limited social interaction, and provided a safe space to discuss topics including racism and mental health stigma.

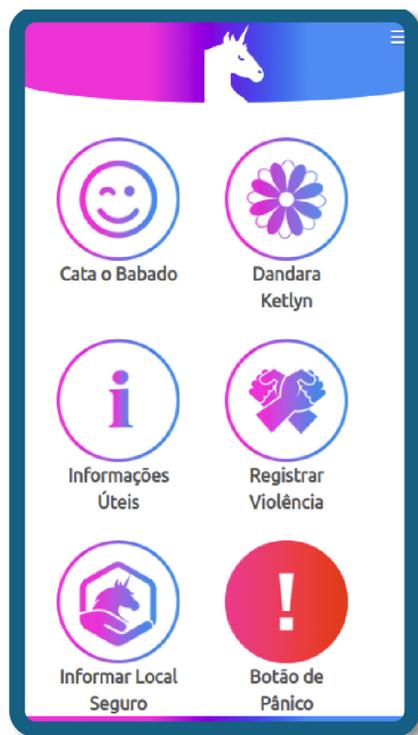
Screenshots of CHATogether



Source: Yale School of Medicine

²¹⁵ Schueller, S. M., Hunter, J. F., Figueroa, C., & Aguilera, A. (2019). Use of Digital Mental Health for Marginalized and Underserved Populations. *Current Treatment Options in Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40501-019-00181-z>

²¹⁶ Song, J. E., Ngo, N. T., Vigneron, J. G., Lee, A., Sust, S., Martin, A., & Yuen, E. Y. (2022). CHATogether: A Novel Digital Program to Promote Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-022-00508-4>

Screenshot of Dandarah – RISE

Source: Google Play Store

Another mobile health intervention, the Dandarah – RISE app, was developed in response to high rates of violence against LGBTQ people in Brazil. Developed in collaboration with the LGBTQ community, the app includes functions to report and map violence, a panic button that allows users to share their location with those in their social network, and a connection to 24/7 support for victims of violence.²¹⁷

According to users, the application was useful in improving feelings of connection and well-being, although additional evaluation for effectiveness is needed.

Digital interventions as simple as creating an online space for discussion can provide positive mental health benefits as well. One small study examined the impact of a small virtual discussion for LGBTQ students after the 2016 mass shooting at an Orlando LGBTQ+ nightclub. It found suggestive evidence that simply reading the emotional responses and perspectives of other LGBTQ people helped to decrease feelings of isolation, normalize one's own emotional experiences, and process emotions related to the event.²¹⁸

Because digital mental health interventions encompass a broad range of potential interventions, we cannot make general conclusions about their effectiveness. However,

their strengths lie in their accessibility and their potential. Digital interventions can have significant reach, bridging the distance between communities and reaching historically underserved communities and those who might not seek traditional services. Additionally, case studies of digital mental health interventions demonstrate how these interventions can be holistic approaches that address many community needs, including providing mental health support and creating support networks where people can collectively share experiences and resources. The CHATogether program and Dandarah app highlight the value of tailored interventions that address the specific needs of specific communities.²¹⁹

Restorative justice practices

Across its work, the Commission has been exploring various aspects of restorative justice, including its effectiveness at reducing recidivism and fostering trust and collective healing for

²¹⁷ Malta, M., da Silva, A. B., & da Silva, C. M. F., LeGrand, S., Seixas, M., Benevides, B., Kalume, C., & Whetten, K. (2023). Addressing Discrimination and Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Persons from Brazil: A Mobile Health Intervention. *BMC Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16857-4>; Silva, A. B., Malta, M., da Silva, C. M. F. P., Kalume, C. C., Filha, I. G. A., LeGrand, S., & Whetten, K. (2023). The Dandarah App: An mHealth Platform to Tackle Violence and Discrimination of Sexual and Gender Minority Persons Living in Brazil. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010280>

²¹⁸ Jackson (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000229>

²¹⁹ Song et al. (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-022-00508-4>; Malta et al. (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16857-4>

victims of crimes and their communities. This review is more narrowly focused on the mental health impacts of restorative justice programs at the individual and community levels. Rooted in traditional justice practices of indigenous communities, restorative justice encompasses a broad range of programs. These programs focus on repairing harm through communication and involvement between the person who caused harm and those who were harmed. Restorative justice practices can address the psychological needs of victims by facilitating open and structured dialogue between victims and offenders. These dialogues are conducted through various methods, including victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, peacemaking circles, and community dialogues. Each technique aims to create a safe space for victims to express their emotions, confront their offenders, and receive acknowledgment of the harm done. These practices can involve offenders taking responsibility for their actions and developing restitution plans, thereby contributing to the emotional and psychological recovery of the victims.²²⁰

Community sentencing circles and alternative sentencing are examples of some models of restorative justice that supplement criminal prosecution, usually at the phase of sentencing. In community sentencing circles, a group of stakeholders work together to discuss the impact of the offense and develop a reparative agreement.²²¹ These stakeholders may include the offender, victim, family, community members, the judge, and counsel for the prosecution and defense. This agreement may be presented to the judge as a recommendation or may become the final sentence. The group may also monitor the offender's compliance. Another approach, alternative sentencing, focuses on imposing a sentence other than incarceration, such as community service, education, or rehabilitation. The goal is to impose sentencing aligned to rehabilitation and addressing the harms caused to individuals and communities.²²² It has been used in cases like hate crimes, where offenders serve sentences that may consist of community service or education targeted at cultural awareness and rehabilitation.

There may be mental health benefits to restorative justice practices because these practices prioritize healing and community restoration over punitive measures. By facilitating open dialogue and promoting accountability, restorative justice practices can help victims process their trauma and receive emotional support from their community.²²³ These practices may be particularly beneficial for hate crime survivors, who often experience significant psychological

²²⁰ Nascimento, A. M., Andrade, J., & de Castro Rodrigues, A. (2023). The Psychological Impact of Restorative Justice Practices on Victims of Crimes—a Systematic Review. *Trauma Violence Abuse*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221082085>; Kaplan, M. A., & Inguanzo, M. M. (2020). The Historical Facts About Hate Crime in America the Social Worker's Role in Victim Recovery and Community Restoration. *Journal of Hate Studies*.

<https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.147>; Bolitho, J. (2017). Inside the Restorative Justice Black Box: The Role of Memory Reconsolidation in Transforming the Emotional Impact of Violent Crime on Victims. *International Review of Victimology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017714549>

²²¹ Bishop, T., Andrews, A., Becker, S., Martin, L., Mercer-Golden, B., Pérez-Santiago, M., Rogers, T., Wiggins, K., Sinnar, S., & German, M. (2021). Exploring Alternative Approaches to Hate Crimes. https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Alternative-to-Hate-Crimes-Report_v09-final.pdf

²²² Ibid. https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Alternative-to-Hate-Crimes-Report_v09-final.pdf

²²³ Bolitho (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017714549>

trauma, including PTSD, anxiety, and depression.²²⁴ These practices may also provide a framework for emotional healing, community engagement, and offender accountability, which can mitigate the psychological impacts of hate crimes and foster a sense of empowerment and validation for victims.²²⁵

However, these practices may not be suitable for all cases, as their success can vary depending on the nature of the crime and the individuals involved.²²⁶ Additionally, systemic barriers, such as existing policies and practices, can hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives.²²⁷ Given this, it is crucial to ensure that practices are intentionally designed, facilitators are adequately trained, and the process is carefully managed. In addition, while there are many effective restorative justice programs in operation, scaling these programs may be challenging.²²⁸

Interim Recommendations for Addressing the Mental Health Impacts of Hate

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HATE

- Invest in research on mental health interventions to support victims of hate
- Support training for mental health providers
- Proactively build a crisis network of mental health providers to address hate

Invest in research on mental health interventions to support victims of hate

In this section, we identified interventions that address a range of mental health challenges, such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and stress, which can result from experiencing hate. Some of these interventions also foster social connections, promote collective healing, and lend themselves to being community centered, such as social support programs, digital mental health tools, and restorative justice practices. Despite the promise of these interventions, we found few rigorous studies specifically measuring their effectiveness with respect to the impacts of hate.

²²⁴ Kalpan & Inguanzo (2020). <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.147>; Nascimento et al. (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221082085>

²²⁵ Bolitho (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017714549>; Kalpan & Inguanzo (2020). <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.147>; Nascimento et al. (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221082085>

²²⁶ Bolitho (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017714549>

²²⁷ Mulawa, M. I., Docherty, S. L., Bailey, D. E., Jr., Gonzalez-Guarda, R. M., Lipkus, I. M., Randolph, S. D., Yang, Q., & Pan, W. (2024). A Hybrid Pragmatic and Factorial Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial for an Anti-Racist, Multilevel Intervention to Improve Mental Health Equity in High Schools. *Prevention Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-023-01626-x>; Walters, M. (2015). Repairing the Harms of Hate Crime: A Restorative Justice Approach. *The Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203578988>

²²⁸ Bishop et al. (2021). https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Alternative-to-Hate-Crimes-Report_v09-final.pdf

Investments to address this research gap could include grant funding and other incentives to support a variety of research projects. These projects could involve collaborations between researchers and community-based organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions within specific communities. Studies could also focus on assessing the scalability of various programs and their ability to reach underserved populations. For example, to potentially expand access to care, grants could be established to fund research on remote care, peer support groups, and digital mental health interventions. Research could also examine the effectiveness of novel types of interventions that provide mental health support through a holistic approach, such as the CHATogether application and trauma recovery centers.

Support training for mental health providers

The effectiveness and availability of the interventions we reviewed are contingent on properly trained mental health care providers. To increase the availability of mental health services available for people impacted by hate, it is essential to invest in mental health providers. These investments could include supporting opportunities for continuing education or training on a variety of topics. For instance, trainings could help providers understand the needs of hate crime victims and how to apply various therapeutic interventions to address those needs. Trainings could also focus on cultural awareness and how to adapt interventions to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Grants could also be targeted to incentivize skill development related to scalable mental health interventions, such as peer support groups, or interventions to help underserved communities, such as mental health care delivered remotely.

Proactively build a crisis network of mental health providers to address hate

As described, to effectively treat victims of hate, mental health providers must be trained in the specific interventions and in cultural awareness. They must also be able to speak the languages of the communities they serve. Though providers with these full sets of skills are likely not available statewide, many of these interventions can be applied remotely.

One approach to addressing the specialized needs of victims is to proactively build a statewide network of skilled providers. The goal of the network would be to provide a centralized source of information about providers who have the various skills and competencies needed to help victims of hate successfully. For instance, the network should consist of providers who speak languages and dialects other than English and who have cultural competence training to understand specific communities in California. The network should also consist of providers trained in administering a variety of therapeutic interventions to meet the needs of victims of hate, including remote care.

This network would have several advantages. First, it could help fill statewide gaps in mental health services statewide. For example, if a member of a specific community is unable to find a provider in their area who speaks their language and who understands the impacts of hate, they could turn to the network to find a virtual provider. Second, the network could be leveraged in cases where there are concentrated spikes in hate or mass casualty events, where there may be a sudden need for many providers with a highly specialized skill set. For example, as described in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, after the 2023 mass shooting in Monterey Park, the impacts of the event were experienced community-wide. Culturally competent mental health providers

who could speak several languages were needed by families and survivors, as well as people in the community who were indirectly affected, such as seniors afraid to leave their homes. In these events, the network could be leveraged to quickly find providers.

To be clear, this network does not necessarily need to consist of subsidized mental health services. Simply building a robust directory of people to help hate victims can be an invaluable resource. However, models to fund subsidized services could be considered, such as by integrating this network with other programs like the California Victim Compensation Board and Medi-Cal.

IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO HATE

Government Code section 8010 tasks the Commission with providing resources and recommendations to law enforcement for responding to and reducing acts of hate. As described in the 2022-2023 Annual Report, not all communities feel safe reporting hate to law enforcement, and the Commission supports organizations and resources that may serve as alternatives to law enforcement. However, for instances in which law enforcement does respond to hate, it is crucial that officers respond effectively and appropriately. This requires appropriate training, policies, and procedures to be in place.

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, the Commission described three gaps in law enforcement response to hate statewide: gaps in data collection, gaps in statewide training requirements, and gaps in research on the efficacy of trainings. We continue to observe these gaps. In this year's report, we provide updated evidence on these gaps and an update on a new training for law enforcement developed in partnership with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), CRD, CA vs Hate, and this Commission. We also discuss our preliminary findings on law enforcement approaches to working with people experiencing mental health crises and with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Gaps in Law Enforcement Data on Hate

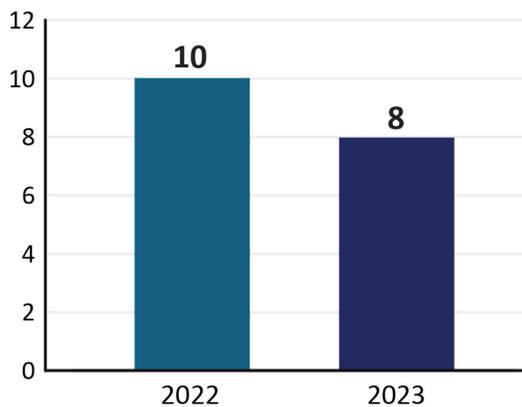
In the Commission's 2023-2024 Annual Report, we described the foundational importance of addressing gaps in law enforcement data. Hate crime data from law enforcement agencies are some of the most referenced sources for understanding hate crime patterns and trends. More comprehensive and accurate data can help answer important questions about where, when, how, and to whom hate activity is most likely to occur. Understanding this is essential for focusing prevention interventions and support systems to respond to emerging patterns and trends in hate crimes. Comprehensive data is also essential for ensuring that law enforcement is serving all communities by validating communities' experiences and helping to focus resources to address hate crimes affecting specific communities.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a vast gap between the hate crimes recorded in law enforcement data and Californians' self-reported experiences with hate. Nationally, law enforcement data may only capture 3% of the total number of hate crimes that actually

happen.²²⁹ Our analysis estimated that only 0.3% of adult victims and 0.1% of adolescent victims of hate-motivated physical violence or property damage were recorded in law enforcement data in California.

Over the past two years, the Commission has investigated missing and incomplete hate crime data from law enforcement agencies in California. The 2023-2024 report found significant data

Number of California Counties with Zero Reported Hate Crimes



gaps for many counties in California, particularly for counties with smaller, less-resourced agencies. In the 2022 Hate Crime in California report from the California Department of Justice (DOJ), zero hate crime events were recorded for 10 of California’s 58 counties, or 17% of counties in the state. The total population of all people across the zero-reporting counties was about a quarter of a million people. We examined counties with comparable population sizes and suggested it is unlikely that zero people across those 10 counties experienced a single hate crime.

We examined the number of zero-reporting counties for 2023. We found that there continues to be missing and incomplete data for many counties. However, the number of counties with zero reported hate crime events has declined slightly from 10 counties in 2022 to 8 in 2023. These counties all have relatively smaller populations. However, the total population of these 8 counties was about 172,300 people in 2023. Compared to counties with similar population sizes, we suggest it is unlikely that zero hate crime events occurred across all eight of those counties. For example, Shasta County, with a population of about 180,000 in 2023, reported 13 hate crime events. Kings County, which has a population of about 153,000, reported four hate crime events. Humboldt County has an even smaller population of about 134,000 but reported 15 hate crime events.

In addition to investigating missing data, the Commission examined the public availability of hate crime data from law enforcement. Access to timely data on hate crimes is essential for understanding emerging trends and quickly deploying resources to address them. However, statewide law enforcement hate crime statistics are generally not available until the release of the California DOJ’s annual report on hate crimes after the end of the year. Existing law requires state and local law enforcement agencies to post hate crime-related information to their websites monthly if “adequate funding” is available. (Penal Code section 13023(e).) Hate crime data could be considered such information. However, existing law does not appear to provide details on how “adequate funding” is determined, and it is unclear which agencies are required to post hate crime data to their websites monthly. Nevertheless, given the importance of

²²⁹ Sill & Haskins (2023). <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/using-research-improve-hate-crime-reporting-id/>

publicly available, timely data, the Commission investigated whether agencies in California post their data to their websites.

Over the course of two months, December 2024 and January 2025, the Commission investigated the websites of 40 law enforcement agencies in California to understand how many contain updated hate crime data. We found that a vast majority of websites do not contain hate crime data, and very few contain data that is updated monthly.

We approached this investigation systematically by reviewing the websites of 40 law enforcement agencies in California. These 40 agencies were randomly selected from the list of all 332 agencies listed in Table 6 of the DOJ's 2023 Hate Crimes in California report.

We found that only 5 of the 40 agency websites we examined, or 12.5%, contained any hate crime data at all from the last year. Of the five websites that do contain hate crime data, only two appeared to contain data that was updated monthly. Two appeared to contain data updated annually, and it was unclear how often the hate crime data from the remaining website was updated. In sum, across the agency websites we examined, only 5% of law enforcement agency websites contain hate crime data updated monthly. To be sure, some agencies may provide information about hate crimes through other means outside of data posted to their websites. Overall, however, our findings suggest that many Californians likely do not have access to timely updated hate crime data from the websites of their local agencies.

From our investigation, we also observed the strengths of websites that do contain updated hate crime data. For example, the San Francisco Police Department's data appears to be updated monthly and allows for rigorous analysis.²³⁰ The website contains extensive documentation about the data, including clearly written explanations of the data fields and responses to frequently asked questions. The data can also be downloaded in various formats, making it easy to analyze using various data analysis programs. The website also contains an application programming interface, or API, a mechanism that allows two separate software applications to communicate with each other. In this case, it can allow apps and websites to connect to the SFPD data directly without the need to download the data periodically. The API could be used to create real-time dashboards and automated analyses.

The Garden Grove Police Department's website also contains updated hate crime data and exemplifies a more simplified approach that could be implemented by smaller agencies.²³¹ Its website contains detailed information describing each report. The reports are clearly organized, and the website contains explicit notes each month if there were no reports of hate.

As another example, hate crime data from the San Diego Police Department can be downloaded from its website.²³² The data can be downloaded as a .csv file that contains regularly updated information on hate crimes reported to the San Diego Police Department from 2016 through the present. The format of the dataset allows for rich analyses of reports over time, as it

²³⁰ This data is available via the following link: https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Investigated-Hate-Crimes/huqr-9p9x/about_data

²³¹ The website is available via the following link: <https://ggcity.org/police/hate-crime-reports>

²³² San Diego Police Department (2025). <https://data.sandiego.gov/datasets/police-hate-crimes/>

contains information on individual hate crimes recorded by the SDPD along with the day, month, and year of the event. The website also contains detailed documentation that helps users understand the information contained within the dataset.

We discuss these examples to highlight potential approaches to providing hate crime data to the public. However, closing the data gaps in both data accuracy and availability requires



The public may not report hate crimes to law enforcement because of...

- Distrust
- Language barriers
- Inadequate accommodations for people with disabilities
- Normalization of hate within communities

understanding why they exist. Turning first to data accuracy, as described in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, explanations for why law enforcement data underestimate hate crimes fall primarily into one of two related categories. One category concerns reasons that members of the public may not report

hate crimes to law enforcement. Researchers from the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, nationally, only 42% of violent hate crime victimizations were reported to police during 2015 through 2019.²³³ There are many reasons for this, including distrust of law enforcement, language barriers, inadequate accommodations for people with disabilities, and a lack of incentives to report. The second set of related explanations pertains to the actions of law enforcement officers and agencies. When a member of the public reports a hate crime to law enforcement, it may not be recorded or even investigated as a hate crime. This can be due to insufficient resources, training, policies, and investigative emphases of agencies. As described above, one study found that the number of hate crimes reported by an agency was significantly correlated with whether the agency had hate crime policies and procedures in place.²³⁴ This is suggestive evidence that



Law enforcement may not record or investigate hate crimes because of insufficient...

- Resources
- Training
- Policies
- Investigative emphases of agencies

adequate procedures and policies could lead to better data reporting and/or more investigations of hate crimes. Better policies and procedures could also potentially enhance public availability of data, ensuring that hate crime data are posted to agencies' websites.

²³³ Kena, G. & Thompson, A. (2021). Hate Crime Victimization, 2005–2019. Special Report. Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/hcv0519_1.pdf

²³⁴ Jones et al. (2022). https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/sites/default/files/media/2023-08/summary-report_12.31.21.pdf

Gaps in Law Enforcement Training

In the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, we described two significant gaps in hate crime training for law enforcement. First, there are no active statewide requirements for hate crime trainings after law enforcement officers are appointed or sworn in. Though Penal Code section 13519.6(e) requires in-service peace officers to take a POST-certified course on hate crimes every six years, one provision in the law implies that this requirement is not in effect until an appropriation of funds has been made. (Penal Code section 13519.6(e)(1).) It appears that the Legislature has made no such appropriation. Consequently, though new officers are required to learn about hate crimes when they begin their careers in the police academy, there is no active state requirement for them to continue to be trained on hate crimes after that point.

The second gap in law enforcement training is the lack of research on the effectiveness of the trainings. The Commission is unaware of any systematic, rigorous impact evaluations of existing POST-certified trainings on hate crimes or similar trainings outside of California. To the Commission’s knowledge, both these gaps in training persist today.

Overview of the AB 449 training

As described in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, the Commission partnered with POST, CA vs Hate, and CRD staff to develop a new training for law enforcement officers.²³⁵ The training is an informational video, categorized as a “short special” by POST, which is defined as less than 15 minutes of high-quality finished video. The video is designed to be shown during roll call at the beginning of law enforcement officers’ shifts. The goals of the training are to improve law enforcement responses to reports of hate and instruct officers on some of the changes to the law as a result of AB 449 (Ting 2023). In this section, we describe the process for developing the training, provide an overview of the content, and discuss the strengths and limitations of the design.

Before developing the training, the Commission examined academic research on best practices for designing such a training. The findings from that research, which are contained in the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, were used to inform the overall design of the training. The Commission then worked with POST, CA vs Hate, and CRD staff to assemble a working group of community-based organizations, law enforcement officers, and subject matter experts. The working group developed content over three days and provided feedback on production and postproduction. The training is an outcome of the discussions and negotiations within the working group.

The training itself contains testimonials from people who were victimized by both hate crimes and hate incidents. They discuss the impact of being targeted and their experiences with law enforcement. The stories are diverse, demonstrating the broad manifestations of hate. The emotional impact of these stories is intended to help trainees deeply understand the impacts of hate, be motivated to address hate, and engage with the training. The stories also highlight victims’ experiences with law enforcement, including both effective and ineffective responses.

²³⁵ The training video is available via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3-z5iAwC9U>

The training also informs officers of law enforcement requirements established by AB 449. These requirements include that law enforcement agencies must adopt a hate crime policy and that officers must fill out a hate crime supplemental report when bias or hate is suspected. It explains the importance of completing the report for building a strong case for prosecuting the crime. The training also explains that, to prove that a hate crime occurred, there does not necessarily need to be proof that a perpetrator hates a person or community; it just must be proven that the perpetrator targeted a victim because of a bias motivation at that moment.

The training focuses on the importance of establishing trust with communities. It points out that building trust can encourage people to report acts of hate. To build trust, the training explains, it is important for law enforcement to proactively build relationships with communities. It emphasizes how trust is also built by responding to reports of hate appropriately, including by connecting victims to resources regardless of whether a hate act appears criminal. The training describes how resources such as CA vs Hate and LA vs Hate can help victims of even noncriminal hate acts.²³⁶

The design of the training drew on several evidence-based best practices developed from the Commission's review of research. First, as discussed, the training uses emotions and stories throughout to frame the information. Research shows that stories can increase cognitive engagement and increase understanding and retention.²³⁷ Second, as described in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, there is a risk of cognitive overload in trainings, which can occur when more information is presented than can be held in a person's working memory at a given time. This risk can be reduced by breaking information into distinct segments and integrating diagrams with narration. The training does precisely that. It displays diagrams throughout and intersperses short pieces of information from various speakers and stories from victims of hate. Moreover, because the training is only 10 minutes and intersperses specific information with stories, the cognitive burden of the training is minimal.

Screenshot of Assembly Bill 449 Training Video



Source: California POST, YouTube

²³⁶ LA vs Hate is a community-centered system designed to allow residents of Los Angeles County to report hate crimes and incidents and to provide support.

²³⁷ Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.79.5.701>

One of the primary limitations of the video is that it is short and is not comprehensive.²³⁸ Instead, the training focuses on providing a few clear and practical steps that officers can take when responding to hate incidents. This approach was developed after consulting with Professor Jack Glaser, a professor at UC Berkeley and a subject matter expert on stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, including racial profiling in police stops. Professor Glaser explained that, given the format and length of the training, an in-depth overview of the topic would not be conducive to encoding beyond trainees' short-term memory. Therefore, it was important to take a "less is more" approach that focuses on concrete steps officers can take.

The training has additional limitations. There is no statewide requirement for officers to watch the video. With this in mind, we focused on creating a video that was particularly engaging and succinct. Second, it is not an interactive training. Ideally, a hate crime training would provide opportunities for officers to engage with the material in various ways, such as through simulations or role-playing scenarios. A third limitation of the training is that, though it is evidence-based, there was no opportunity to research or evaluate it after it was released. The Commission is exploring opportunities for evaluating the training.

Initial Findings: Enhancing Law Enforcement Practices for People with Mental Illness and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Commission has learned of the critical need to enhance law enforcement responses to situations involving individuals with mental health disorders and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We have recently begun to explore this topic in depth. This section contains our preliminary findings. We also provide a case study of a potentially effective model for enhancing law enforcement responses to individuals with mental health disorders and IDD. This review is not comprehensive, and the Commission plans to conduct additional research on this topic in the future.

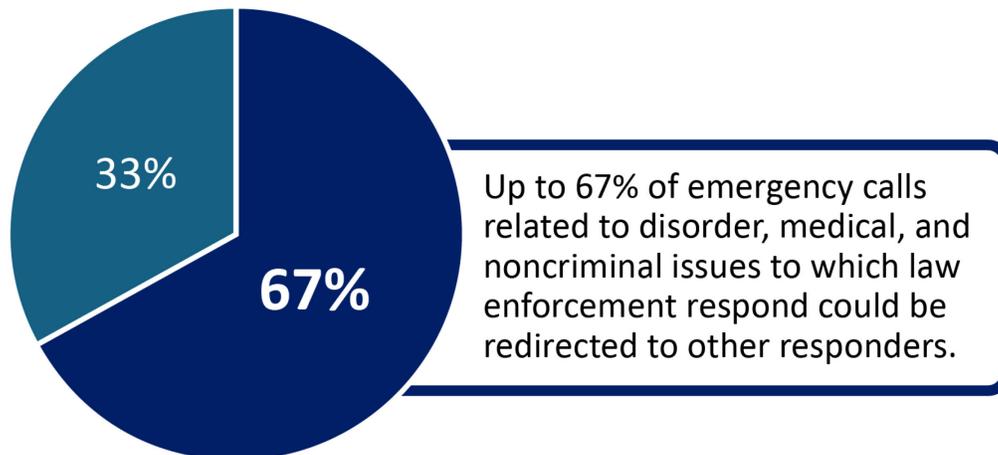
In a Commission community forum, Professor Karen Nakamura described police interactions with people with psychiatric disabilities as "very deadly." At least one-quarter of fatal law enforcement encounters involves a person with a serious mental illness.²³⁹ In addition, individuals with IDD are two to three times more likely to be victims of violent crime and face high risks of being taken advantage of by perpetrators.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Other POST-certified hate crime trainings are significantly more comprehensive, but, as described above, are not required outside of the police academy.

²³⁹ Fuller, D. A., Lamb, H. R., Biasotti, M., & Snook, J. (2015). Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters. https://www.tac.org/reports_publications/overlooked-in-the-undercounted-the-role-of-mental-illness-in-fatal-law-enforcement-encounters/; Lowery et al. (2015). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2015/06/30/distraught-people-deadly-results/>

²⁴⁰ Melendrez, B., Turner, J., Pope, L., & Davis, L. A. (2019, December 10). Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: 10 Facts Law Enforcement Officers Need to Know. Bureau of Justice Assistance. https://web.archive.org/web/20250206170753/https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/Intellectual_and_Developmental_Disabilities_10_Facts%2BLaw_EnforcementOfficers_Need_to_Know.pdf

In the forum, Professor Nakamura emphasized the intersectional nature of identities. That is, people with disabilities hold many identities and belong to many communities, some of which may have a distrust in law enforcement. This distrust can stem from negative encounters with law enforcement in the past (such as mistreatment and over-policing), as well as the fear of potential consequences of involvement with the criminal legal system. People may also experience additional barriers, such as a lack of proper accommodations by law enforcement, language barriers, and a lack of cultural competence among officers.



One approach to reducing negative law enforcement interactions with people with mental illness and IDD is developing a response to emergency calls that includes mental health practitioners. National studies estimate that a quarter to two-thirds of emergency calls related to disorder, mental health, medical, and noncriminal issues to which law enforcement currently responds could be directed to mental health crisis experts and other first responders.²⁴¹

To highlight one approach, we describe the design and impact of a program in Denver, Colorado, called the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program.²⁴² STAR is a mobile crisis response team designed to respond to calls related to mental health services. For certain calls, such as mental health calls where there is no indication that violence might occur, STAR is dispatched in lieu of police officers. The city also has a co-responder program in which certified mental health professionals jointly respond to mental health calls with police officers. The STAR program also has a partner network of local, community-based organizations to provide culturally and linguistically responsive social services throughout the city.

A former Denver chief of police discussed the effectiveness of this program, explaining, “Having a licensed mental health professional interacting with somebody in crisis is typically a better approach than a police officer with 40 hours of CIT [Crisis Intervention Training].”²⁴³ Research on

²⁴¹ Dee, T. S., & Pyne, J. (2022). A Community Response Approach to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Crises Reduced Crime. *Science Advances*. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abm2106>

²⁴² Caring for Denver Foundation (2022). Denver, CO: Community Response Model. <https://caring4denver.org/stories/news-events/denver-co-community-response-model/>; National League of Cities (2024). Denver, CO: Community Response Model. <https://www.nlc.org/resource/reimagining-public-safety-impact-updates/denver-co-community-response-model/>

²⁴³ Police Executive Research Forum (2021, February 10). <https://www.policeforum.org/criticalissues10feb21>

the program demonstrates the demand for the program and its positive impacts. There were nearly 40,000 STAR-eligible calls over 2.5 years, and the number of calls has been growing.²⁴⁴ A rigorous study of the program during its pilot phase documented a substantial impact on reducing reports of crime. The program reduced reports of targeted, less serious crimes, such as trespassing, public disorder, and resisting arrest, by 34% and had no detectable effect on more serious crimes.²⁴⁵ Despite its apparent success, the program continues to have limited hours of operation, and more funding is needed for it to be available 24/7.

Other potential approaches to improving law enforcement responses to situations involving mental illness and people with IDD include listening sessions with communities and advocates. As discussed in last year's report, a representative from a community-based organization proposed requiring law enforcement agencies to host listening sessions with CBOs. Doing so can help officers gain a deeper understanding of the communities they serve, such as their needs and emerging trends in crime. Another potential approach to improving law enforcement responses is encouraging the use of a crisis line such as 988, which is active across the country. A third potential approach is to require law enforcement agencies to designate coordinators on specific topics, such as hate crimes or disability. We discuss this recommendation in more detail below.

²⁴⁴ Gillespie, S., Curran-Groome, W., & Rogin, A. (2024). Evaluating Alternative Crisis Response in Denver's Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) Program: Interim Findings. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/evaluating-alternative-crisis-response-denvers-support-team-assisted-response>

²⁴⁵ Dee, T. S., & Pyne, J. (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abm2106>

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO HATE

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO HATE

2023-2024 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the gaps in law enforcement training requirements • Implement evidence-based law enforcement trainings • Enhance public education about reporting hate
2024-2025 Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address gaps in law enforcement data on hate crimes • Require law enforcement to take hate crime training, including the AB 449 training • Require law enforcement agencies to designate hate crime coordinators

In the Commission’s 2023-2024 report, we proposed three interim recommendations for enhancing law enforcement responses to hate, as shown in the text box above. The Commission continues to support these recommendations. This year, we build on these recommendations and recommend the following three additional interim policy recommendations.

Address Gaps in Law Enforcement Data on Hate Crimes

We identified two gaps related to hate crime data from law enforcement agencies: the underrepresentation of hate crimes in law enforcement data and the lack of data on agency websites. With respect to the availability of hate crime data on agency websites, it is possible that many agencies are unaware of the relatively new legal requirement to post their hate crime data monthly. Sending an informational bulletin to law enforcement agencies clearly explaining this requirement may help to increase the availability of hate crime data among at least some agencies. More fundamentally, addressing the gaps in data requires comprehensive solutions that improve an agency’s overall efforts related to hate crimes. For example, required training and hate crime coordinators could improve both the data gaps and hate crime efforts generally. We discuss each of these approaches below.

Require Law Enforcement to Take Hate Crime Training, Including the AB 449 Training

As described, there are no active statewide requirements for hate crime trainings after law enforcement officers are appointed or sworn in. The Commission continues to recommend that hate crime training requirements be established such that law enforcement personnel receive continuous education on hate crimes throughout their careers. An initial step to improving training requirements is to require training that incorporates the AB 449 video described above. As a 10-minute video, it is not comprehensive. However, it does contain critical information about changes to California law and important new resources, such as CA vs Hate. Moreover, it

is both community-centered and evidence-based. A statewide requirement for officers to watch the video could also require that the viewing be supplemented with more comprehensive training. For example, a requirement could be established requiring agencies to have officers view the video and engage in exercises and discussions to apply and process the information learned.

Require Law Enforcement Agencies to Designate Hate Crime Coordinators

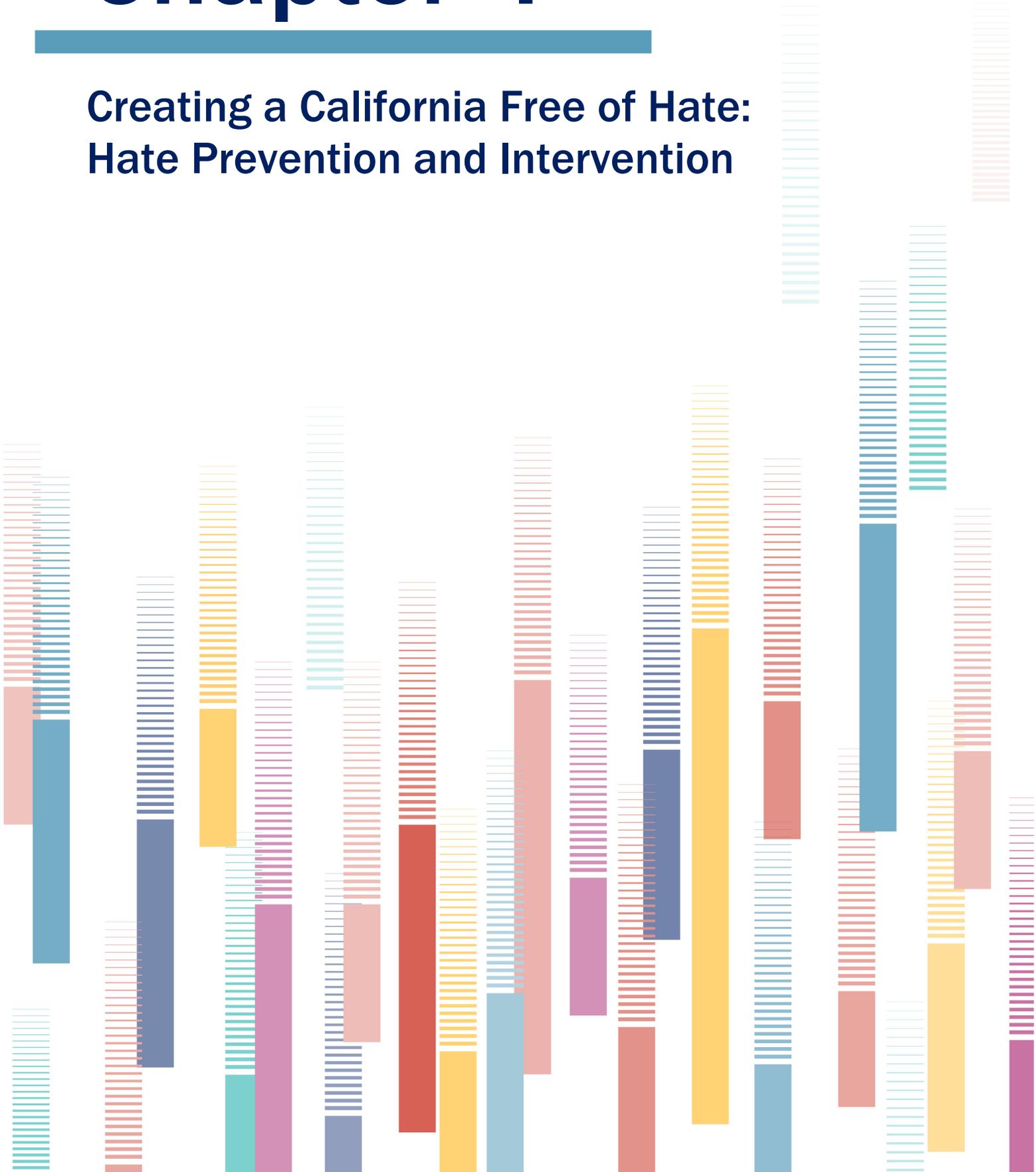
As discussed, there is a substantial gap between Californians' self-reported experiences with hate and hate crimes represented in law enforcement. To some extent, this data gap is a proxy for insufficient policies and procedures for addressing hate crimes. As discussed in Chapter 2, research has found that agencies that have policies and procedures in place to address hate crimes report higher numbers of hate crimes. These procedures include having a hate crime coordinator.

A hate crime coordinator could have several responsibilities that would improve an agency's efforts to respond to hate. These could include developing specialized expertise on hate crimes and serving as a resource for other agency staff. With this knowledge, they could serve as an additional check to verify that the agency complies with specific legal obligations. Coordinators could also research and implement best practices and trainings. The coordinators' contact information should be available publicly to allow them to serve as the primary point of contact for members of the public and other stakeholders with questions and concerns related to the agency's anti-hate efforts. A state agency could create a statewide list of hate crime coordinators and provide this list on a publicly available website.

Hate crime coordinators or other law enforcement staff could be designated for other important issues as well, such as responses to mental health crises or building relations with various communities, including seniors and people with disabilities. For smaller agencies, the coordinator may be one person who has other responsibilities. For larger agencies with the resources to do so, there could be separate coordinators solely focused on developing specialized knowledge of these complex areas and responsible for being the primary point of contact with the public.

Chapter 4

Creating a California Free of Hate: Hate Prevention and Intervention



Preventing hate is essential, but it is also complex. Hate impacts many different communities across California and many different areas of life, from sidewalks and bus stops to homes and houses of worship. It also encompasses a broad range of acts, from microaggressions to physical violence. There is not a single, uniform, evidence-based intervention, or set of interventions, the Commission has encountered to prevent hate statewide. Therefore, the Commission has focused on specific types of prevention approaches and has provided general guidance for their design and implementation. The 2023-2024 Annual Report contained the Commission’s findings on two types of prevention approaches: school programs and public messaging campaigns. From these findings, the Commission developed interim evidence-based guiding principles to assist practitioners with designing and implementing these interventions.

Over the past year, the Commission conducted additional research into these areas and began researching online hate prevention. In this year’s report, we begin with our initial findings about online hate prevention. To study this topic, we reviewed research and consulted with leading academic and policy experts. This review includes three broad strategies to prevent online hate and protect Californians from its harms. The next sections build on our research last year and summarize our new findings on hate prevention in schools and anti-hate public messaging campaigns. We introduce additional guiding principles in these two areas.

PREVENTING AND REDUCING ONLINE HATE

While social media and the internet provide numerous benefits, they can also be platforms for the spread of hate speech, cyberbullying, disinformation, and misinformation. Within California, we estimate that, among those who experienced a hate act within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023, nearly 21% of adults and 24% of adolescents experienced at least one act of hate online. This amounts to over half a million people in California in one year.

The Commission has approached online hate prevention by reviewing research and learning from subject matter experts and communities in California. For instance, the Commission partnered with UCLA’s Initiative to Study Hate (ISH) in October 2024 to host a convening of scholars and policy experts. Attendees discussed the research related to online hate and generated potential ideas to prevent it. Ahead of the convening, Commission staff held listening sessions with community-based organizations from across the state who were part of the CA vs Hate network. Key themes from those listening sessions were summarized and shared with convening participants. The findings in this section draw from the insights generated in the convening, the community listening sessions, and additional research efforts of Commission staff.

This section begins with a detailed discussion of the problem of online hate. We then introduce a select number of considerations and challenges that often complicate efforts to address online hate and other harms. We end with a review of three potential policy strategies for preventing and reducing online hate.

Key Patterns and Trends in Online Hate

As described, our analyses suggest that over half a million Californians experienced hate online within just one year. Another study found that about two out of every three internet users globally reported encountering hate speech online often.²⁴⁶ Among those surveyed, 58% identified Facebook as the online platform where hate speech is most prevalent, followed by TikTok (30%), X (formerly Twitter) (18%), and Instagram (15%). Online hate also appears in online gaming platforms. A 2022 survey of video game enthusiasts, or gamers, found that more than 9 in 10 respondents have experienced or witnessed bullying or emotional abuse while playing video games, more than 2 in 5 have experienced racism on gaming platforms, and nearly 1 in 5 have encountered extremist content while gaming.²⁴⁷ Historically marginalized groups, including women, racial minorities, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals, are disproportionately targeted by online hate.²⁴⁸

Youth are particularly susceptible to experiencing online hate given their high usage of social media. Nationally, an estimated 95% of youth ages 13 to 17 have reported using a social media platform.²⁴⁹ Many children begin using social media before middle school, with approximately 40% of children ages 8 through 12 having reported using social media.²⁵⁰ Widespread usage may expose youth to harmful content, such as hate speech and bullying. One national study found that 81% of youth have seen hate speech online, 46% experienced cyberbullying, and more than half witnessed hate speech directed at someone they know.²⁵¹ The researchers reported that the most prominent forms of hate speech encountered by youth relate to gender (72%), race/ethnicity (71%), and religious beliefs (62%).

Direct impacts of online hate

As with other forms of hate, online hate can result in significant harms. These harms include feelings of fear, anger, rejection, and distress, as well as lowered self-esteem, loneliness, and anxiety.²⁵² In some cases, the consequences of online hate can be similar to those experienced

²⁴⁶ IPSOS and UNESCO (2023). Report: Survey on the Impact of Online Disinformation and Hate Speech. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2023-11/unesco-ipsos-online-disinformation-hate-speech.pdf>

²⁴⁷ Zajeckowski, M. (2024, May 28). Study: Majority of Gamers Say They've Witnessed Racism and Hate Speech. Preply.com. <https://preply.com/en/blog/hate-speech-and-bullying-in-video-games/>

²⁴⁸ Anti-Defamation League (2024). Hate Is No Game: Hate and Harassment in Online Games 2023. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/hate-no-game-hate-and-harassment-online-games-2023>

²⁴⁹ Vogels, E. A., Gelles-Watnick, R., & Massarat, N. (2022, August 10). Report: Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/08/10/teens-social-media-and-technology-2022/>

²⁵⁰ Rideout, V., Peebles, A., Mann, S., & Robb, M. B. (2022). Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2021. Common Sense Media. https://www.common Sense Media.org/sites/default/files/research/report/8-18-census-integrated-report-final-web_0.pdf

²⁵¹ Harmon, J. (2024, November 12). The Social Media and the Spread of Hate (SMASH) Project. UCLA School of Education & Information Studies Magazine. <https://magazine.seis.ucla.edu/the-smash-project/>

²⁵² Davidson, J., Livingstone, S., Jenkins, S., Gekoski, A., Choak, C., Ike, T., & Phillips, K. (2019). Adult Online Hate, Harassment and Abuse: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. UK Council for Internet Safety. <https://www.gov.uk/>

after trauma, though individual responses vary based on a number of factors, such as past experiences, resilience, and support systems.²⁵³ Exposure to a hateful online environment can also increase the likelihood of experiencing empathic numbing, where one's ability to understand others' perspectives is diminished.²⁵⁴ Empathic numbing can trigger a reduced willingness to help others or engage in acts of kindness, as well as impair one's ability to form and maintain close relationships due to a lack of emotional connection.

Experiencing (online) harassment is associated with physiological impacts, including headaches, abdominal pain, skin problems, poor appetite, and respiratory problems.²⁵⁵ Online hate can also trigger the body's stress response, leading to increased heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels.²⁵⁶ Extended exposure to online hate can lead to chronic stress, which can have detrimental effects on cardiovascular health and immune functioning and can contribute to metabolic disorders.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, victims of online hate may experience reduced sleep quality leading to fatigue, impaired concentration, and emotional distress.²⁵⁸ For individuals with preexisting health conditions, online hate can worsen symptoms or trigger flare-ups.²⁵⁹

The harms of online hate can be compounded for youth from historically marginalized communities who are more likely to be targeted by hate both online and offline.²⁶⁰ Because hate speech often targets core aspects of identity, such as one's race, religion, or sexual

[government/publications/adult-online-hate-harassment-and-abuse-a-rapid-evidence-assessment](#); Leets, L., & Giles, H. (1999). Harmful Speech in Intergroup Encounters: An Organizational Framework for Communication Research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1999.11678960>

²⁵³ Leets, L. (2002). Experiencing Hate Speech: Perceptions and Responses to Anti-Semitism and Antigay Speech. *Journal of Social Issues*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00264>

²⁵⁴ Pluta, A., Mazurek, J., Wojciechowski, J., Wolak, T., Soral, W., & Bilewicz, M. (2023). Exposure to Hate Speech Deteriorates Neurocognitive Mechanisms of the Ability to Understand Others' Pain. *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-31146-1>

²⁵⁵ Gini, G., & Pozzoli, T. (2013). Bullied Children and Psychosomatic Problems: A Meta-Analysis. *Pediatrics*. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2013-0614>; Mikhaylovsky, M. N., Lopatkova, I. V., Komarova, N. M., Rueva, E. O., Tereschuk, K. S., & Emelyanenkova, A. V. (2019). Cyberbullying as a New Form of a Threat: A Physiological, Psychological and Medicinal Aspects. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejgm/114268>; Davidson et al. (2019).

[https://research.tees.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/34689333/Adult Online Harms Report 2019.pdf](https://research.tees.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/34689333/Adult_Online_Harms_Report_2019.pdf)

²⁵⁶ Crowley (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12020>

²⁵⁷ Popa-Wyatt, M. (2023). Online Hate: Is Hate an Infectious Disease? Is Social Media a Promoter? *Journal of Applied Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12679>; McEwen, B. S., & Gianaros, P. J. (2011). Stress- and Allostasis-Induced Brain Plasticity. *Annual Review of Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-med-052209-100430>

²⁵⁸ Volpe, V. V., Benson, G. P., Czoty, L., & Daniel, C. (2023). Not Just Time on Social Media: Experiences of Online Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Worse Sleep Quality for Black, Latinx, Asian, and Multi-Racial Young Adults. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-022-01410-7>

²⁵⁹ Ndoja, S. (2024). Reflection-in-Action: Hate Speech and Discrimination Towards Disability, Chronic Illness, and Mental Health Conditions. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8090287>

²⁶⁰ Amadori, A., Real, A. G., Brighi, A., & Russell, S. T. (2025). An Intersectional Perspective on Cyberbullying: Victimization Experiences Among Marginalized Youth. *Journal of Adolescence*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/jad.12466>

orientation, it can be particularly damaging for youth who are still developing their sense of self and belonging.²⁶¹ Repeated exposure to online hate can also lead youth to internalize negative stereotypes and prejudice about their identities, impacting their self-worth and mental health.²⁶² Furthermore, the fear of online hate can lead marginalized youth to self-censor, limit their online presence, and avoid engaging in online communities. This can restrict their access to the many benefits of online platforms, such as support networks, information, and opportunities for self-expression.²⁶³

Hate, disinformation, and misinformation

In some cases, online hate activity is connected to disinformation and misinformation.²⁶⁴ Hate speech may be intertwined with misrepresentations and false narratives that encourage distrust or fear of particular groups or communities.²⁶⁵ When false information is infused with hate speech, it can become more emotionally charged and more persuasive, which enhances the likelihood that people believe and disseminate it.²⁶⁶ For example, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about Jewish people’s influence on institutions, which have existed for centuries, are regularly amplified and adapted in online spaces, fueling hate activity and harassment.²⁶⁷

Research suggests that a small percentage of social media accounts disseminate a significant amount of online misinformation. A 2024 study investigating the spread of misinformation among a sample of over 600,000 U.S. voters active on X (formerly Twitter) found that a mere 0.3% of the sample were responsible for spreading 80% of the content from fake news sites.²⁶⁸

²⁶¹ Keighley, R. (2022). Hate Hurts: Exploring the Impact of Online Hate on LGBTQ+ Young People. *Women & Criminal Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2021.1988034>

²⁶² Ismail, L., Mukramin, S., Fatmawati, F., & Nursida, A. (2024). The Impact of Hate Comments on Social Media Users’ Self-Confidence: An Analysis Grounded in Social Comparison Theory and Cyberbullying Research. *Acta Psychologica*. <https://doi.org/10.35335/psychologia.v3i2.57>; Bottino, S. M. B., Bottino, C. M. C., Regina, C. G., Correia, A. V. L., & Ribeiro, W. S. (2015). Cyberbullying and adolescent mental health: Systematic Review. *Cadernos de Saude Publica*, 31. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0102-311X00036114>

²⁶³ Hubbard, L. (2020). *Online Hate Crime Report: Challenging Online Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia*. London: Galop, The LGBT+ Anti-Violence Charity. https://www.report-it.org.uk/files/online-crime-2020_0.pdf

²⁶⁴ Within this report, “disinformation” refers to false information deliberately intended to mislead, while “misinformation” refers to content that is inaccurate or factually incorrect, regardless of intent.

²⁶⁵ Bader, L. & Bender, J. (2022). What Is “Fake News” and “Hate Speech” and How Do They Work in Practice? *Central and Eastern European EDem and EGov Days*. <https://doi.org/10.24989/ocg.v.342.1>

²⁶⁶ Brady, W. J., Wills, J. A., Jost, J. T., Tucker, J. A., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2017). Emotion Shapes the Diffusion of Moralized Content in Social Networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1618923114>; Ecker, U. K. H., Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Schmid, P., Fazio, L. K., Brashier, N., Kendeou, P., Vraga, E. K., & Amazeen, M. A. (2022). The Psychological Drivers of Misinformation Belief and Its Resistance to Correction. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-021-00006-y>

²⁶⁷ Steffen, E., Mihaljevic, H., Pustet, M., Bischoff, N., Varela, M. D. M. C., Bayramoglu, Y., & Oghalai, B. (2023). Codes, Patterns and Shapes of Contemporary Online Antisemitism and Conspiracy Narratives—an Annotation Guide and Labeled German-Language Dataset in the Context of COVID-19. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*. <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v17i1.22216>; Comerford, M., & Gerster, L. (2021). The Rise of Antisemitism Online During the Pandemic: A Study of French and German Content. *Publications Office of the European Union*. <https://doi.org/10.2838/671381>

²⁶⁸ Baribi-Bartov, S., Swire-Thompson, B., & Grinberg, N. (2024). Supersharers of Fake News on Twitter. *Science*. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adl4435>

A similar study of X (Twitter at the time of the study) with a sample of over 16,000 users found that only 0.1% of users in the sample were responsible for sharing 80% of tweets containing news from untrustworthy websites.²⁶⁹

Bots, which are automated accounts that often mimic human behavior on social media platforms, can also play a role in the proliferation of online hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation. These automated accounts can rapidly disseminate hateful messages, target specific individuals or groups with abusive content, and create an illusion of widespread support for hateful ideologies.²⁷⁰ By retweeting, liking, and sharing hateful posts, bots increase their visibility and reach a wider audience, contributing to the normalization and mainstreaming of hate-based language.²⁷¹ Furthermore, bots can artificially inflate the popularity of hateful and erroneous information on platforms, further amplifying their impact. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, researchers identified automated accounts spreading untrue, divisive, and hateful content, often targeting specific demographic groups with inflammatory rhetoric.²⁷² This research suggests that one approach to disrupting the spread of online hate, misinformation, and disinformation is to address the small concentration of accounts that create and circulate the overwhelming majority of untruthful information and focus on stemming the proliferation of bots programmed to do the same.

Platform features that exacerbate hate

The design and features of online platforms have the potential to exacerbate the harms of online hate. Due to its inherently inflammatory nature, online hate can attract attention and generate rigorous debate online, leading to virality.²⁷³ Features that allow for reach and amplification of content on social media platforms can result in hateful messages spreading rapidly and widely, and potentially to global audiences.²⁷⁴ The attention that hate receives can result in a cycle in which hate speech is perpetuated because it is rewarded with greater visibility and reach.²⁷⁵ The spread of hateful content can lead to increased harms to victims and communities, as they may feel bombarded with hateful content. Also, the permanence of online content in some cases means that hateful messages that are not removed will essentially

²⁶⁹ Grinberg, N., Joseph, K., Friedland, L., Swire-Thompson, B., & Lazer, D. (2019). Fake News on Twitter During the 2016 US Presidential Election. *Science*. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aau2706>

²⁷⁰ Ferrara, E. (2023). Social Bot Detection in the Age of ChatGPT: Challenges and Opportunities. *First Monday*. <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v28i6.13185>

²⁷¹ Stella, M., Ferrara, E., & De Domenico, M. (2018). Bots Increase Exposure to Negative and Inflammatory Content in Online Social Systems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1803470115>

²⁷² Bessi, A., & Ferrara, E. (2016). Social Bots Distort the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election Online Discussion. *First Monday*. <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v21i11.7090>

²⁷³ Brady et al. (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1618923114>

²⁷⁴ Stray, J., Iyer, R., & Puig Larrauri, H. (2023). The Algorithmic Management of Polarization and Violence on Social Media. Knight First Amendment Institute. <https://scholarship.org/content/qt9vc329zb/qt9vc329zb.pdf>

²⁷⁵ Noble, S. U. (2018). Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479833641.001.0001>

remain online indefinitely, causing ongoing harm.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, the anonymity of some online platforms can embolden perpetrators, leading to more extreme and vitriolic language than might be used offline.²⁷⁷

FACTORS THAT AMPLIFY THE HARMS OF ONLINE HATE

Permanence of Online Content

Anonymity and Disinhibition

Rapid Spread & Amplification

Incentivizing Hate Speech

Online platforms also facilitate connections between individuals and hate groups in ways largely unavailable offline. Anonymity and pseudonymity, for instance, lower the risks associated with expressing hateful views, allowing individuals who might be hesitant to join hate groups because of fear of stigma to overcome these barriers by participating in virtual communities.²⁷⁸

Online platforms facilitate connections between individuals and hate groups in ways largely unavailable offline.



Furthermore, online algorithms can amplify the perceived normalization and validation of hate-based ideologies by exposing users to increasingly inflammatory content and creating

information echo chambers.²⁷⁹ Anonymity-based social media platforms can often attract hate speech. A 2021 research study found that almost one in four comments posted on alt-right discussion boards on the anonymity-based platforms Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan contained hate speech.²⁸⁰

Influence on offline violence

The extent to which online hate directly causes offline hate violence is an unanswered empirical question. In the October 2024 convening, experts grappled with this question. On the one hand, scholars pointed to the dearth of rigorous empirical studies demonstrating a direct causal link

²⁷⁶ Cooper, L. M. J. (2021). Social Media and Online Persecution. *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal*. <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/immigration-law-journal/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/07/02-Jarvis-Cooper-GT-GILJ210042.pdf>

²⁷⁷ Suler, J. (2004). The Online Disinhibition Effect. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1089/1094931041291295>

²⁷⁸ Woods, F. A., & Ruscher, J. B. (2021). Viral Sticks, Virtual Stones: Addressing Anonymous Hate Speech Online. *Patterns of Prejudice*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2021.1968586>

²⁷⁹ Barberá, P. (2020). Social Media, Echo Chambers, and Political Polarization. *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field, Prospects for Reform*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108890960>

²⁸⁰ Rieger, D., Kümpel, A. S., Wich, M., Kiening, T., & Groh, G. (2021). Assessing the Extent and Types of Hate Speech in Fringe Communities: A Case Study of Alt-Right Communities on 8chan, 4chan, and Reddit. *Social Media + Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211052906>

between online hate and offline violence. Though there are many research studies and case studies that identify a connection between online activities and offline hate violence, a causal link is particularly difficult to prove, and few studies do so. On the other hand, there is a wealth of evidence documenting the harms of online hate. Thus, addressing online hate is imperative, regardless of whether a causal link between online hate and offline violence can be measured robustly. Given the frequency with which this question is raised, however, the Commission reviews research on it below.

One study argues that social media usage consistently plays a role in what it refers to as the radicalization of U.S.-based extremists within the context of terrorism. The study found that social media engagement played a role in the radicalization process of nearly 90% of the extremists tracked in its database.²⁸¹ A 2020 study found a significant correlation between increases in online hate speech on Twitter targeting race and religion and increases in offline crimes motivated by racial and religious bias in London.²⁸² More broadly, online hate speech has been identified as a contributing factor to a global increase in real-world violence directed at specific populations.²⁸³

One of the few causal studies on the link between online hate and offline violence examined hate toward refugees in Germany. It found that hate crimes against refugees diminished during social media outages and increased after increases in social media posts containing online hate speech toward refugees. Using sophisticated causal analysis techniques, the researchers identified that online posts were a causal factor resulting in hate crimes against refugee communities.²⁸⁴ The researchers surmised that social media platforms can act as hubs for hateful rhetoric, which can reinforce hate-based ideologies and lead to offline violence. In a separate study, these researchers conducted an analysis and found that Twitter use in a county was associated with a sizeable increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes after the 2016 presidential primaries.²⁸⁵

The 2022 mass shooting at a Tops supermarket in Buffalo, New York, is one of the many mass shootings that tragically exemplifies the link between online activities and hate violence. The perpetrator of the shooting was heavily immersed in online white supremacist ideologies and meticulously documented his plans and motivations online before carrying out the attack. The shooter's online activity revealed deep involvement in white supremacist online forums and consumption of hateful content. His online manifesto, shared before the attack, explicitly

²⁸¹ Jensen, M., James, P., LaFree, G., Safer-Lichtenstein, A., & Yates, E. (2018). The Use of Social Media by United States Extremists. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).

https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_PIRUS_UseOfSocialMediaByUSExtremists_ResearchBrief_July2018.pdf

²⁸² Williams, M. L., Burnap, P., Javed, A., Liu, H., & Ozalp, S. (2020). Hate in the Machine: Anti-Black and Anti-Muslim Social Media Posts as Predictors of Offline Racially and Religiously Aggravated Crime. *The British Journal of Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azz049>

²⁸³ Laub, Z. (2019, June 7). Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/background/hate-speech-social-media-global-comparisons>

²⁸⁴ Müller, K., & Schwarz, C. (2021). Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime. *Journal of the European Economic Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvaa045>

²⁸⁵ Müller, K., & Schwarz, C. (2023). From Hashtag to Hate Crime: Twitter and Antiminority Sentiment. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20210211>

outlined racist motivations in targeting a retail establishment in a predominantly Black community.²⁸⁶

Considerations and Challenges of Online Hate Prevention

Preventing and reducing online hate involves a complex set of considerations, challenges, and barriers, including the difficulties of content moderation, disinvestment in moderation systems by online platforms, increasingly limited data access, and important legal considerations. Given these interrelated considerations, creating safer platforms free of hate may transcend the capabilities of any single entity. It will likely require efforts by governments, researchers, nongovernmental organizations, communities, the private sector, and users.

Difficulties of social media content moderation

Social media content moderation is fraught with complexity. For instance, the sheer volume of content uploaded each year poses challenges. In an average minute, it is estimated that over 347,000 tweets are shared on X, Snapchat users send over 2 million snaps, 1.7 million pieces of content are shared on Facebook, and 500 hours of video content is uploaded to YouTube.²⁸⁷ Effectively moderating this quantity of content globally can be a monumental task. Historically, platforms have relied on a combination of automated and human-driven moderation. There are



Moderators often work under pressure to meet quotas, make quick decisions with limited context, and are regularly exposed to graphic and disturbing content, which can lead to psychological distress, burnout, and even PTSD.

documented negative effects of this work on the well-being of human moderators. Moderators often work under pressure to meet quotas, make quick decisions with

limited context, and are regularly exposed to graphic and disturbing content, which can lead to psychological distress, burnout, and even PTSD.²⁸⁸

Several platforms outsource content moderation to third-party companies based outside the United States, including in India and the Philippines.²⁸⁹ Doing so can lead to slower, less consistent, and inaccurate decision-making due to a combination of less-than-optimal working

²⁸⁶ Peterka-Benton, D., & Benton, B. (2023). Online Radicalization Case Study of a Mass Shooting: The Payton Gendron Manifesto. *Journal for Deradicalization*. <https://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/737>

²⁸⁷ Domo (2022). Data Never Sleeps 10.0. <https://www.domo.com/data-never-sleeps>

²⁸⁸ Roberts, S. T. (2019). Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300245318>

²⁸⁹ Ahmad, S., & Krzywdzinski, M. (2022). Moderating in Obscurity: How Indian Content Moderators Work in Global Content Moderation Value Chains. *Digital Work in the Planetary Market*. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/13835.003.0008>

conditions and contextual differences between regions of the world.²⁹⁰ A 2022 review of outsourced content moderation noted that third-party moderators often contend with frantic and highly stressful work environments, which is at odds with the care and effort needed to review content adequately while allowing moderators to maintain their well-being.²⁹¹ Research also indicates that online hate speech is largely contextual and fluid, with new slang, memes, and coded language constantly emerging, making it difficult for moderators not immersed in the audience's culture to moderate accurately.²⁹²

Some platforms have introduced community reporting features to manage the massive scale of content and address the shortcomings of outsourcing human-driven content moderation.²⁹³ Rather than relying on dedicated moderators to identify issues, users are provided with tools to report and correct problematic content. This strategy shifts the responsibility for moderation primarily to platform users. Though it may be somewhat effective for mitigating the spread of harmful content, like other forms of human-driven content review, it can also be reactive. Technology-driven moderation often screens and filters harmful content before it is posted, while human-driven content review does not occur until after content is posted.

A study of crowdsourced content moderation strategies, like Community Notes, found it less effective than other approaches, as corrections were often never approved or appeared too late to counteract the viral spread of misinformation. An analysis of X's Community Notes system determined that it took more than 11 hours for a Community Note to be added to a post containing misinformation.²⁹⁴ During this time, false or misleading information can reach millions of users.

Additionally, this moderation approach can be weaponized by ill-intentioned actors. It can be abused by groups who use coordinated reporting campaigns to intimidate and silence opponents. A study of content moderation on Twitter estimated that 47% of users' attempts to moderate content were false or abusive.²⁹⁵ For instance, a CNN post on X in June 2023 that discussed the biased portrayal of Black fathers had a Community Note attached that included misleading data, further perpetuating the racist and biased stereotype that the original CNN post was aiming to debunk. The Community Note remained visible for multiple days.

²⁹⁰ Chan, A. J., García, J. L. R., Silvestri, F., O'Donnell, C., & Palla, K. (2023). Enhancing Content Moderation with Culturally-Aware Models. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2312.02401>; Roberts (2019). <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300245318>

²⁹¹ Nurik, C. (2023). Facing Contracting Issues: The Psychological and Financial Impacts of Facebook Outsourcing Content Moderation. University of Pennsylvania Law Review. <https://core.ac.uk/reader/591707910>

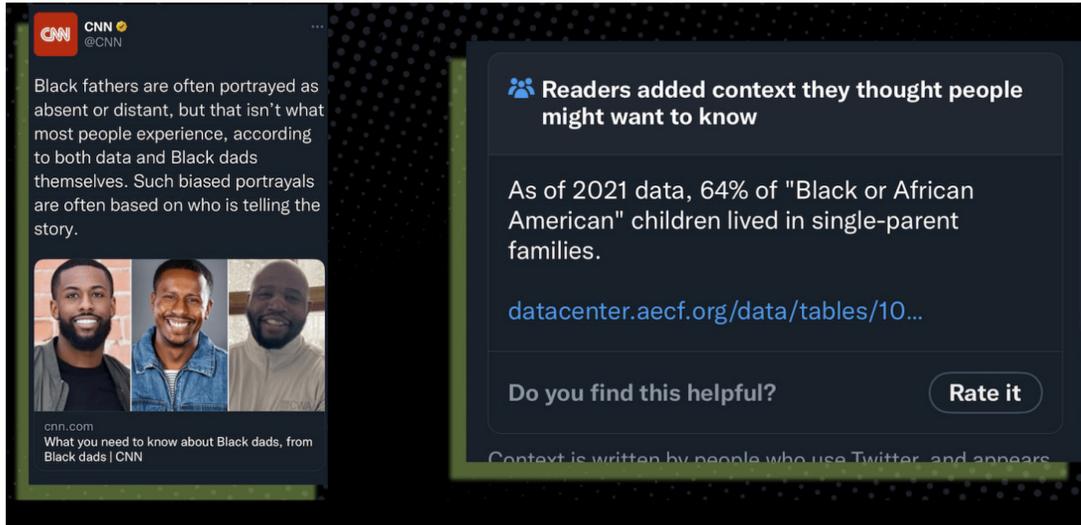
²⁹² Farrand, B. (2023). 'Is This a Hate Speech?' The Difficulty in Combating Radicalisation in Coded Communications on Social Media Platforms. European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-023-09543-z>

²⁹³ Stafford, T. (2025, January 14). Do Community Notes Work? The London School of Economics. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2025/01/14/do-community-notes-work/>

²⁹⁴ Oremus, W., Thadani, T., & Merrill, J. B. (2024, October 30). Elon Musk says X users fight falsehoods. The falsehoods are winning. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/10/30/elon-musk-x-fact-check-community-notes-misinformation/>

²⁹⁵ Matias, J. N., Johnson, A., Boesel, W. E., Keegan, B., Friedman, J., & DeTar, C. (2015). Reporting, Reviewing, and Responding to Harassment on Twitter. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1505.03359>

Example of a community note feature used to spread misinformation



Source: <https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2023/why-twitters-community-notes-feature-mostly-fails-to-combat-misinformation/>

While moderation systems also use artificial intelligence (AI) and other types of automated moderation strategies, these approaches also have drawbacks. They may struggle to grasp the nuances of human language, particularly forms of sarcasm, humor, and culturally specific language. This can lead to misinterpretations and the erroneous flagging or removal of harmless content, while harmful content may slip through undetected.²⁹⁶ Platforms often augment technology-based moderation with human moderators to address this issue. However, doing so can create concerns about well-being, as the most disturbing and complex moderation cases typically require human review. One such moderator reported handling hundreds of violent videos daily, often feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of disturbing content.²⁹⁷ Additionally, the models are often trained using existing data, which can result in discriminatory moderation decision outcomes that disproportionately affect marginalized groups.²⁹⁸ For instance, research shows that hate speech detection algorithms are more likely to flag content written in African American English as offensive, leading to higher rates of content removal for Black users.²⁹⁹ While there are benefits to a technology-driven approach to social media

²⁹⁶ Roberts (2019). <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300245318>; Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions that Shape Social Media*. Yale University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300235029>

²⁹⁷ Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300235029>

²⁹⁸ O'Neil, C. (2017). *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/241363/weapons-of-math-destruction-by-cathy-oneil/>; Noble (2018). <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479833641.001.0001>

²⁹⁹ Sap, M., Card, D., Gabriel, S., Choi, Y., & Smith, N. A. (2019, July). The Risk of Racial Bias in Hate Speech Detection. Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics. <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/P19-1163>; Consistent with the research cited, we use the term "African American

moderation, these shortcomings demonstrate that moderation, like many approaches, is insufficient to address the complexities of online hate and misinformation alone.

The harms caused by the inaccuracies of content moderation systems are exacerbated by the lack of transparency into the internal policies that guide how platforms remove content and determine the validity of users who appeal moderation decisions. This information is often not shared publicly. Lack of transparency is often accompanied by inconsistent enforcement and confusion by users targeted for abusive reporting, as they have no clear recourse for appeal.³⁰⁰

Industry trends: shifting content moderation policies and restricting data access

Industry trends among major online platforms appear to be moving toward less content moderation, greater reliance on user-generated moderation, and restricted access to data for researchers. These trends pose risks to the mitigation of hate on their platforms. For example, in January 2025, Meta Platforms announced important changes to its content moderation policies across its platforms, including discontinuing third-party fact-checking and replacing it with a crowdsourced model that relies on user reports to produce Community Notes. The company also announced that it would modify restrictions on topics like immigration, sexual orientation, and gender identity, areas where hate speech are prominent.³⁰¹ The updated Community Standards explicitly described that they would permit users to describe LGBTQ+ people as mentally ill and to call for their exclusion from professions, public spaces, and society based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.³⁰²

Meta's changes follow a broader industry trend of reducing resources allocated to moderation efforts. For instance, in December 2022, X dissolved its Trust and Safety Council, an advisory group of independent civil, human rights, and other organizations that the company formed to address hate speech, child exploitation, suicide, self-harm and other issues on the platform.³⁰³ In October 2024, TikTok laid off hundreds of employees primarily in its content moderation

English" (AAE). AAE encompasses unique grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns distinct from standard American English, tracing its roots to the languages spoken by enslaved Africans during the transatlantic slave trade.

³⁰⁰ Juneja, P., Rama Subramanian, D., & Mitra, T. (2020). Through the Looking Glass: Study of Transparency in Reddit's Moderation Practices. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3375197>

³⁰¹ Kaplan, J. (2025, January 7). More Speech and Fewer Mistakes. Meta. <https://about.fb.com/news/2025/01/meta-more-speech-fewer-mistakes/>; Duffy, C. (2025, January 7). Meta Is Getting Rid of Fact Checkers. Zuckerberg Acknowledged More Harmful Content Will Appear on the Platforms Now. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/07/tech/meta-censorship-moderation/index.html>

³⁰² Torek, B. (2025, January 15). Meta's New Policies: How They Endanger LGBTQ+ Communities and Our Tips for Staying Safe Online. The Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/news/metas-new-policies-how-they-endanger-lgbtq-communities-and-our-tips-for-staying-safe-online>

³⁰³ O'Brien, M., & Ortutay, B. (2022, December 13). Musk's Twitter Disbands Its Trust and Safety Advisory Group. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/elon-musk-twitter-inc-technology-business-a9b795e8050de12319b82b5dd7118cd7>

operations, stating that it would shift its focus to technology-driven forms of content moderation.³⁰⁴

In addition to changes in content moderation systems and policies, some social media platforms have severely restricted or cut off access to their data. Such access has been critical for researchers and other groups to understand trends in hate activity and other issues on the platforms. For instance, in August 2024, Meta shut down its public insights system, CrowdTangle. A bipartisan group of U.S. senators and congressional members sent a letter to Meta urging the company to continue access to the transparency tool. In their letter, the lawmakers characterized CrowdTangle as vital for the public, independent researchers, journalists, and policymakers to study and address the impact of Meta’s social media platforms.³⁰⁵ Similarly, in 2023, Reddit suspended public access to its Pushshift database/archive of historical postings and instituted fees for using its application programming interface (API). Access to the platform’s API is essential to the site’s volunteer moderators and independent researchers, who rely on the API to develop tools and interventions to safeguard users from hate activity and misinformation.³⁰⁶ In March 2023, X eliminated free academic API access to its data. In the aftermath, more than 100 research studies related to X were canceled, suspended, or significantly changed.³⁰⁷ Many of the impacted studies focused on issues related to hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation. One researcher pointed out the impacts, stating, “The reduced ability to study the platform makes users on X vulnerable to more hate speech, more misinformation, and more disinformation.”

Legal considerations

Policies that address online hate and regulate online platforms must contend with a complex, shifting legal landscape. A comprehensive discussion of these various legal complexities is outside the scope of this report, but we address a few here.

To begin, the Commission affirms unequivocally that protecting and upholding civil liberties, including the freedom of speech and expression, is critical. Our efforts to address online hate should not be misconstrued – policies to prevent online hate should not infringe on Constitutional rights and freedoms. In some cases, policies to address online hate may be determined to be unconstitutional. For example, California law AB 587 (Chapter 269, Statutes of 2022) required social media companies in California to increase transparency by filing semiannual reports with the State attorney general that publicly disclose their content

³⁰⁴ Latiff, R. (2024, October 11). ByteDance's TikTok Cuts Hundreds of Jobs in Shift Towards AI Content Moderation. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/bytedance-cuts-over-700-jobs-malaysia-shift-towards-ai-moderation-sources-say-2024-10-11/>

³⁰⁵ Congress of the United States (2024, July 24). Letter to Mr. Mark Zuckerberg. [https://www.coons.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter to meta re crowdangle from coons cassidy et al.pdf](https://www.coons.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter%20to%20meta%20re%20crowdtangle%20from%20coons%20cassidy%20et%20al.pdf)

³⁰⁶ Gilbert, S., Matias, J. M., Zuckerman, E., Yellowmix, & Mickens, J. (2023, July 12). Survey Report: Reddit’s Actions Continue to Undermine Moderation & Research. Coalition for Independent Technology Research. <https://independenttechresearch.org/reddit-survey-results/>

³⁰⁷ Dang, S. (2023, November 6). Exclusive: Elon Musk's X Restructuring Curtails Disinformation Research, Spurs Legal Fears. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/elon-musks-x-restructuring-curtails-disinformation-research-spurs-legal-fears-2023-11-06/>

moderation policies and enforcement metrics regarding hate speech, misinformation, disinformation, and extremism. In 2024, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued an injunction against the law, stating that it likely violates the companies' constitutional rights to free speech.³⁰⁸ An eventual settlement allowed AB 587 to be reinstated, but portions of the law were permanently enjoined. These portions included the requirement that social media companies provide detailed descriptions of their definitions of certain categories of content, such as "hate speech or racism," "extremism or radicalization," and "disinformation or misinformation," and the existing policies intended to address such content.³⁰⁹

As another example of the legal complexities, policymakers must also consider Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (47 U.S. Code Section 230). Among other provisions, it states that "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider." Though Section 230 was amended in 2018, there have been calls for further reforms to address harmful content on online platforms.³¹⁰ To be clear, the Commission does not take a position on this law or proposed reforms, but the debate around Section 230 underscores the tension between existing law and efforts to protect people from online harm.

Legal issues are further complicated by the global presence of many social media platforms, as the laws governing content creation and moderation vary between countries and regions. The United States, with its robust First Amendment protections and Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, represents one end of the spectrum.³¹¹ The European Union has adopted a far more interventionist approach. A German law known as the Network Enforcement Act, for example, imposes strict takedown deadlines for "manifestly illegal" content, including hate speech, with substantial fines for noncompliance.³¹² The European Union's Digital Services Act harmonizes rules across member states, requiring platforms to implement mechanisms for users to report illegal content, swiftly respond to reports, and be more transparent about their content moderation practices.³¹³ This creates a significantly different regulatory environment compared to the United States. Importantly, these differing legal frameworks result in a fragmented and potentially less effective system for online hate prevention.

There are also challenges with implementing and enforcing current policies. For example, Assembly Bill 2291 (Chapter 491, Statutes of 2018) required schools to develop procedures to address bullying and cyberbullying. It also requires the California Department of Education to

³⁰⁸ Poritz, I. (2024, September 4). X Wins Block of California Social Media Anti-Hate Speech Law (2). Bloomberg Law. <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/litigation/x-wins-pause-on-california-social-media-anti-hate-speech-law>

³⁰⁹ Ibid. <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/litigation/x-wins-pause-on-california-social-media-anti-hate-speech-law>

³¹⁰ Citron, D. K., & Franks, M. A. (2020). The Internet as a Speech Machine and Other Myths Confounding Section 230 Reform. University of Chicago Legal Forum. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol2020/iss1/3>

³¹¹ Ibid. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol2020/iss1/3>

³¹² Heldt, A. (2019). Reading between the Lines and the Numbers: An Analysis of the First NetzDG Reports. Internet Policy Review. <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.2.1398>

³¹³ Latham & Watkins LLP. (2023). The Digital Services Act: Practical Implications for Online Services and Platforms. <https://www.lw.com/admin/upload/SiteAttachments/Digital-Services-Act-Practical-Implications-for-Online-Services-and-Platforms.pdf>

develop training modules on bullying and cyberbullying. Schools must make these training modules available to staff members who interact with students. Though the policy is well-intentioned, it does not mandate the use of evidence-based programs. One subject matter expert described how it could be strengthened through the use of data collection about schools' use of the materials. For instance, schools could be required to document the quality of materials being posted, including whether the materials are promoting evidence-based practices; the extent to which they are implementing practices informed by the materials; and whether their practices have been effective. This information could be used to improve the materials.

Interim Recommendations for Policy Strategies to Address Online Hate

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ONLINE HATE

- Support empowerment and education initiatives for internet users: digital literacy training and counter-messaging
- Increase data access, transparency, and research on online hate
- Address content moderation and user control on online platforms

Despite the complexity of preventing hate online, its impacts demand solutions. Drawing on our fact-finding efforts, we identified three broad interim policy strategies to prevent online hate. Each strategy is multifaceted and could encompass many different policies. Though framed as policy strategies, each strategy could be used to guide efforts by other entities, such as schools, parents, community-based organizations, and technology companies themselves.

Support empowerment and education initiatives for internet users

As users encounter online hate, it is critical for them to be prepared. In this section we describe two categories of approaches to educating and empowering users to prepare them when they encounter online hate: digital literacy training and counter-messaging.

Digital literacy training

Digital literacy training encompasses teaching a range of skills, including the ability to evaluate online sources, recognize manipulative techniques and propaganda, understand algorithmic biases, and critically analyze media messages.³¹⁴ Research suggests that individuals with stronger digital literacy skills are less susceptible to believing and sharing false information.³¹⁵ Furthermore, training in media literacy can enhance awareness of online hate speech and

³¹⁴ Livingstone, S. (2004). Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies. *The Communication Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490280152>

³¹⁵ Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than You Think: Prevalence and Predictors of Fake News Dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau4586>

empower users to identify and challenge hateful narratives.³¹⁶ Digital literacy training could also address the possibility that trainees themselves may commit hate acts. Curricula could include information about the tangible harms online hate can cause and employ evidence-based approaches for reducing prejudice.³¹⁷

One specific strategy that could be used in digital literacy training is known as inoculation, or “prebunking,” or “attitudinal inoculation” strategies.³¹⁸ These strategies seek to proactively debunk conspiracies and misinformation before they take root and cause harm to individuals and communities. For instance, instead of simply warning against fake news articles, a passive form of inoculation would show examples of common disinformation tactics, like emotionally charged headlines or manipulated images, while active inoculation would involve prompting individuals to develop their own counterarguments. Although both passive and active inoculations effectively inoculate, there is evidence that active inoculation has longer-lasting benefits than passive inoculation.³¹⁹

Research is beginning to demonstrate the effectiveness of a variety of prebunking and attitudinal inoculation programs in decreasing people’s susceptibility to disinformation and misinformation online.³²⁰ A 2020 study found that individuals who played an inoculation game could better identify misinformation techniques used in news stories than individuals not exposed to the game.³²¹ Another study demonstrated that preemptively showing individuals common manipulation techniques, like emotional language or impersonations of authorities, significantly improved their ability to identify and resist disinformation.³²² A third study consisted of showing an inoculation video consisting of typical propaganda alongside an “inoculation presenter” who paused the video intermittently to point out erroneous information and manipulative rhetorical techniques. The video significantly reduced participants’ perceptions of the credibility of the propaganda.³²³

³¹⁶ Vraga, E. K., & Tully, M. (2021). News Literacy, Social Media Behaviors, and Skepticism Toward Information on Social Media. *Information, Communication & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637445>

³¹⁷ For additional information on prejudice-reduction interventions, see the following sections titled “Public Messaging as a Tool for Preventing Hate” and “Hate Prevention in Schools.”

³¹⁸ McGuire, W. J. (1961). The Effectiveness of Supportive and Refutational Defenses in Immunizing and Restoring Beliefs Against Persuasion. *Sociometry*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2786067>

³¹⁹ McBride, M. K., Faber, P. G., Haney, K., & Kannapel, P. J. (2023). Evidence-Based Techniques for Countering Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation. Center for Naval Analyses. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/11761271/u-evidence-based-techniques-for-countering-mis-dis-mal-information/12652563/>

³²⁰ Braddock, K. (2020). Clearing the Smoke and Breaking the Mirrors: Using Attitudinal Inoculation to Challenge Online Disinformation by Extremists. *Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1521-613620200000025009>; Hughes, B., Goldberg, B., Jereza, R., & West, J. J. (2021). Inoculating Against Persuasion by Scientific Racism Propaganda: The Moderating Roles of Propaganda Form and Subtlety. *SocArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/ecqn4>

³²¹ Basol, M., Roozenbeek, J., & Van der Linden, S. (2020). Good News About Bad News: Gamified Inoculation Boosts Confidence and Cognitive Immunity Against Fake News. *Journal of Cognition*. <https://doi.org/10.5334/joc.91>

³²² Roozenbeek, J., & Van der Linden, S. (2019). Fake News Game Confers Psychological Resistance Against Online Misinformation. *Palgrave Communications*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0279-9>

³²³ Hughes et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/ecqn4>

While an inoculation approach could consist of teaching people to prebunk hate-based content and propaganda, it may have risks. Specifically, it may be emotionally burdensome and cause harm to viewers, especially those who are members of frequently targeted groups. Research indicates that historically marginalized populations can have heightened sensitivity to microaggressions and other discriminatory actions, and exposure to potentially harmful material, even for inoculation purposes, could trigger negative emotions and psychological distress.³²⁴ An inoculation approach using hate content could undermine the inoculation process and potentially lead to further psychological harm. Further research is needed to understand the risks of such inoculation strategies, particularly their impacts on people who are historically targeted by hate.

More broadly, digital literacy training has other risks and limitations. To remain relevant, trainings need to be updated to address emerging challenges, such as deepfakes and sophisticated bot networks. This is a significant limitation given the rapidly evolving nature of online platforms and tactics. Scalability and accessibility are also crucial considerations. Ensuring that high-quality digital literacy education reaches diverse populations, including those most vulnerable to online manipulation, is essential for broad-based impact. As experts have noted, effective implementation of digital literacy training programs will require investments in digital infrastructure, policy and governance frameworks, and training in digital technologies.³²⁵ For example, the UK government has developed a national strategy for digital media literacy, working in collaboration with private sector organizations, including social media companies, media outlets, and technology firms. The UK government sets the specific policies that guide the multifaceted initiative, while industry partners contribute expertise, funding, and platform support.³²⁶

“ Effective implementation of digital literacy training programs will require investments in digital infrastructure, policy and governance frameworks, and training in digital technologies. ”

Counter-messaging

Counter-messaging is a strategy that has the potential to mitigate the spread of online hate.³²⁷ This approach involves directly confronting and refuting harmful content and could be deployed by users themselves or platforms. Research demonstrates how counter-messaging can effectively correct misinformation and reduce its continued influence. Counter-messaging

³²⁴ Nadal, K. L., King, R., Sissoko, D. R. G., Floyd, N., & Hines, D. (2021). The Legacies of Systemic and Internalized Oppression: Experiences of Microaggressions, Imposter Phenomenon, and Stereotype Threat on Historically Marginalized Groups. *New Ideas in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100895>

³²⁵ Bandura, R., & Leal, E. M. (2022). CSIS Brief: The Digital Literacy Imperative. Center for Strategic & International Studies. <https://apo.org.au/node/318662>

³²⁶ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021). Online Media Literacy Strategy. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60f6a632d3bf7f56867df4e1/DCMS_Media_Literacy_Report_Roll_Out_Accessible_PDF.pdf

³²⁷ See, for example, Munger, K. (2017). Experimentally Reducing Partisan Incivility on Twitter. Unpublished working paper. <https://kmunger.github.io/pdfs/jmp.pdf>

should be clear, concise, and generally focused on facts.³²⁸ However, in certain contexts, such as when dealing with emotionally charged issues, counter-messaging that incorporates narrative persuasion and empathy building may be most impactful.³²⁹ The source of a counter-message can significantly impact its effectiveness. Messages from trusted sources or those who share a common identity with the person whose messages are being countered are more likely to be persuasive.³³⁰ Research also demonstrates that counter-messaging should be refined and repeated over time to curb the continued influence of misinformation and disinformation, as studies have indicated that people may still rely on false information even after it is corrected.³³¹

However, counter-messaging comes with risks. Primarily, counter-messaging may lead to potential risks for the person countering the content. By responding to hate, the person may become targeted directly. Additionally, responding to hate directly may amplify the reach of hate-based content in cases where a ranking algorithm amplifies content based on engagement. Both these risks apply to users but not necessarily platforms themselves. This suggests that it may be more prudent for platforms to provide counter-messages and may be a particularly effective strategy in cases where a platform is unwilling to remove content.

Implementing empowerment and educational initiatives

These two approaches to educating and empowering users – digital literacy training and counter-messaging – could be pursued in several ways. From a policy perspective, supporting any of these approaches could consist of grants or other incentives to create programs using these principles. It could also consist of mandated curricula in schools, training for teachers, or programs for families to teach them about potential programs. These approaches could also be implemented by CBOs, libraries, or other entities to run community programs focused on any of these approaches.

The primary advantages of approaches that focus on empowering and educating users is that they largely sidestep the legal complexities involved in regulating online platforms and the challenges of relying on platforms. Moreover, these approaches may have spillover benefits, equipping people to address hate offline. For example, it could help people to think critically and skeptically about hate-based rhetoric they encounter in public places.

With both these approaches, there are limitations. They often require significant investment in terms of time, resources, and sustained effort. They can also be critiqued for not directly addressing the root causes or initial occurrences of online hate, focusing instead on mitigating its impact. At the same time, these approaches could be viewed as harm reduction techniques

³²⁸ Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C. M., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and Its Correction: Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612451018>

³²⁹ Braddock, K., & Dillard, J. P. (2016). Meta-Analytic Evidence for the Persuasive Effect of Narratives on Beliefs, Attitudes, Intentions, and Behaviors. *Communication Monographs*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2015.1128555>; Keen, S. (2006). A Theory of Narrative Empathy. *Narrative*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388>

³³⁰ Ecker, U. K. H., & Antonio, L. M. (2021). Can You Believe It? An Investigation into the Impact of Retraction Source Credibility on the Continued Influence Effect. *Memory & Cognition*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-020-01129-y>

³³¹ Lewandowsky et al. (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612451018>

or pragmatic methods that acknowledge the persistence of online hate and seek to minimize its harmful effects. Within this context, reducing the likelihood of harm may be a practical and necessary approach.

Increase data access, transparency, and research on online hate

Given the critical role that data and research play in developing interventions for prevention, increasing transparency, data access, and support for research are essential. Greater data access allows researchers to analyze the spread of harmful content, identify important patterns and trends, and develop evidence-based interventions.³³²

Transparency can also increase platform accountability, enabling external scrutiny of content moderation policies and their effectiveness.³³³

Studies demonstrate the benefits of increased social media data access and transparency in combating online harms. For instance, research that uses platform data access has quantified the scale and dynamics of misinformation spread, enabling researchers to identify key actors and networks responsible for its propagation.³³⁴ In fact, many of the studies cited in this review relied on data provided through data access programs with social media companies.

Transparency initiatives, such as platform-provided datasets on content removals and enforcement actions, allow for external auditing and assessments of how platforms are used.³³⁵ Such assessments provide critical information to the public. Access to platform APIs has allowed researchers to develop early warning systems for detecting and flagging emerging disinformation campaigns and hate speech outbreaks.³³⁶

To be clear, enhanced data access and transparency should be provided in a privacy-sensitive way. Data access without stringent safeguards risks exposing sensitive user data.³³⁷ Moreover, to the extent that policies related to data transparency require data retention, the benefits of

“ Greater data access allows researchers to analyze the spread of harmful content, identify important patterns and trends, and develop evidence-based interventions. ”

³³² Boyd, D., & Crawford, K. (2012). Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon. *Information, Communication & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.678878>

³³³ Suzor, N. P., West, S. M., Quodling, A., & York, J. (2019). What Do We Mean When We Talk about Transparency? Toward Meaningful Transparency in Commercial Content Moderation. *International Journal of Communication*. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/9736>

³³⁴ Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The Spread of True and False News Online. *Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559>

³³⁵ Zannettou, S., Bradlyn, B., De Cristofaro, E., Kwak, H., Sirivianos, M., Stringini, G., & Blackburn, J. (2018). What Is Gab: A Bastion of Free Speech or an Alt-Right Echo Chamber? WWW '18: Companion Proceedings of The Web Conference 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3184558.3191531>

³³⁶ Pereira-Kohatsu, J. C., Quijano-Sánchez, L., Liberatore, F., & Camacho-Collados, M. (2019). Detecting and Monitoring Hate Speech in Twitter. *Sensors*. <https://www.mdpi.com/1424-8220/19/21/4654>

³³⁷ Ohm, P. (2009). Broken Promises of Privacy: Responding to the Surprising Failure of Anonymization. *UCLA Law Review*. https://citpsite.s3.amazonaws.com/events/big-data/Ohm_Big_Data.pdf

these policies should be weighed against the risks of retaining data for longer than they would be otherwise.

Specific policies related to increased data access, transparency, and research are numerous. As described above, the challenge of such policies will be to navigate an evolving legal landscape and resistance from platforms themselves, many of which are increasingly restricting data access. These complexities aside, we propose a few possibilities. Governments could mandate access to data in a privacy-sensitive way, particularly for researchers and subject matter experts. Policies could also mandate audits of the company's actions to address harmful content. This could be paired with requirements related to data aggregation to ensure individualized data is not retained longer than it otherwise would be. Requirements could also consist of data standardization to ensure that data is available in a format conducive to understanding patterns of hate across different platforms. Government policies could also require greater transparency of algorithms to understand how specific features amplify harmful content and illuminate approaches to curbing these effects.

Outside of platform regulations, policies could consist of grants or other incentives to support research, as well as opportunities to bring research and policy experts together. During the joint Commission and UCLA convening on online hate prevention, we observed a strong appetite for building connections between scholars and policy experts to mutually inform each other's efforts.

Address content moderation and user control on online platforms

Content moderation

Research indicates that active content moderation, while complex and imperfect, is vital for curbing the spread of online hate and disinformation and fostering a healthier online environment. Specifically, platform interventions, such as removing violating content and suspending accounts, have been shown to reduce the prevalence of harmful speech. For instance, a study analyzing Reddit's ban on overtly hateful accounts found a significant decrease in hate speech originating from those users and their networks.³³⁸ Similarly, research examining Reddit's content moderation policies showed that proactive community moderation reduced hate speech within and outside the moderated communities, suggesting a broader "norm-setting" effect.³³⁹ Experiments on platforms like Facebook have shown that flagging and demoting disinformation significantly reduces user belief in, and engagement with, false news.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Chandrasekharan, E., Pavalanathan, U., Srinivasan, A., Glynn, A., Eisenstein, J., & Gilbert, E. (2017). You Can't Stay Here: The Efficacy of Reddit's 2015 Ban Examined Through Hate Speech. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3134666>

³³⁹ Ribeiro, M. H., Jhaver, S., Zannettou, S., Blackburn, J., Stringhini, G., De Cristofaro, E., & West, R. (2021). Do Platform Migrations Compromise Content Moderation? Evidence from r/The_Donald and r/Incels. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3476057>

³⁴⁰ Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). Fighting Misinformation on Social Media Using Crowdsourced Judgments of News Source Quality. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1806781116>

However, content moderation is a limited approach to hate. Studies suggest that moderation efforts often struggle to keep pace with the volume and evolving nature of harmful content. For example, research analyzing Reddit's content moderation efforts found that despite significant investment, hate speech and extremist content persisted, suggesting a "whack-a-mole" dynamic where removed content is quickly replaced.³⁴¹ Other research indicates that moderation can be somewhat easily circumvented as determined users adapt their language and tactics to evade detection, rendering moderation efforts reactive rather than preventive.³⁴²

Content moderation also poses risks. Among them, moderation systems can be biased in a way that harms groups who are most targeted by hate. Evidence suggests that algorithms and human moderators disproportionately target specific groups and viewpoints, raising concerns about partiality.³⁴³ In addition, some moderation systems may overlook the context in which specific language is shared, leading to the removal of content that is not considered hate speech. For example, a research study found that social media posts in which users shared personal experiences of racism were erroneously flagged for removal by both algorithmic and human-based content moderation systems. Experiencing this moderation exacerbated feelings of online and offline isolation. The researchers noted that these issues could be mitigated by reframing content moderation guidelines to foster increased understanding and empathy for people posting content.³⁴⁴ These findings also point to the need for significant investments in research. For example, the Measuring Hate Speech Project at University of California, Berkeley was created to develop a more nuanced approach to detecting hate speech online.³⁴⁵

User controls

Giving users greater control over their experiences on online platforms is another approach to reducing the likelihood that they will encounter hate and other harmful content. This could consist of allowing users to develop more personalized social media feeds and filter out unwanted content. There is evidence suggesting that, when users actively curate their social media experiences, they report increased satisfaction and reduced exposure to negativity.³⁴⁶ Furthermore, user-driven filtering tools can be effective in reducing exposure to specific types of unwanted content, such as hate speech, for those who actively utilize them.³⁴⁷ This suggests

³⁴¹ Ribeiro et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3476057>

³⁴² Steen, E., Yurechko, K., & Klug, D. (2023). You Can (Not) Say What You Want: Using Algospeak to Contest and Evade Algorithmic Content Moderation on TikTok. *Social Media + Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231194586>

³⁴³ Noble (2018). <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479833641.001.0001>

³⁴⁴ Lee, C., Gligorić, K., Kalluri, P. R., Harrington, M., Durmus, E., Sanchez, K. L., San, N., Tse, D., Zhao, X., Hamedani, M. G., Markus, H. R., Jurafsky, D., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2024). People Who Share Encounters with Racism Are Silenced Online by Humans and Machines, but a Guideline-Reframing Intervention Holds Promise. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2322764121>

³⁴⁵ Measuring Hate Speech. UC Berkeley. <https://hatespeech.berkeley.edu/>

³⁴⁶ Heung, S., Jiang, L., Azenkot, S., & Vashistha, A. (2025). "Ignorance Is Not Bliss": Designing Personalized Moderation to Address Ableist Hate on Social Media. *arXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2503.21844>

³⁴⁷ Beknazar-Yuzbashev, G., Jiménez-Durán, R., McCrosky, J., & Stalinski, M. (2025). Toxic Content and User Engagement on Social Media: Evidence from a Field Experiment. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5130929

benefits for motivated and digitally literate users in shaping their individual online environments.

Greater user control could also consist of features that allow users to protect themselves from other users. Users should have the right to block other users, ensuring they do not see the other users' content on their feeds or in messages. To mitigate cross-platform targeting, where a person finds and targets another person across many platforms, users should be able to control who can find and contact them on the platform. This could consist of proactively blocking phone numbers or email addresses, even before a person registers an account on the platform with that information. Such controls may be used for a number of situations, such as when a user wants to hide posts from another user who posts harmful content regularly or a user wants to set up protections from a person who attempts to find and target the user on different platforms.

Addressing hate through greater user control has drawbacks, however. Research highlights the risk of "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers" if personalized feeds reinforce existing biases and limit exposure to diverse perspectives, potentially *increasing* susceptibility to misinformation.³⁴⁸ Furthermore, relying solely on user control can place the burden of content moderation on individuals, who may lack the resources or expertise to combat sophisticated disinformation tactics or widespread hate campaigns effectively. Research also indicates that many users do not actively utilize content filtering tools, limiting the overall impact of this approach.³⁴⁹ Therefore, while user control offers individual-level benefits, as with other approaches introduced here, it is insufficient as a comprehensive solution and needs to be considered alongside other interventions.

From a policy perspective, requirements could be instituted to regulate and certify content moderation systems, including internal teams within internet companies known as "trust and safety" teams that address harmful content. Additionally, staff working on these issues could be required to have professional licenses or certifications, like many other professions in California, from teachers to attorneys. Requirements could be established for audits of a company's content moderation efforts. Policies could also establish user rights to specific features on online platforms, such as the ability to block other users. Policies could address user education, such as public awareness campaigns or dedicated programs, teaching users about the risks of platforms and how to use common features and settings to mitigate them. Beyond regulating platforms themselves, governments could establish grant programs for research and collaborations to address the limitations of these approaches. Potential research projects could include efforts to improve the science of content moderation or research on the effectiveness of specific user controls to address hate.

³⁴⁸ Pariser, E. (2011). The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web Is Changing What We Read and How We Think. <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.5555/2361740>

³⁴⁹ Merten, L. (2021). Block, Hide or Follow—Personal News Curation Practices on Social Media. Digital Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1829978>

Conclusion

A comprehensive approach to combating online hate and disinformation, integrating digital literacy, inoculation, counter-messaging, data access, content moderation, and user controls, offers synergistic benefits that likely exceed those of isolated interventions. Digital literacy training can empower users with critical thinking skills to discern and resist harmful content,³⁵⁰ while inoculation preemptively builds skills to counteract manipulation.³⁵¹ Counter-messaging actively refutes false narratives, potentially limiting their spread,³⁵² and proactive content moderation reduces the amount of harmful material on platforms.³⁵³ Data access and transparency enable researchers, watchdog groups, and other organizations to monitor and analyze online harms, fostering accountability,³⁵⁴ and user content controls provide individuals with the agency to curate their online experiences.³⁵⁵ Combining these strategies can lead to a more robust and effective online ecosystem for preventing and reducing online hate.

PUBLIC MESSAGING AS A TOOL FOR PREVENTING HATE

In the Commission's 2023-2024 Annual Report, we described the potential for evidence-based public messages to prevent prejudice and hate acts. We defined public messages as communication initiatives in public and online spaces to bring attention to a problem and attempt to intervene. Public messages include traditional media campaigns, such as posters and commercials, as well as statements on social media and public statements from officials. After reviewing over 40 research studies, we developed a set of eight interim, evidence-based guiding principles for designing and implementing public messages to maximize their potential to prevent hate.

In this section, the Commission builds on last year's findings, providing further evidence of the potential of public messages to both prevent hate and increase the safety and sense of belonging of historically marginalized groups. Throughout this section, we summarize and refine the eight guiding principles introduced in the 2023-2024 Annual Report. We also introduce additional new principles, which we group into two broad categories: principles to consider when developing the content of the message (content principles) and principles to guide implementation (implementation principles). We introduce these interim principles with the caveat that they should be considered general guidance, rather than universal recommendations. This is due to the limitations of existing research and the particularities of

³⁵⁰ Livingstone (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490280152>

³⁵¹ McGuire, W. J., & Papageorgis, D. (1961). The Relative Efficacy of Various Types of Prior Belief-Defense in Producing Immunity Against Persuasion. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0042026>

³⁵² Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C. M., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and Its Correction: Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612451018>

³⁵³ Chandrasekharan et al. (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3134666>

³⁵⁴ Boyd & Crawford (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.678878>

³⁵⁵ Jhaver, S., Zhang, A. Q., Chen, Q. Z., Natarajan, N., Wang, R., & Zhang, A. X. (2023). Personalizing Content Moderation on Social Media: User Perspectives on Moderation Choices, Interface Design, and Labor. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3610080>

local contexts. In fact, three of our principles address these points and provide guidance on tailoring public messages for specific audiences.

Content Principles

Of the eight principles introduced in the 2023-2024 report, six were approaches to designing the content of the message itself:

- Emphasize relationships across groups.
- Encourage empathy and perspective-taking.
- Highlight egalitarian values.
- Emphasize and align descriptive and injunctive norms.
- Align and combine interventions.
- Consider the messenger and the audience.

We continue to recommend these principles and summarize them throughout this review to contextualize our new principles. We also introduce new principles to consider when developing the content for a public message. However, given the number of content principles we introduce, it is likely infeasible to employ them all in a single message. Instead, these principles should be viewed as a menu of options to consider when developing content.

Our first few content principles stem from the finding that norms can be effective approaches to reducing prejudice. Social norms are shared rules and standards held by a group or community about what behaviors are common and appropriate in a given setting.³⁵⁶ Over the course of decades, research has demonstrated that social norms have a strong influence on thought and behavior.³⁵⁷ In a given situation, a person’s thoughts and behaviors are strongly guided by their

“ Raising awareness of social norms against hate may be a particularly effective strategy for preventing hate.

perception of what behaviors are common and appropriate in that setting – that is, by whatever social norms are salient.³⁵⁸ Within the research on prejudice, one formative study showed that people’s reported levels of prejudice toward a given group were strongly correlated with community norms of how acceptable it was to hold prejudice against that group.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Cialdini, R. B., Kallgren, C. A., Reno, R. R. (1991). A Focus Theory of Normative Conduct: A Theoretical Refinement and Reevaluation of the Role of Norms in Human Behavior. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60330-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60330-5)

³⁵⁷ Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T); Bem, D. (1970). Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs.

<https://archive.org/details/beliefsattitudes00bemd/page/76/mode/2up>; Pepitone, A. (1976). Toward a Normative and Comparative Biocultural Social Psychology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.34.4.641>

³⁵⁸ Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno (1991). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60330-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60330-5)

³⁵⁹ Crandall, C. S., Eshleman, A., & O’Brien, L. (2002). Social Norms and the Expression and Suppression of Prejudice: The Struggle for Internalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.3.359>

This research suggests that raising awareness of social norms against hate may be a particularly effective strategy for preventing hate. The first few principles consist of potential approaches to highlighting social norms in public messages designed to prevent and reduce hate. Following the norm-based principles, we identify additional evidence-based approaches to designing public messages.

Convey the prevalence and growth of positive norms

Providing statistics or other types of information about the high prevalence of people who support (or oppose) a given behavior is one way to convey a social norm. In the case of anti-hate messaging, this could consist of highlighting the high number of people who support inclusion or hold values counter to hate. For example, in one recent study, researchers found that participants vastly underestimated the support for diversity and inclusion within the U.S. population.³⁶⁰ After the researchers provided factual information to the study participants about the high levels of support for diversity and inclusion in the United States, the participants expressed more support for diversity and inclusion and stronger intentions to confront discrimination. The effect held both for people who voted for Donald Trump and for Joe Biden in the 2020 election. The findings suggest that the information had this effect because it corrected misperceptions about opposition to diversity and inclusion.

Misperceptions about the prevalence of anti-hate norms may be quite common. Researchers have found that, across a number of contexts, people tend to overestimate the prevalence of generally harmful and negative behaviors and underestimate the

prevalence of positive, healthy behaviors in their communities.³⁶¹ In the case of hate, hateful actions of a very small minority of people can often receive considerable public attention, which may lead to fear and a perception that hate acts are much more common than they are. For

example, research has found that frequently viewing violent media content can lead people to experience increased fear, pessimism, and beliefs that the world is more dangerous than it actually is.³⁶² Thus, public messages that seek to counter these perceptions with factually correct information may be quite impactful.

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Across a number of contexts, people tend to overestimate the prevalence of generally harmful and negative behaviors and underestimate the prevalence of positive, healthy behaviors in their communities.
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³⁶⁰ Isenberg, N., & Brauer, M. (2024). Diversity and Inclusion Have Greater Support Than Most Americans Think. *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-76761-8>

³⁶¹ Prentice, D. A., & Miller, D. T. (1993). Pluralistic Ignorance and Alcohol Use on Campus: Some Consequences of Misperceiving the Social Norm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.2.243>; Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., Griskevicius, V. (2007). The Constructive, Destructive, and Reconstructive Power of Social Norms. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01917.x>

³⁶² Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1986). Living with Television: The Dynamics of the Cultivation Process. *Perspectives on Media Effects*. http://wiki.commres.org/pds/CultivationTheory/LivingWithTelevision_TheDynamicsoftheCultivationProcess.pdf

To be clear, we do not intend to diminish the emotional distress that individuals and communities feel in response to hate itself. In fact, as discussed below, effective messages should consider acknowledging and validating the experiences of people who are impacted by hate and prejudice. Instead, we suggest it is important to highlight positive social norms to provide a counternarrative to the highly publicized acts of hate. Most people interact with each other peacefully on a day-to-day basis and most likely overwhelmingly support inclusion and oppose hate. Prevention-oriented public messages could highlight these points to promote norms of inclusion and peaceful interactions.

Changing norms may also be important to highlight. One study showed that framing equal pay between men and women as a growing priority among human resources professionals increased people's reported salary offers to women compared to not providing information about the norm.³⁶³ One strength of emphasizing changes in norms over the prevalence of norms is that it can avoid the possibility that people will infer that an important goal has already been accomplished. For example, a message stating that over 60% of people support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies may lead someone reading that message to assume the goal of gaining majority support for DEI policies has already been accomplished and that further action is unnecessary. Highlighting *changes* in norms can counteract this possibility by framing the change as evidence of an ongoing effort that benefits from sustained contributions. Applying these ideas to an anti-hate message, if increasing numbers of people are supportive of inclusivity and diversity, this could be highlighted. A message could also highlight trends toward combating hate by explaining the additional investments the State of California has made in recent years in anti-hate efforts, such as CA vs Hate, the Stop the Hate grant program, and the Ethnic Media Grant Outreach Program. As another example, a message could state, "The movement to stop hate is growing in California. In the fight to create a California free from hate, more than ever, people are coming together to support each other and protect our communities from hate and prejudice."

Align descriptive and injunctive norms

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, the Commission reviewed evidence pointing to the importance of aligning descriptive and injunctive norms. This continues to be an important guiding principle. To contextualize the additional principles introduced in this year's report, we review our previous findings here. For additional details, refer to the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Descriptive norms refer to perceptions of what behaviors are common (or uncommon) in a given social context. Injunctive norms refer to people's perceptions of what behaviors are acceptable and should (or should not) be done. For example, a person may be influenced to wear a face mask if they observe everyone else in their environment wearing one (descriptive norm) or if they think most people in their environment believe that people should wear masks

³⁶³ Schuster, C., Sparkman, G., Walton, G. M., Alles, A., & Loschelder, D. D. (2023). Egalitarian Norm Messaging Increases Human Resources Professionals' Salary Offers to Women. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001033>

(injunctive norm). Although both types of norms can guide behaviors, researchers generally find injunctive norms are more influential than descriptive norms.³⁶⁴

One risk of emphasizing descriptive norms of negative attitudes and behaviors is that this may frame them as normative, implicitly encouraging them. For example, anti-tobacco campaigns that emphasize the prevalence of smoking may signal that smoking is normative and socially acceptable. Public messaging campaigns about hate may include descriptive norm information about how frequently hate incidents occur (for example, “One in four Asian Americans have reported experiencing a hate incident”). Emphasizing the frequency with which hate occurs can serve important purposes, such as education and mobilizing support for policy changes. Although these are important goals, such a framing in a widespread public messaging campaign could undercut the goal of preventing hate by suggesting that hate is a normative experience, and perhaps tacitly tolerated by society.

In our 2023-2024 Annual Report, we explained that public messages that use norms should consider aligning injunctive norms (what society, or a given community, approves or disapproves of) with positive descriptive norm information (what desirable behaviors are commonly done, or how infrequently undesirable behaviors are done). For example, a campaign to reduce hate incidents could state “95% of California residents value an inclusive California and support creating a California free of hate. Because Californians do not tolerate hateful interactions, California has implemented a resource line to report hate when it occurs and connect victims of hate to resources.”

Emphasize norms with institutional support

One method by which people infer prevailing social norms is through signals sent by institutions, such as policies or decisions they make.³⁶⁵ These signals include laws, court decisions, and statements from leaders. For instance, one study demonstrated that learning about the Supreme Court ruling in favor of marriage for same-sex couples in 2015 shifted perceptions of social norms about the issue.³⁶⁶ That is, the ruling resulted in a perception that U.S. society had shifted to be more accepting of marriage for same-sex couples. There is also suggestive evidence that the ruling may have also increased personal support for marriage equality and led to more positive feelings toward people who are lesbian and gay.

This research suggests that the actions of an institution send a signal that can influence perceptions of social norms. For instance, when a large institution, like the State of California, makes a policy, law, or decision to support diverse communities, it can be interpreted as a signal of what public sentiment in the state must be and potentially shape behavior accordingly. Public

³⁶⁴ Cialdini, R. B., Demaine, L. J., Sagarin, B. J., Barrett, D. W., Rhoads, K., & Winter, P. L. (2006). Managing Social Norms for Persuasive Impact. *Social Influence*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510500181459>; Rhodes, N., Shulman, H. C., & McClaran, N. (2020). Changing Norms: A Meta-Analytic Integration of Research on Social Norms Appeals. *Human Communication Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqz023>

³⁶⁵ Bem (1970). <https://archive.org/details/beliefsattitudes00bem/page/76/mode/2up>

³⁶⁶ Tankard, M. E., & Paluck, E. L. (2017). The Effect of a Supreme Court Decision Regarding Gay Marriage on Social Norms and Personal Attitudes. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617709594>

messages to combat hate could leverage this idea by promoting the State’s anti-hate efforts, ranging from investments in anti-hate programs to resolutions that condemn hate. Doing so could potentially send signals of what behaviors are common, accepted, and appropriate among most Californians.

Frame norms as working together

Recent research has demonstrated that norm-based messages are more effective when framed as an invitation to work with others toward a common goal. A series of studies found that pairing descriptive norms with invitations to “join in” and “do it together” significantly increased people’s charitable giving and pro-environmental behaviors more than messages that simply presented statistics about the rates of these behaviors.³⁶⁷

Invitations to work with others toward a common goal can be more inviting than norms that tell people how they “should” act, which can threaten a person’s sense of autonomy because they are perceived as social pressure to conform and can lead to resistance to considering the message.³⁶⁸ One reason for the effectiveness of messages that encourage working together toward a goal is that they appeal to a fundamental need to affiliate with others.³⁶⁹ Additionally, there is a tendency to be more motivated by goals that are shared and involve working with others versus goals that are worked toward alone.³⁷⁰

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Invitations to work with others toward a common goal can be more inviting than norms that tell people how they “should” act.
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Frame action as helping others

Research has shown that helping others can be a powerful motivator of behavior.³⁷¹ Specifically, framing behaviors in terms of how they can help others is more encouraging than simply describing the personal benefit of a behavior. For example, one study demonstrated that people are more motivated to take preventative health measures when the behaviors are construed as

³⁶⁷ Howe, L. C., Carr, P. B., & Walton, G. M. (2021). Normative Appeals Motivate People to Contribute to Collective Action Problems More When They Invite People to Work Together Toward a Common Goal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000278>

³⁶⁸ Kang, G. W., Piao, Z., & Ko, J. Y. (2021). Descriptive or Injunctive: How Do Restaurant Customers React to the Guidelines of COVID-19 Prevention Measures? The Role of Psychological Reactance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102934>; Kavvouris, C., Chrysochou, P., & Thøgersen, J. (2020). “Be Careful What You Say”: The Role of Psychological Reactance on the Impact of Pro-Environmental Normative Appeals. *Journal of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.10.018>

³⁶⁹ Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497>

³⁷⁰ Carr, P. B., & Walton, G. M. (2014). Cues of Working Together Fuel Intrinsic Motivation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.03.015>

³⁷¹ Yeager, D. S., Henderson, M. D., Paunesku, D., Walton, G. M., D’Mello, S., Spitzer, B. J., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). Boring but Important: A Self-Transcendent Purpose for Learning Fosters Academic Self-Regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037637>

“ Framing behaviors in terms of how they can help others is more encouraging than simply describing the personal benefit of a behavior.

helping others rather than protecting oneself.³⁷² Similarly, students show more sustained efforts in school when they think about education as a way to help others than when they only think about the personal benefits of education.³⁷³

Anti-hate public messages may be more effective when they draw on this motivation and remind the audience of how specific anti-hate actions could help

others. For example, messages could emphasize the importance of reporting hate by describing it as a collective responsibility that benefits others. Alternatively, a message could encourage confronting hate when people see it, explaining how doing so helps the person targeted and entire communities by decreasing the likelihood that hate will happen again.

Highlight relationships across group lines

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, we introduced the following principle: “Emphasize relationships across groups.” Below we review our previous findings and introduce new evidence that speaks to the potential effectiveness of this principle. We focus on two approaches: (1) highlighting relationships and friendships across group lines, and (2) highlighting commonalities between groups.

As explained in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, there is evidence that simply learning or knowing about relationships between one’s own group and another group can reduce prejudice toward the other group and enhance positive feelings toward that group.³⁷⁴ This type of intervention is known as extended contact. One study found that extended contact could reduce prejudice to the same degree as direct friendships.³⁷⁵

There are several reasons why extended contact reduces prejudice. One reason is that it helps people overcome anxiety about being friends with a person in a different group, which leads to avoidance of that group. It is well documented in social psychological research that people can experience anxiety about interacting with members of other groups, particularly when it comes

³⁷² Grant, A. M., & Hofmann, D. A. (2011). It’s Not All About Me: Motivating Hospital Hand Hygiene by Focusing on Patients. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611419172>

³⁷³ Yeager et al. (2014). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037637>

³⁷⁴ Cameron, L., Rutland, A., & Brown, R. (2007). Promoting Children’s Positive Intergroup Attitudes Towards Stigmatized Groups: Extended Contact and Multiple Classification Skills Training. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025407081474>; Paluck, E. L., Porat, R., Clark, C. S., Green, D. P. (2021). Prejudice Reduction: Progress and Challenges. *Annual Review of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>; Wright, S. C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., Ropp, S. A. (1997). The Extended Contact Effect: Knowledge of Cross-Group Friendships and Prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.73>

³⁷⁵ Zhou, S., Page-Gould, E., Aron, A., Moyer, A., & Hewstone, M. (2019). The Extended Contact Hypothesis: A Meta-Analysis on 20 Years of Research. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868318762647>

to interracial and inter-ethnic social interactions.³⁷⁶ This can be due, in part, to a lack of experience with these relationships. However, knowing that a member of one's own group has positive interactions with people from another group suggests that positive intergroup interactions can and do happen. Anxiety about interacting with members of another group also arises because, in some cases, people assume people from another group are uninterested or not open to relationships with people like themselves.³⁷⁷ Learning about relationships between one's group and the other group can modify these assumptions.

Observing relationships across group lines also decreases prejudice and avoidance because it presents a role model who can suggest that cross-group relationships are the norm. Similarly, observing how these relationships can be positive can counteract negative assumptions and stereotypes that people may have about other groups. Taken together, these processes of learning through observation can reduce people's anxiety about, avoidance of, and biases against people from other groups.³⁷⁸

Illustrating these points, in one set of studies, researchers showed white college students a video of a pair of friends, one of whom was white and the other was Black, and described how the two friends had low expectations about their friendship at the beginning. Students were then asked to write about a time they formed an unexpected friendship of their own. The study found that, after seeing the video and conducting the writing exercise, students had higher expectations for how well an upcoming interracial interaction would go, displayed less nervousness during the interaction, and formed a larger number of interracial friendships over the next two weeks.³⁷⁹

Highlight commonalities between groups

There is evidence that public messages have the potential to reduce prejudice between groups by emphasizing shared commonalities across groups, such as shared morals, values, and experiences.³⁸⁰ In a set of studies conducted in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina,

³⁷⁶ Sanchez, K. L., Kalkstein, D. A., & Walton, G. M. (2022). A Threatening Opportunity: The Prospect of Conversations About Race-Related Experiences Between Black and White Friends. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000369>; Plant, E. A., & Devine, P. G. (2003). The Antecedents and Implications of Interracial Anxiety. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203029006011>; Shelton, J. N., & Richeson, J. A. (2005). Intergroup Contact and Pluralistic Ignorance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.1.91>; Goff, P. A., Steele, C. M., & Davies, P. G. (2008). The Space Between Us: Stereotype Threat and Distance in Interracial Contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.1.91>; Trawalter, S. & Richeson, J. A. (2008). Let's Talk About Race, Baby! When Whites' and Blacks' Interracial Contact Experiences Diverge. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.03.013>

³⁷⁷ For example, see Shelton & Richeson (2005). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.1.91>

³⁷⁸ Wright et al. (1997). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.73>

³⁷⁹ Mallet, R. K., & Wilson, T. D. (2010). Increasing Positive Intergroup Contact. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.11.006>

³⁸⁰ Čehajić-Clancy, S., Janković, A., Opačin, N., & Bilewicz, M. (2023). The Process of Becoming 'We' in an Intergroup Conflict Context: How Enhancing Intergroup Moral Similarities Leads to Common-Ingroup Identity. *British Journal of*

researchers found that highlighting shared moral values of care and empathy across the groups that were previously in conflict increased warmth toward, and willingness to interact with, members of the other group.³⁸¹ These studies also provided support for the extended contact hypothesis: Shared moral values were portrayed through a story of a person from the other group coming to the aid of someone from the research participant's own group. Hearing this story increased people's identification with a common identity that encompassed both groups and their willingness to connect with people from the other group.³⁸²

An example of an approach that emphasized shared commonalities between groups is a short video produced by Asian Health Services in partnership with Asian Pacific Environmental Network and the Oakland Chinatown Coalition.³⁸³ The video documented a group of Chinese seniors who participated in a program developed in response to violence in Oakland's Chinatown. The group learned about the experiences and histories of different communities in the Bay Area. For instance, they learned about the history of San Francisco's Chinatown, as well as the historical significance of West Oakland and the Black Panther Party's work to provide community support and social programs. The video illustrates how education about shared histories and experiences can promote positive intergroup relationships, allyship, and coalitions across different communities to support each other in addressing safety and resisting hate.

Social Psychology. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12632>; Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2000). Reducing Intergroup Bias. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315804576>; Pinel, E. C., & Long, A. E. (2012). When I's Meet: Sharing Subjective Experience with Someone from the Outgroup. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211433878>; Pinel, E. C., Long, A. E., Johnson, L. C., & Yawger, G. C. (2018). More About When I's Meet: The Intergroup Ramifications of I-Sharing, Part II. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167218771901>

³⁸¹ Janković, A., & Čehajić-Clancy, S. (2021). The Power of the Media on Peace and Reconciliation Processes: Representing Former Enemy Groups as Moral Versus Immoral Matters. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18344909211002561>; Čehajić-Clancy et al. (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12632>

³⁸² Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12632>

³⁸³ The video is available via the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUfG2y45ZKU>

Screenshots from a video in which Chinese seniors toured West Oakland and San Francisco's Chinatown to learn about shared histories between communities



Source: Asian Health Services, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUfG2y45ZKU>

Another approach to emphasizing commonalities between groups is to describe how shared broad identities, such as being a Californian or a Dodgers fan, encompass multiple different groups. For example, a public messaging strategy could define Californian through its diversity, by stating “This is what it means to be a Californian,” and describing the many, diverse

communities who reside in the state. Such a message could reduce the bias that often occurs when people view a group as distinct and separate from one's own. It may also catalyze the positive feelings people often feel toward people who they view as part of their own group.³⁸⁴

A study in Canada tested an idea similar to this. It asked students to read an editorial highlighting a common national identity across all Canadians that included both migrants and Canadian-born citizens. It highlighted shared historical roots and experiences between these groups, explaining that many Canadian-born citizens were also descendants of migrants. After reading the editorial, students' attitudes toward immigration and people who migrate were more positive.³⁸⁵ In addition to state and national identities, other common identities could be emphasized such as "Dodgers fan," "musician," and "Chevy owner."

Importantly, emphasizing a broader shared identity does not require neglecting or downplaying other identities. It is possible for people to hold many important identities simultaneously. Public messages that emphasize a shared identity can also emphasize that multiple important identities exist within the common shared identity. However, designers of public messages should be alert to other factors, including how groups may feel when characterized as part of a larger shared identity and whether a message of common unity downplays important power and status imbalances between groups. These considerations could be navigated with research and partnerships with communities, which we discuss as implementation principles below.

Encourage empathy and perspective-taking

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, we introduced the principle "Encourage empathy and perspective-taking." In this year's report, we continue to recommend this principle. In this section, we summarize our previous findings. For additional details, see the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Researchers have observed that thoughtful perspective-taking exercises can reduce prejudice. Taking the time to imagine oneself in the position of a person in another group can reduce perceived divisions between groups, resulting in more favorable attitudes toward both the imagined person and that person's group.³⁸⁶ Thoughtful perspective-taking can be done in a number of ways, such as writing an essay about a specific group or immersing oneself in another person's experiences through media or virtual reality.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Gaertner & Dovidio (2000). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315804576>

³⁸⁵ Esses, V. M., Dovidio, J. F., Jackson, L. M., & Armstrong, T. L. (2001). The Immigration Dilemma: The Role of Perceived Group Competition, Ethnic Prejudice, and National Identity. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00220>

³⁸⁶ Galinsky, A. D., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2000). Perspective-Taking: Decreasing Stereotype Expression, Stereotype Accessibility, and In-Group Favoritism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.78.4.708>

³⁸⁷ Paluck et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>

In one groundbreaking study, researchers sent canvassers to talk to nearly 7,000 voters across the United States.³⁸⁸ The researchers compared how perspective-taking conversations can influence prejudice against transgender and undocumented people, relative to conversations where voters simply heard arguments against prejudice toward these groups.³⁸⁹ Conversations in which a voter simply heard arguments against these prejudices had no effect. When voters engaged in a 10-minute perspective-taking exercise, their prejudice against undocumented and transgender people was significantly reduced. In a four-month follow-up survey, the effects remained.

Implementing a thoughtful perspective-taking exercise through a public messaging campaign may be challenging, as the effectiveness of this approach may depend on deep engagement and reflection. Nevertheless, the strong evidence of the long-term effectiveness of this approach suggests it is worth exploring for interventions to reduce hate. For example, a public messaging strategy that encourages people to consider the experiences of certain groups may be more effective than a messaging campaign that simply presents arguments against prejudice. Moreover, as we discuss later, immersive mediums, such as television shows and other forms of entertainment, may be effective vehicles for reducing prejudice. It is conceivable that a television show or a commercial about a group's experiences could result in viewers taking the perspective of that group and could inspire the type of reflection and engagement that facilitates effective perspective-taking.

Emphasize potential for growth

People's perceptions of whether their own prejudices can be reduced might influence their motivation to engage in efforts to reduce their own prejudices. This idea comes out of psychological research on mindsets, which focuses on two types of mindsets that people can hold about personal attributes: a growth mindset and a fixed mindset.³⁹⁰ A growth mindset refers to the belief that a trait someone has – like prejudice – is malleable and can change over time, such as with practice and effort. A fixed mindset refers to the belief that a given attribute cannot be changed. Research has shown that when people have a growth mindset about a particular trait, they tend to focus more on learning and improving that trait.

Several studies demonstrate that when people approach prejudice with a growth mindset (that is, they believe it is malleable and changeable with effort), they display less anxiety and more interest in interracial interactions than when people have a fixed mindset about prejudice. In

³⁸⁸ Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2020). Reducing Exclusionary Attitudes Through Interpersonal Conversation: Evidence from Three Field Experiments. *American Political Science Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541900923>

³⁸⁹ The perspective-taking exercise consisted of asking voters to talk about a time when they were judged negatively for being different. They were then encouraged to see how their own experience might allow them to understand the experiences of transgender and undocumented people.

³⁹⁰ Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (1988). A Social-Cognitive Approach to Motivation and Personality. *Psychological Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.95.2.256>; Chiu, C.-y., Hong, Y.-y., & Dweck, C. S. (1997). Lay Dispositionism and Implicit Theories of Personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.19>

one study, white participants who were taught that one’s level of prejudice is changeable were less anxious and were more friendly toward a person who was Black than white participants who were taught that prejudice was fixed.³⁹¹ Similarly, another study found that framing an interracial conversation as an opportunity for reducing future anxiety in cross-race interactions appeared to reduce bias and increased white participants’ willingness to engage in cross-race social interactions.³⁹² A study with children showed similar effects. Children were asked to read either a story that described prejudice as something that can be changed (for example, stating “with enough effort, even prejudice deep down can be erased”) or as something that is fixed. Reading a story that emphasized the changeability of prejudice resulted in more friendly behaviors in an interracial interaction and increased interest in future cross-race interactions compared to reading a story that focused on the intractability of prejudice.³⁹³ Importantly, these researchers found that these effects held for both white children and children of color.

Example of fixed and malleable framings of prejudice

Fixed Condition

“Before we get to work, let’s discuss what the story should be about,” suggested Ms. Miller. “I have an idea!” Billy exclaimed. “I think the story should show how the Civil Rights Movement taught us that we can change laws to stop unfair treatment based on race, even if we can’t change people’s prejudiced attitudes. Prejudice is just like any other attitude, and attitudes rarely change. Prejudice is permanent because after it develops, it usually does not change. In the play, we can show how the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement courageously helped to pass laws that would give equal rights to all people, even though people’s prejudice continued.”

Malleable Condition

“Before we get to work, let’s discuss what the story should be about,” suggested Ms. Miller. “I have an idea!” Billy exclaimed. “I think the story should show how the Civil Rights Movement taught us that prejudiced attitudes can change. Prejudice is just like any other attitude, and attitudes change all the time. Prejudice is not permanent, because even after it develops, it can be changed. In the play, we can show how the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement courageously helped people get rid of their prejudice.”

Source: Pauker et al. (2021)

³⁹¹ Carr, P. B., Dweck, C. S., & Pauker, K. (2012). “Prejudiced” Behavior Without Prejudice? Beliefs About the Malleability of Prejudice Affect Interracial Interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028849>

³⁹² Schultz, J. R., Gaither, S. E., Urry, H. L., & Maddox, K. B. (2015). Reframing Anxiety to Encourage Interracial Interactions. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000048>

³⁹³ Pauker, K., Apfelbaum, E. P., Dweck, C. S., Eberhardt, J. L. (2022). Believing That Prejudice Can Change Increases Children’s Interest in Interracial Interactions. *Developmental Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13233>

Beyond influencing people’s interest and behavior in intergroup interactions, mindsets can influence people’s responses to acts of prejudice they observe. One set of studies found that people who believed prejudice was malleable reported being more likely to confront an individual about making a prejudiced statement than people who believed prejudice was fixed.³⁹⁴

As a prejudice-reduction strategy, growth-oriented framings of prejudice are different than framings that describe individuals as being innately prejudiced. Labeling people – including perpetrators of hate acts – in terms of innate personality traits implies that individual bias and prejudice is immutable and unchangeable. This risks preventing people from learning and expending effort to address their own biases. Furthermore, it risks depriving people who have said or done things out of bias or prejudice of a path to redemption and movement away from past prejudices.

Instead of exclusively trying to change individuals’ prejudicial attitudes, messages that seek to promote growth mindsets around prejudice may be an alternative and particularly effective way to counter racist behavior.³⁹⁵ Such messaging could emphasize themes of progress and individual growth toward inclusivity. For example, messages targeted at perpetrators of hate could state “Whatever you have or have not done in the past, what you do going forward matters” or “It’s never too late to start helping others.”

Tailor the message to audience identities and values

Public messages to reduce hate and prejudice will likely be more effective when they resonate with the audience’s values and identities. This principle stems from the finding that people tend to be motivated to hold beliefs and behave in ways that are consistent with their identities and values.³⁹⁶ Practically, this means that, when crafting public messages, it is important to consider and understand the audience of the message, including what personal and social identities are important to them and their values. This requires careful consideration of who the target audience is and intentional efforts to understand the audience, such as through research, pilot testing, and/or partnering with community-based organizations. We discuss these approaches in later sections. In this section, we review evidence of the importance of an audience’s identities and values when receiving messages.

Create connections between the message and important identities. Public messaging campaigns should consider how the message connects with their intended audience’s valued identities. Research shows that people are more likely to endorse a given value or behave in a

³⁹⁴ Rattan, A., & Dweck, C. S. (2010). Who Confronts Prejudice? The Role of Implicit Theories in the Motivation to Confront Prejudice. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610374740>

³⁹⁵ Tai, C., & Pauker, K. (2021). Growing Racial Resilience: The Impact of Mindsets on the Development of Prejudice. *Human Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000519632>

³⁹⁶ Festinger, L., Riecken, H. W., & Schachter, S. (1956). When Prophecy Fails. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10030-000>; Oyserman, D. (2009). Identity-Based Motivation: Implications for Action-Readiness, Procedural-Readiness, and Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.008>

certain way when it is understood as a way to enact an important personal identity.³⁹⁷ For example, in one study in the Netherlands, researchers found that students with a strong Dutch identity significantly increased support for Muslim rights after receiving messages about the history in the Netherlands of valuing religious tolerance.³⁹⁸

It is important to note that identities are complex. People often hold many valued identities at once. These identities range from racial/ethnic, religious, regional, or relational (for example, mother, uncle) to social identities like L.A. Dodgers fan or a fan of a music group. Identities are also intersectional. In fact, a person's most valued identity may be the unique combination of different aspects of their identity. Public messages may resonate most when they connect with identities that are particularly important, valued, and top of mind for the audience of the message.³⁹⁹ However, given the complexities of identity, it is critically important to deeply understand one's audience and what identities are valued and relevant. The identities that are top of mind for people when processing a given message will influence how it is received.⁴⁰⁰

To illustrate, a public messaging campaign could appeal to people who strongly identify as Californians by describing California's commitment to diversity and equality. Alternatively, a campaign could appeal to other types of identities such as being a patriot, a parent, a trade worker, and so on. Messages could also be targeted based on activities or interests, such as sports or music. For example, a campaign in partnership with the L.A. Dodgers could highlight the Dodgers' historical commitment to racial equality as the first Major League team to integrate across racial lines. Ads run during televised games and banners displayed at the game could emphasize teams' and fans' commitments to inclusion and egalitarianism. Alternatively, a broader campaign could be developed that contains a variety of messages, each of which is adapted to speak to the identities of different groups.

Create connections between the message and important values. Research consistently shows that messages that connect to the core values of the audience are more effective than those that do not.⁴⁰¹ Though ostensibly intuitive, this principle points to novel approaches to framing various issues. For example, one study with eighth grade students found that a message that framed healthy eating as asserting autonomy and supporting social justice led to healthier dietary decisions.⁴⁰² This message was effective because it aligned healthy eating with two

³⁹⁷ Lewis, N. A., & Oyserman, D. (2016). Using Identity-Based Motivation to Improve the Nation's Health Without Breaking the Bank. *Behavioral Science & Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2379461516002002>

³⁹⁸ Smeekes, A., Verkuyten, M., & Poppe, E. (2012). How a Tolerant Past Affects the Present: Historical Tolerance and the Acceptance of Muslim Expressive Rights. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212450920>; In this study, "Muslim rights" refers to the rights among Muslim people to publicly express their identities through practices such as celebrating Islamic holidays and wearing headscarves in public.

³⁹⁹ Lewis & Oyserman (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2379461516002002>

⁴⁰⁰ Oyserman (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.008>

⁴⁰¹ Feinberg, M. & Willer, R. (2019). Moral Reframing: A Technique for Effective and Persuasive Communication Across Political Divides. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12501>

⁴⁰² Bryan, C. J., Yeager, D. S., Hinojosa, C. P., Chabot, A., Bergen, H., Kawamura, M., & Steubing, F. (2016). Harnessing Adolescent Values to Motivate Healthier Eating. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1604586113>

values that typically become prominent for children during adolescence – autonomy and social justice.

In a study among Canadian college students, researchers framed informational materials about reducing prejudice to reflect values of autonomy and personal choice. Students who viewed the materials reported less prejudice and a greater motivation to not display prejudice than students who viewed materials that framed reducing prejudice as an important obligation, which was viewed as controlling and pressuring.⁴⁰³ These results occurred because autonomy and personal choice were core values commonly held by the participants in the study.⁴⁰⁴ Importantly, when students perceived the information advocating for prejudice reduction as controlling, the materials backfired. These students actually expressed more prejudice than students who received no information about prejudice reduction at all. A separate study showed that describing how a social welfare policy (universal basic income) supports personal freedom for Americans increased support for the policy among people who hold liberty as a core value. It also reduced their biases toward the beneficiaries of the policy.⁴⁰⁵

When developing a message relevant to the values of an audience, it is important to understand that different cultures may emphasize different core values.⁴⁰⁶ For example, a large body of research has argued that while the values of autonomy and independence are more widespread and commonly held in some regions of the world, community, interdependence, and fulfilling social responsibilities are core values that are held more broadly in other regions.⁴⁰⁷ At the same time, these are generalizations and not meant to be absolute descriptors of every individual within each group. Rather, they highlight the observation that different regions and cultures can vary in their emphasis of particular core values.

As illustrated by the examples above, drawing connections between an anti-hate message and an audience's values can impact their receptiveness to the message. For example, a message that states "standing up to hate is a choice" may be more motivating for audiences who particularly value autonomy and agency, such as adolescents or people strongly identified with values of independence.

⁴⁰³ Legault, L., Gutsell, J. N., Inzlicht, M. (2011). Ironic Effects of Antiprejudice Messages: How Motivational Interventions Can Reduce (but Also Increase) Prejudice. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611427918>

⁴⁰⁴ Kim, H. S., & Sherman, D. K. (2007). "Express Yourself": Culture and the Effect of Self-Expression on Choice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.1>

⁴⁰⁵ Thomas, C. C., Walton, G. M., Reinhart, E. C., Markus, H. R. (2023). Mitigating Welfare-Related Prejudice and Partisanship Among U.S. Conservatives with Moral Reframing of a Universal Basic Income Policy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104424>

⁴⁰⁶ Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015141>

⁴⁰⁷ Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2003). Models of Agency: Sociocultural Diversity in the Construction of Action. *Cross-Cultural Differences in Perspectives on the Self*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2003-88416-001>

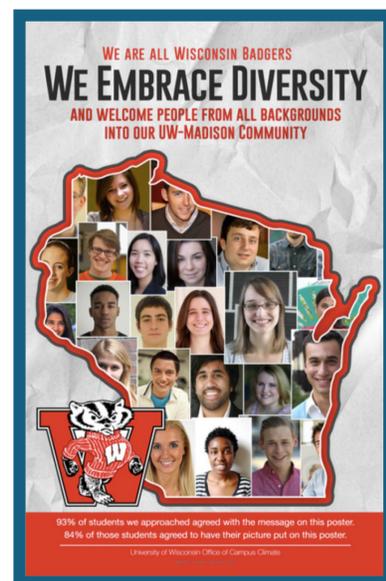
Align and combine approaches

To increase their impact, messages can draw on many of these principles simultaneously. For example, one study on a college campus employed many of these principles in a set of interventions, finding strong effects on prejudice reduction and student belonging. As discussed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, this study consisted of showing students posters and videos emphasizing social norms related to embracing diversity.⁴⁰⁸ These posters and videos included statistics demonstrating that nearly all students at the school agreed with the pro-diversity messages. Some of the materials also validated the experiences of students who experienced discrimination by acknowledging that discriminatory behaviors do occur. Specifically, the video stated that acts of bigotry occur on campus and that, although most students hold pro-diversity attitudes and try to behave inclusively, this does not imply that students from marginalized groups are no longer the target of discrimination. Both the posters and the videos also functioned as institutional signals, featuring official university logos, students and faculty, and statements made on behalf of the university.

The researchers found that students who viewed the pro-diversity videos and posters reported more pro-diversity and inclusive attitudes than students who did not. Students from ethnic and religious minority backgrounds also benefited, reporting an increased sense of belonging, better treatment from their peers, and higher grades.

This study provides powerful evidence of the potential for public messages to draw on many of these principles to boost inclusivity and reduce hate-based beliefs and behaviors. Moreover, the researchers suggest that consistent, university-wide messaging – via emails from leaders, campus posters, and teacher communications affirming diversity – could amplify these effects. The study also demonstrated an important nuance of such messages: The message explained the prevalence of inclusionary behaviors and attitudes on campus while also validating the experiences of students who experienced discrimination.

Example of a pro-diversity poster to increase inclusion



Source: Murrar et al., 2020

⁴⁰⁸ Murrar, S., Campbell, M. R., & Brauer, M. (2020). Exposure to Peers' Pro-Diversity Attitudes Increases Inclusion and Reduces the Achievement Gap. *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0899-5>

Simplify the message and call to action

Collectively, the numerous principles introduced here should be considered a menu of approaches to consider when designing a message to reduce hate. Effective public messages will likely not draw on all principles. In fact, messages should be relatively simple to facilitate easy cognitive processing. Classic psychological research has argued that people have tendencies to conserve mental resources whenever possible.⁴⁰⁹ Because we have limited cognitive and attentional resources, we tend to take processing shortcuts whenever available. For example, when tired or distracted, people tend to rely on quick and simple information processing strategies.⁴¹⁰ Given that people may process public messages in distracted states of mind, the most effective messages should be simple. For messages with a call to action, ideally it is a single simple behavior. Providing people with too many options can lead to choice overload, which can lead to disengagement from the message altogether.⁴¹¹

Implementation Principles

Beyond the design of the message itself, it is important to consider other aspects of implementation. In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, we introduced two guiding principles related to implementing public messages to reduce hate:

- Provide a group-based context for processing messages.
- Employ narratives, stories, and entertainment.

We review these principles below and introduce three new evidence-based principles to consider when implementing public messages.

Provide a group-based context for processing messages

As discussed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, receiving norm-based messages with others in a group setting may enhance their effectiveness. People tend to process information more deeply, and messages are often more persuasive, when processed with others in group contexts.⁴¹²

Researchers argue that broad public messaging campaigns are most successful when they create “common knowledge” of values and norms that are shared by members of the community.⁴¹³ Such common knowledge can be created through campaigns like major media events or public assemblies and forums, especially in settings where people listening to a message believe that others are also listening to it at the same time. For instance, a public

⁴⁰⁹ Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). Social Cognition. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1991-97723-000>

⁴¹⁰ Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego Depletion: Is the Active Self a Limited Resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.5.1252>

⁴¹¹ Vohs K. D., Baumeister R. F., Schmeichel B. J., Twenge J. M., Nelson N. M., Tice D. M. (2008). Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control: A Limited Resource Account of Decision Making, Self-Regulation, and Active Initiative. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.5.883>

⁴¹² Shteynberg, G. (2018). A Collective Perspective: Shared Attention and the Mind. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.12.007>

⁴¹³ Paluck, E. L., & Chwe, M. S. (2017). Confronting Hate Collectively. *Profession Symposium: Political Science & Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517001123>

service announcement could be more effective as a Super Bowl ad than a magazine advertisement.

As discussed in the Commission’s 2023-2024 Annual Report, a study in Rwanda found that norm-based messages processed in a group setting improved intergroup relations.⁴¹⁴ In the study, participants listened to one of two radio soap operas in groups. One set of groups (the reconciliation groups) listened to a soap opera featuring themes related to prejudice, violence, and trauma reduction. The protagonists of the radio show displayed behaviors like pursuing intergroup romantic relationships and initiating community efforts toward peace and cooperation. The other set of groups consisted of control groups who listened to a reproductive health soap opera. Compared with the control groups, participants in the reconciliation groups changed their perceptions of social norms and positively changed their behaviors with respect to intermarriage, open dissent, trust, empathy, and cooperation. The researchers who conducted the study argued that this effect was a result of both the specific content discussed within the reconciliation group and group processing.⁴¹⁵ Specifically, they argued that the group discussions and collective processing of emotions while listening to the show were important factors that allowed the radio program to influence participants’ perceptions of prevailing group norms.

The impact of group processing may hold even when people are not interacting in the same physical space or with each other. Simply being aware that others are hearing the same message can affect a listener’s openness to listening to a message.⁴¹⁶ In other words, the perception that receiving a message is part of a collective experience can be impactful. Implementing this may be challenging for public messaging campaigns in which ads are shown in various settings and at different times. However, it does point to some possibilities. For example, it suggests that community teach-ins, webinars, and other group events may be ideal opportunities for sharing prejudice-reduction messages.

Deliver messages through persuasive messengers

The messenger can also influence a message’s effectiveness. Research suggests that messages are more effective when delivered by messengers who are seen as leaders or high status and who are viewed by the audience as credible. Last year’s report described how political leaders’ rhetoric can reduce support for violence. A message condemning violence from either Biden or Trump reduced support for violence among strongly partisan respondents, regardless of whether the respondent was Democrat or Republican.⁴¹⁷ Though Republicans showed greater

⁴¹⁴ Paluck, E. L. (2009). Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>

⁴¹⁵ Paluck, E. L., & Chwe, M. S.-Y. (2017). Confronting Hate Collectively. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517001123>

⁴¹⁶ Shteynberg, G., Bramlett, J. M., Fles, E. H., & Cameron, J. (2016). The Broadcast of Shared Attention and Its Impact on Political Persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000065>

⁴¹⁷ Kalmoe, N. P., & Mason, L. (2022). *Radical American Partisanship: Mapping Violent Hostility, Its Causes, and the Consequences for Democracy*. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/R/bo163195227.html>

reductions in support for violence after seeing a message from Trump, the message from Biden was somewhat effective as well. Additionally, Democrats showed equal reductions in support for violence in response to messages from Trump and Biden. In a study among students, anti-bullying messages from students were more effective when they were delivered by students who were well-connected and widely known in the school.⁴¹⁸

An audience's perception of a messenger's credibility is also important. However, whom people see as credible may vary across audiences, underscoring the importance of understanding the audience. Research indicates that three important factors determine the credibility of a messenger – level of expertise, trustworthiness, and likeability.⁴¹⁹ A messenger's experience with the topic of the message and qualifications, such as an advanced degree, can convey expertise. Messengers who are perceived as honest, sincere, and ethical also tend to be more effective.⁴²⁰ With respect to likeability, this is often a function of how relatable and similar the audience thinks the messenger is to them. However, pairing a likeable messenger with messaging that contains weak arguments can reduce the overall persuasiveness of a message.⁴²¹ As such, anti-hate public messaging efforts should not depend on messenger likeability at the expense of developing strong content.

Potential effective messengers can range from peers to celebrities and entertainers, as well as community leaders and politicians. As described above, messengers who resonate with important social identities can be effective, such as athletes or entertainers who publicly voice support for diversity and rejection of hate and prejudice. One recent example of this is the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism's TimeOut Against Hate campaign. This campaign included ads run during primetime sporting events that featured athletes, coaches, and major figures across all major North American sport leagues, including the NBA, WNBA, NFL, MLS, NHL, NWSL, and NASCAR, all advocating for unity against hate. The strength of this campaign is its potential to reach more diverse audiences because of the wide array of high-profile people it includes. For example, NASCAR and the WNBA may have fan bases with little overlap, but the campaign has potential to reach both groups through its endorsement by major figures from each league.

A series of studies on attitudes toward marriage equality demonstrate how well-selected messengers can be influential, particularly if they resonate with the audience's identities.⁴²² In

⁴¹⁸ Paluck, E. L., & Shepherd, H. (2012). The Saliency of Social Referents: A Field Experiment on Collective Norms and Harassment Behavior in a School Social Network. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030015>

⁴¹⁹ O'Keefe, D. J. (2016). Persuasion and Social Influence. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect067>

⁴²⁰ Filieri, R., Acikgoz, F., Li, C., & Alguezaui, S. (2023). Influencers' "Organic" Persuasion Through Electronic Word of Mouth: A Case of Sincerity over Brains and Beauty. *Psychology & Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21760>

⁴²¹ Tormala, Z. L., Briñol, P., & Petty, R. E. (2006). When Credibility Attacks: The Reverse Impact of Source Credibility on Persuasion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2005.10.005>

⁴²² Harrison, B. F., & Michelson, M. R. (2017). Listen, We Need to Talk: How to Change Attitudes About LGBT Rights. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190654740.001.0001>

one of these studies, participants read a paragraph supporting marriage equality. When the paragraph was described as coming from a professional athlete, rather than a general supporter, participants expressed more support for marriage equality, particularly if they were sports fans. In a similar study, the paragraph was described as coming from Reverend Richard T. Lawrence, a Baltimore-area pastor. They found that, after reading the paragraph from the pastor, participants who identified as religious were more likely than other participants to express support for marriage equality and more likely to approve of gay and lesbian parenting.

Employ narrative, stories, and entertainment

As reviewed in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, narrative, stories, entertainment, and celebrities are potentially useful vehicles for broadcasting messages to reduce prejudice. Studies testing the efficacy of narrative and entertainment-based interventions have found they tend to have quite strong effects.⁴²³ For example, when people consume stories and entertainment media, they can become immersed in narratives, which leads to greater openness to ideas and messages.⁴²⁴ Participants also view narratives and stories as less manipulative, threatening, and accusatory than direct arguments against prejudice.⁴²⁵ A major advantage of these interventions is that they can leverage multiple approaches to reducing prejudice.⁴²⁶ Media interventions can reduce prejudice by increasing empathy and support for members of stigmatized groups, such as formerly incarcerated individuals.⁴²⁷ In addition, narratives can reduce prejudice and potentially strengthen intergroup relations by using an extended contact approach. That is, they offer opportunities for people to identify protagonists who are from a different group or who have positive interactions and relationships with different group members.⁴²⁸

There are several forms of entertainment that researchers have found could successfully reduce prejudice and/or improve relationships between groups. Researchers have demonstrated that the presence of lesbian and gay characters on television programs in the United States has reduced prejudice against lesbian and gay people among viewers.⁴²⁹ In another set of studies, researchers found that a television sitcom reduced stereotypes and prejudice about Arab and Muslim people.⁴³⁰ In the study, people watched several episodes of a popular Canadian television sitcom featuring Arab and Muslim characters. The sitcom drew on several evidence-based approaches for reducing prejudice. First, the characters were depicted as relatable by

⁴²³ Paluck et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>

⁴²⁴ Murrar, S., & Brauer, M. (2018). Entertainment-Education Effectively Reduces Prejudice. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216682350>

⁴²⁵ Kalla & Broockman (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000923>

⁴²⁶ Paluck et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>

⁴²⁷ Reddan, M. C., Garcia, S. B., Golarai, G., Eberhardt, J. L., & Zaki, J. (2024). Film Intervention Increases Empathic Understanding of Formerly Incarcerated People and Support for Criminal Justice Reform. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2322819121>

⁴²⁸ Murrar & Brauer (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216682350>

⁴²⁹ Schiappa, E., Gregg, P. B., & Hewes, D. E. (2006). Can One TV Show Make a Difference? *Will & Grace* and the Parasocial Contact Hypothesis. *Journal of Homosexuality*. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v51n04_02

⁴³⁰ Murrar & Brauer (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216682350>

showing them engaged in everyday experiences, such as disagreeing with parents or interacting with a love interest. Second, the show highlighted the diversity among Arab and Muslim people by showing characters varying in age, gender, beliefs, lifestyles, and occupations. This moved viewers beyond monolithic stereotypes. Finally, the show drew on principles of extended contact and depicted relationships between people who are Muslim and not Muslim.

Radio shows, books, and music videos have also been found to reduce prejudice. For instance, as described above, one study that took place in Rwanda used a radio soap opera to develop social norms against prejudice. The show incorporated characters from diverse groups alongside themes of positive intergroup contact and reconciliation. Compared to a control group, listeners of this soap opera perceived intergroup contact to be more normatively acceptable, and they positively changed their behaviors with respect to intermarriage, open dissent, trust, empathy, and cooperation.⁴³¹ A number of studies have used books to introduce ideas that effectively reduce prejudice. For example, one study found that children who read fictional stories in which able-bodied children befriended children with disabilities reduced ableist prejudice.⁴³² Another study found that a four-minute country music video resulted in less prejudice against Muslim people.⁴³³

One potential risk of entertainment-based approaches is that characters may be developed that perpetuate stereotypes. To mitigate this risk, it is important to avoid narrow or oversimplified portrayals of groups. Additionally, it is important to design such interventions in collaboration with members of groups and communities featured in the interventions.

Overall, research suggests that there is significant potential for media, entertainment, and narrative mediums to disseminate messages that effectively reduce prejudice and curb hate. One of their key strengths is that they have the ability to employ several of the principles outlined in this report – they can communicate social norms,⁴³⁴ provide a group-based context for processing information,⁴³⁵ model positive intergroup relationships,⁴³⁶ foreground characters the target audience finds credible, increase empathy and perspective for people from given groups,⁴³⁷ and be tailored to match the values and identities of the audience. Finally, public messages broadcast through entertainment and social media have potential to reach a significant number of people.

⁴³¹ Paluck (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>

⁴³² Cameron, Rutland, & Brown (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025407081474>

⁴³³ Murrar & Brauer (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216682350>

⁴³⁴ Paluck (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>

⁴³⁵ Paluck & Chwe (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517001123>; Shteynberg et al. (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000065>

⁴³⁶ Paluck (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>

⁴³⁷ Reddan et al. (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2322819121>

Research messages during development and implementation

Where possible, research on public messages should be used to inform the design of the message itself and to evaluate its impact. Messages could be tested in small-scale pilots before being rolled out in mass campaigns. There are several ways to pilot test messages. One approach is to conduct qualitative evaluations with members of the target audience. Alternatively, small-scale randomized control experiments could be conducted that compare various versions of a message to measure their effectiveness before launch. These measures could include general comprehension measures, measurements of prejudice and intergroup attitudes and beliefs, measurements of behavioral intentions (for example, to confront prejudice), or measurements of actions taken (for example, signing a petition). Such pilots can lead to multiple rounds of iteration to hone messages and optimize their potential to reduce hate. After the launch of a message, research and data collection should also be conducted to evaluate the impact of the programs, where possible. Measuring impacts over time can speak to whether, and for how long, the impact of a program extends beyond its end. Previous research has used digital advertising tools to measure the efficacy of a wellness campaign and campaigns to reduce searching for harmful content online.⁴³⁸

Create opportunities for community partnerships

Throughout this review we have discussed the importance of understanding the audience of the message and attending to the audience's needs and values. This requires partnerships with communities. Members of a community are ideally positioned to weigh in on key considerations highlighted in the principles above, such as who are credible messengers in the community, which identities are important to members of the community, and which values people in the community hold most strongly. Community partnerships can also assist with ensuring the message is respectful of particular communities (for example, by avoiding reliance on stereotypes). Community partners can also assist with evaluating the translation and localization of the message.

In addition to having expertise that can bear on specific aspects of the message, local partners can provide insight into more practical considerations, such as what the most effective platforms for communication are. For example, in rural and agricultural areas of the state, key populations may be more likely to tune in to radio programming on long drives or while at work. In more densely populated areas, there may be ideal roadways or intersections for billboard messages that capitalize on traffic patterns and visibility.

⁴³⁸ Yom-Tov, E., Shembekar, J., Barclay, S., & Muennig, P. (2018). The Effectiveness of Public Health Advertisements to Promote Health: A Randomized-Controlled Trial on 794,000 Participants. *NPJ Digital Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41746-018-0031-7>; Onie, S., Berlinquette, P., Holland, S., Livingstone, N., Finemore, C., Gale, N., Elder, E., Laggis, G., Heffernan, C., Armstrong, S. O., Theobald, A., Josifovski, N., Torok, M., Shand, F., & Larsen, M. (2023). Suicide Prevention Using Google Ads: Randomized Controlled Trial Measuring Engagement. *JMIR Mental Health*. <https://doi.org/10.2196/42316>; Helmus, T.C. & Klein, K. (2018). Assessing Outcomes of Online Campaigns Countering Violent Extremism. RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2813.html

One community-centered approach to public messages is the creation of “campaign collateral,” which is essentially a swath of public communication assets that members of the public and community-based organizations can download and customize. CA vs Hate used this approach in creating graphics and templates for social media, flyers and posters, and customizable content in many different languages. These assets were used by community-based organizations to publicize CA vs Hate in a localized way. Campaign collateral could also be accompanied by principles or best practices to guide the use of the collateral.

More broadly, partnering with local communities can help build trust with communities. Actively including the public in programs and initiatives demonstrates respect and encourages civic engagement. In addition, direct involvement in anti-hate public messaging campaigns may also increase community members’ commitment to anti-hate causes.

Interim Recommendations for Public Messaging Efforts

Our research provides further evidence of the potential for public messages to create a more inclusive California and reduce prejudice and hate acts. The 2023-2024 Annual Report outlined five interim recommendations for preventing and reducing hate, all of which are related to public messaging efforts:

- Invest in evidence-based school interventions and public messaging campaigns to prevent hate.
- Support research and data collection on prevention initiatives.
- Support collaborations between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.
- Incorporate prevention messages into public statements.
- Prepare Californians before hate occurs.

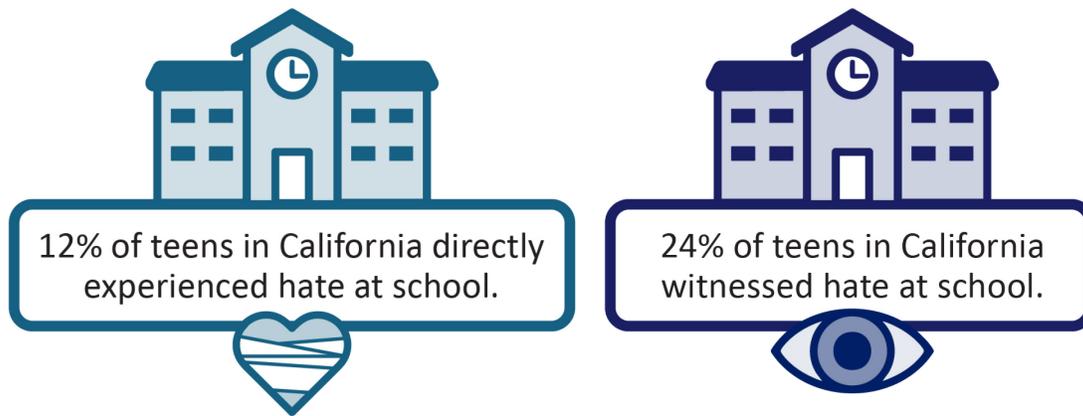
The Commission continues to support these recommendations. Building on our findings from our 2023-2024 Annual Report, we introduced additional interim guiding principles for developing and implementing prevention-focused public messaging initiatives, as noted in the text box.

INTERIM GUIDING PRINCIPLES: PUBLIC MESSAGING

- Convey the prevalence and growth of positive norms.
- Align descriptive and injunctive norms.
- Emphasize norms with institutional support.
- Frame norms as working together.
- Frame action as helping others.
- Highlight relationships across group lines.
- Highlight commonalities between groups.
- Encourage empathy and perspective-taking.
- Emphasize potential for growth.
- Tailor the message to audience identities and values.
- Align and combine approaches.
- Simplify the message and call to action.
- Provide a group-based context for processing messages.
- Deliver messages through persuasive messengers.
- Employ narrative, stories, and entertainment.
- Research messages during development and implementation.
- Create opportunities for community partnerships.

HATE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

Since its inception, the Commission has focused on understanding how to prevent and reduce hate in California's K-12 schools. Schools are a particularly important area of focus for several reasons. First, schools are common locations of hate. As stated in Chapter 2, schools are by far the most common place that California teens ages 12 to 17 experience and witness hate in California. An estimated 80% of teens who experienced a hate act within a one-year period between 2022 and 2023 experienced hate at school. This corresponds to roughly 12% of teens overall in California who have directly experienced hate in school. Nearly a quarter of teens have witnessed a hate event at school.



As discussed throughout the Commission's annual reports, the potential adverse impacts of hate are multifaceted and severe. For adolescents, especially those from historically oppressed groups, these impacts can persist into adulthood.⁴³⁹ Moreover, research shows that the presence and even the perceived threat of bias creates inequalities in students' educational experience and outcomes.⁴⁴⁰ Through well-informed programs, interventions, and policies, the State can protect generations against the deleterious effects of hate.

In the Commission's 2023-2024 Annual Report, we reviewed research on the effectiveness of select approaches to preventing hate in schools. Because of the limitations in existing research, we did not recommend specific programs and interventions. Instead, we drew on our findings to introduce five interim, evidence-based guiding principles for consideration when designing and implementing school programs. These principles were not prescriptive. Rather, they were intended to guide decisions by helping schools and other stakeholders understand the potential risks and benefits of various approaches to hate prevention.

⁴³⁹ See, for example: Brody, G. H., Yu, T., & Beach, S. R. H. (2016). Resilience to Adversity and the Early Origins of Disease. *Development and Psychopathology*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0954579416000894>

⁴⁴⁰ Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797>

Since then, the Commission has reviewed additional research, consulted with subject matter experts, and gathered additional community input. These efforts affirmed the principles we introduced previously and pointed to additional interim, evidence-based guiding principles. In this section, we begin with a description of our more recent fact-finding efforts. We then introduce the principles that emerged from those efforts. We pair each principle with supporting evidence and, in some cases, ideas for implementation. We end with six interim policy recommendations.

The Commission's Fact-Finding Efforts

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Commission, we reviewed research on various interventions to prevent hate in K-12 schools. These interventions included:

- Opportunities for extended intergroup contact through media or narratives
- Sociocognitive approaches that seek to disrupt underlying cognitive processes that lead to bias, prejudice, and hate
- Information, knowledge, and awareness programs that teach students about different communities and cultures
- Social and emotional learning programs that promote positive outcomes for youth, such as emotional and behavioral regulation, self-efficacy, empathy, and academic success
- Perspective-taking interventions that encourage students to see the perspectives of others, including people from groups and communities different than their own
- Moral reasoning interventions that frame intergroup social exclusion as morally wrong
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation interventions that teach students to stop conflict in a nonviolent manner
- Restorative justice programs that promote nonviolent and nonpunitive conflict resolution
- Youth-led civic programs that empower young people to create positive change in their schools and communities
- Sports and recreation programs that increase community cohesion and encourage healthy intergroup contact

From this review, the Commission introduced five interim guiding principles for the development and implementation of hate prevention programs in schools:

- Review evidence related to the program.
- Implement programs with evidence-based mechanisms.
- Combine mechanisms where possible.
- Monitor the impacts on students and, when possible, collect data.
- Follow general best practices for implementing educational programs.

This section builds on these principles and our previous findings. Over the past year, we have continued to review academic research on this topic and consulted with subject matter experts. As discussed earlier, we cohosted a convening on hate prevention in partnership with UCLA's Initiative to Study Hate. The convening brought together distinguished scholars and policy

experts to generate policy approaches to preventing and reducing hate in schools and online. We include the learnings from this convening throughout this report.

The Commission has proactively gathered community input on this topic as well. Ahead of the convening, Commission staff held listening sessions with CBOs from across the state who were part of the CA vs Hate partner network. The CBOs shared their ideas for policies and other interventions to prevent hate online and in K-12 schools. Learnings from those sessions were shared with convening participants and are incorporated throughout this report. In addition to the listening sessions, the Commission held several community forums on various topics across the state. The issue of hate in schools has been raised repeatedly by members of the public attending the forums, which has also informed the Commission’s findings on this topic.

Principles for Preventing Hate in K-12 Schools

Over the following pages, we introduce key principles for preventing hate in schools. Though discussed separately, these principles build on each other. Given the persistent and complex nature of hate, no single strategy is likely to be sufficient alone. The most effective approaches are likely those that combine principles to develop a comprehensive, multilevel approach to preventing hate.

Support cultural awareness training for students and staff

Cultural awareness includes learning about the histories, traditions, and practices of various communities and is a crucial element for fostering inclusive and respectful school environments. Across our efforts, the Commission heard calls to build cultural knowledge and awareness among students and staff in K-12 schools. For example, in the Commission’s May 2024 forum on hate experienced by Indigenous people, speakers and commenters described widespread misunderstandings of Indigenous history and culture and called for better education on these topics. In the Commission’s November 2023 forum, students from AAPI Youth Rising described their efforts to counteract bullying by advocating for AAPI history and culture in school curricula. Experts have shared with the Commission numerous examples of bias-related bullying and harassment against students because of their cultures. For instance, we learned of students facing harassment and bullying based on the food they brought for lunch, such as its smell and color. To counteract such incidents, students should be taught about the histories, customs, and traditions of cultures in a respectful and sensitive way that celebrates all cultures.

Subject matter experts also explained to the Commission that effective cultural awareness and anti-hate education should be incorporated into core curricula and across diverse subjects from literature and history to math and sciences. A cross-disciplinary approach ensures that cultural awareness is woven into everyday learning, which reinforces understanding.

“ Effective cultural awareness and anti-hate education should be incorporated into core curricula and across diverse subjects. ”

Effective development and deployment of cultural awareness education requires support for teachers, as we discuss below. To promote cultural awareness

among students, schools could facilitate professional development for teachers and staff that includes information on the histories, customs, and traditions of various cultures to equip school personnel with knowledge, resources, and best practices to foster cultural awareness in a nuanced and sensitive way for students in their classrooms. For example, on numerous occasions, the Commission heard stories of students from underrepresented backgrounds being called on by teachers to serve as spokespeople for their cultures or religions. This can reinforce a sense of otherness and tokenization. Training should equip teachers with strategies to foster inclusive discussions without placing the burden of education on individual students.

In the Commission's 2023-2024 Annual Report, we reviewed research on what we called information, knowledge, and awareness (IKA) interventions, which are closely related to the principle of supporting cultural awareness. For a more detailed research review of IKA interventions, see the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Provide teacher training and support

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the school environment. They must be equipped with the knowledge, resources, and support necessary to create inclusive classrooms. Our research pointed to four subprinciples for categorizing teacher training and support: support teachers' ability to navigate sensitive topics, equip teachers to respond to hate, provide educators with tools to mitigate their own expressions of bias, and support teachers from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds. While existing research provides some evidence for each of these approaches, there are significant gaps in the research. Thus, as we discuss later, supporting additional research in this area is critical.

Prepare teachers to discuss diversity, sensitive topics, and cultural differences

It is essential for teachers to be prepared to lead discussions on topics such as cultural differences and hate. Importantly, research has shown that learning about historical racism can decrease racially biased attitudes.⁴⁴¹ Without adequate training, however, educators may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes, have trouble managing heated classroom discussions, and avoid teaching topics altogether out of fear of social and political fallout.

Effective teacher training should include structured programs that provide practical tools for discussing controversial topics. Existing initiatives, such as the Facing History & Ourselves curriculum, offer models to help teachers facilitate critical conversations in a way that fosters growth and understanding. The Facing History organization provides participating teachers with curriculum, professional learning opportunities, and a holistic approach they can bring to their classroom. In a nonexperimental study with a comparison group, researchers found that the 10-

⁴⁴¹ Hughes, J. M., Bigler, R. S., & Levy, S. R. (2007). Consequences of Learning About Historical Racism Among European American and African American Children. *Child Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01096.x>

week Facing History & Ourselves intervention significantly reduced eighth graders' racial prejudice when compared to students in a comparison group.⁴⁴²

Equip teachers to respond to hate and bias incidents

Teachers should be prepared to respond to hate and bias incidents when they arise in schools. Research demonstrates that confronting and responding to acts of prejudice can establish and restore norms against prejudice.⁴⁴³ Conversely, not responding to these incidents risks creating norms within the classroom suggesting that acts of hate are socially acceptable, which could lead to further acts of hate. As leaders in the classroom, teachers can affirm norms against bias and hate in a variety of ways, including by setting expectations, displaying classrooms materials emphasizing anti-hate norms, and directly responding to hate when it occurs. (For a more detailed discussion on how norms can be conveyed to reduce hate, see the section Public Messaging as a Tool for Preventing Hate.)

TEACHERS CAN AFFIRM NORMS AGAINST BIAS AND HATE IN CLASSROOMS BY...

- Setting anti-hate expectations
- Displaying anti-hate classroom materials
- Directly responding to hate when it occurs

The Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University offers guidance for schools and educators on preventing and addressing hate. In a publicly available brief, PERIL outlines key strategies educators can adopt to prevent hate by responding to early warning signs of exposure to harmful ideologies and engagement with hate-based groups.⁴⁴⁴ The guide explains how teachers are often the first adults to witness such signs, and it advises them to watch for harmful language, sudden changes in behavior, shifts in peer relationships, and changes in emotional well-being. It encourages teachers to familiarize themselves with modern hate symbols and to ask students directly, but with curiosity and not suspicion, about unfamiliar symbols. The guide also advocates for directly confronting problematic behaviors, but without ridicule or shame.

In conversations with experts, we learned of teachers and other staff who appeared to be unaware of existing legal protections for students and how they might apply in specific situations. In particular, the Commission has heard from community members, CBOs, and policy experts about the need for additional training and education among school staff on the rights of students with disabilities. The Commission heard numerous stories in which a subject matter

⁴⁴² Schultz, L. H., Barr, D. J., & Selman, R. L. (2001). The Value of a Developmental Approach to Evaluating Character Development Programmes: An Outcome Study of Facing History and Ourselves. *Journal of Moral Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240120033785>

⁴⁴³ Li, A. H., Noland, E. S., & Monteith, M. J. (2024). Following Prejudiced Behavior, Confrontation Restores Local Anti-Bias Social Norms. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672241229006>

⁴⁴⁴ https://perilresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/splc_peril_strategies_for_educators.pdf

expert or other member of the public reported that the rights of students with disabilities were violated. For example, several comments described instances in which students with disabilities were denied opportunities and excluded from activities, such as field trips, due to stereotypes and assumptions about their abilities. Exclusion also occurred because of specific school policies. In one case, students with disabilities, some of whom were enrolled in credit/no credit courses, were systematically excluded from a schoolwide awards program that only rewarded students in letter-grade courses. In a listening session, CBO advocates shared a report of a child with a disability who was interrogated by police and frisked after witnessing an incident involving another student. They also described school staff who were unaware of the specifics of laws related to learning plans for students with disabilities, such as individualized education programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans.

Provide educators with tools to mitigate their own expression of biases

It is important for teacher trainings to help teachers reduce their own biases. Experts and community organizations emphasized to the Commission that hate and bias are not always peer-to-peer. They can also occur in teacher-student and institutional dynamics.

A common approach to reducing expressions of bias is implicit bias trainings, which aim to make people aware of biases they may hold and strategies to overcome them. While understanding implicit bias is important, there is limited evidence that implicit bias trainings, as they are often implemented, are effective in reducing individuals' levels and expressions of bias.⁴⁴⁵

One reason for this is that they may create defensiveness among participants. Frequently, the focus of such trainings is on ways of thinking and behaviors that are undesirable or problematic. In other words, they can be deficit-based in that they focus on what the trainee lacks or needs to improve. This approach can limit the training's efficacy by evoking dismissiveness, reactivity, and even backlash among participants.⁴⁴⁶ When bias training programs make teachers feel defensive and anxious about their own biases, they may avoid addressing issues of bias and related concepts in the classroom.

⁴⁴⁵ Paluck et al. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>

⁴⁴⁶ Brannon, T. N., Carter, E. R., Murdock-Perriera, L. A., & Higginbotham, G. D. (2018). From Backlash to Inclusion for All: Instituting Diversity Efforts to Maximize Benefits Across Group Lines. *Social Issues and Policy Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12040>

An alternative to deficit-based bias reduction trainings are asset-based trainings.⁴⁴⁷ Asset-based

“
 Trainings that effectively reduce biases among teachers would not necessarily focus on changing their implicit biases...Instead, they would affirm core goals or values that teachers hold.

trainings focus on identifying the trainees’ existing strengths, skills, talents, and experiences. Research has shown that when white teachers have opportunities to affirm valued aspects of themselves, they are better able to lead racially and ethnically diverse classrooms, create positive student-teacher relationships, and support students’ academic growth to a greater extent.⁴⁴⁸ Thus, trainings that effectively reduce biases among teachers would not necessarily focus on changing their implicit biases and attitudes.

Instead, they would affirm core goals or values that teachers hold, such as supporting and helping students, and identifying key behaviors teachers can enact to work toward these goals or values.

Asset-based interventions may also reduce teacher bias by providing teachers with exercises that improve relationships with stigmatized students, such as having students write letters to teachers about their goals for education.⁴⁴⁹ These trainings may also focus on helping teachers reframe situations in a way that reduces biased behaviors. For example, they may train teachers to view the administering of critical feedback as an opportunity to support students and build positive, trusting relationships with students.⁴⁵⁰ Both these types of exercises help teachers to lean into their values of supporting students, rather than asking them to solely focus on suppressing or changing negative aspects of themselves.

Asset-based training on teachers’ disciplinary practices can have powerful effects on reducing racial disparities in discipline, a key concern raised by CBOs. Across multiple studies, researchers found that an asset-based intervention significantly decreased suspension rates overall and reduced racial disparities in suspension rates by 45% over two years.⁴⁵¹ In these studies, teachers observed other teachers responding to misbehavior with empathy (for example, understanding and valuing the students’ perspective and demonstrating care and positive regard) rather than treating students punitively. The participants were then asked to write a

⁴⁴⁷ Okonofua, J. A., Harris, L. T., & Walton, G. M. (2022). Sideline Bias: A Situationist Approach to Reduce the Consequences of Bias in Real-World Contexts. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214221102422>

⁴⁴⁸ Brady, S. T., Griffiths, C. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2024). The Affirmed (White) Teacher in a Cross-Race Context. *Social Psychology of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-023-09812-z>

⁴⁴⁹ Walton, G. M., Okonofua, J. A., Cunningham, K. R., Hurst, D., Pinedo, A., Weitz, E., Ospina, J. P., Tate, H., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2021). Lifting the Bar: A Relationship-Orienting Intervention Reduces Recidivism among Children Reentering School from Juvenile Detention. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211013801>

⁴⁵⁰ Yeager, D. S., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., Brzustoski, P., Master, A., Hessert, W. T., Williams, M. E., & Cohen, G. L. (2014). Breaking the Cycle of Mistrust: Wise Interventions to Provide Critical Feedback Across the Racial Divide. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033906>

⁴⁵¹ Okonofua, J. A., Paunesku, D., & Walton, G. M. (2016). Brief Intervention to Encourage Empathic Discipline Cuts Suspension Rates in Half Among Adolescents. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1523698113>; Okonofua et al. (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214221102422>

letter to a new teacher explaining how empathetic disciplinary approaches supported core goals that teachers hold (for example, uplifting students). Thus, the intervention focused on teachers' positive attributes and framed discipline as an opportunity to help and support students, resulting in positive outcomes for the students. While there is strong evidence that asset-based trainings can mitigate expressions of individual bias, creating equitable and inclusive school environments may also require addressing a host of systemic forms of bias. Pairing asset-based trainings with professional development opportunities designed to inform teachers of the history, legacies, and impact of structural oppression in the educational system may enhance their capacity to effectively work for needed systemic and institutional changes.⁴⁵²

Support teachers from historically marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds

Supporting teachers should include efforts to support teachers from historically marginalized backgrounds who often play a critical role in fostering safe and inclusive school environments for historically marginalized students.⁴⁵³ They may face specific burdens, such as being expected to lead discussions on race and culture without adequate institutional support. Building stronger systems of allyship among teachers can help distribute the responsibility of anti-hate education more equitably. Professional development initiatives should incorporate training on how all educators, regardless of background, can contribute to culturally responsive teaching.

Schools should also implement policies that address workplace inequities and support structures for teachers experiencing hate, bias, or other forms of marginalization within the school environment, including from other teachers, administrators, and students. The trainings described above may be effective approaches to reduce these inequities. Other principles throughout this section can also be helpful for preventing hate against teachers.

Overall, the Commission's engagement with educators, researchers, and community organizations underscores a consistent theme: Teachers need increased support and resources to engage effectively with hate-related topics in the classroom and create a culture of inclusion and safety. This includes not only training and professional development, but also systemic changes such as rethinking approaches to training, integrating cultural education across disciplines, and ensuring that teachers are safe from hate.

Implement curricula to protect students from online hate

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, nationally, 80% of youth have seen hate online, and more than half have witnessed hate speech against someone they knew.⁴⁵⁴ According to data from the California Health Interview Survey, an estimated 24% of teens who directly experienced hate in one year experienced it online. Without the tools to critically evaluate,

⁴⁵² Blake, J. J., Fenning, P. A., & Jimerson, S. R. (2024). Building an Evidence Base for Professional Learning in Prejudice Reduction, Racial Bias, and Antiracism in Schools: Slow Motion Is Better Than No Motion. *School Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2024.2362550>

⁴⁵³ Griffiths, C. M., Pearman, F. A., O'Sullivan, K. E., Knight-Williams, L., Pagnani, M., Martin, S. E., & Brady, S. T. (2024). Attending to Race in Teacher Well-Being Interventions: A Systematic Review and Recommendations. *Review of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543241289568>

⁴⁵⁴ Harmon, J. (2024, November 12). <https://seis.ucla.edu/magazine-fall-2024/the-smash-project/>

identify, and inoculate themselves from hate online, students are vulnerable to its harms and at risk of spreading hate themselves.

Schools can empower and educate students to navigate online content, including preparing them for hate content they might encounter. In the earlier section Preventing and Reducing Online Hate, we discussed approaches to doing so within the general population. The need to incorporate digital literacy and related courses into K-12 school curricula specifically was communicated to the Commission from CBOs and subject matter experts. Many emphasized that simply telling students to avoid problematic content is insufficient; instead, curricula should empower youth with the ability to navigate digital spaces responsibly and develop the skills to resist manipulation. For instance, digital literacy curricula could address the various forms that hate and persuasion attempts take online, how to recognize and counteract harmful online content such as hate-based dog whistles and coded language, and how to recognize online content and tactics from hate groups. Schools could also provide students with the tools to critically examine online discourse generally and information on how digital environments can contribute to systemic discrimination and bias.

Teachers should be equipped with the knowledge and resources to effectively teach digital literacy. One way to do so is through relying on established resources. For instance, one resource provides an in-depth review of prebunking strategies and guidance on how to implement prebunking interventions.⁴⁵⁵ The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles also has resources available for educators and students. These include an in-person digital media literacy workshop, which is designed to teach students critical thinking for decoding and rejecting online hate. The Museum of Tolerance invites schools across the state to attend the workshop and offers additional free professional development opportunities for educators. To be sure, other resources are available to teach students digital literacy and assist educators. However, the adoption of any program or resource should be carefully vetted prior to use.

Design solutions locally with the school community

As with many efforts to prevent hate, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to hate in California schools. Hate takes different forms across schools, communities, and student populations, which often requires local, targeted interventions. During the October 2024 hate-prevention convening, experts emphasized that anti-hate programs do not scale easily; what works in one school may not be effective in another.

⁴⁵⁵ Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Biddlestone, M., van der Linden, S., Stuart, A., Iwahara, M., Piri, B., Xu, R., Goldberg, B., & Graham, M. (2022). A Practical Guide to Prebunking Misinformation. https://interventions.withgoogle.com/static/pdf/A_Practical_Guide_to_Prebunking_Misinformation.pdf

Instead, effective programs may be those that are built from the ground up and designed in collaboration with the school community. A review of research on best practices for school safety interventions concluded that successful programs involve bottom-up grassroots participation by members of the school community, such as teachers, staff, and students.⁴⁵⁶

Similarly, in a study examining the factors that contribute to successful cultivation of safe school environments, researchers found that teachers and principals see external anti-violence or anti-bullying programs as ineffective unless they are one part of a larger schoolwide approach and belief system.⁴⁵⁷ In creating local, collaborative school safety programs, it is important to engage a wide range of stakeholders. In addition to teachers and

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Successful programs involve bottom-up grassroots participation by members of the school community, such as teachers, staff, and students.

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students, other members of the school community should be engaged, such as parents, unions, district administrators, and school personnel, such as bus drivers. All these groups contribute to shaping the school environment and are essential for the success of a program.

One approach to developing local solutions is to share best practices, case studies, and learnings from other schools. For example, staff could participate in interschool visits that allow them to observe and learn from other schools. This can serve as inspiration and provide educators with concrete ideas to adapt for their own schools.

Leadership is also essential for developing school-based safety programs. One study found that a principal’s leadership was the most important factor contributing to the success of schools that had exceptional records of maintaining student safety.⁴⁵⁸ It is hypothesized that school leaders are effective because they catalyze the school community to build, enact, and support a culture of safety.

Applied to issues of hate prevention, these findings suggest that the most effective interventions will be school-wide efforts that are developed and supported by the school community. Not only will such collaborative efforts empower schools to address issues specific to their own communities, but they can also engender greater buy-in and support for the program.

Develop youth-led approaches to hate

Closely related to the principle of designing local solutions is the importance of youth leadership in the development of anti-hate programs. This approach is rooted in research demonstrating that young people can create positive change in their schools and communities, and that they

⁴⁵⁶ Astor, R. A., Meyer, H. A., Benbenishty, R., Marachi, R., & Rosemond, M. (2005). School Safety Interventions: Best Practices and Programs. *Children & Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/27.1.17>

⁴⁵⁷ Astor, R. A., Benbenishty, R., Estrada, J. N. (2009). School Violence and Theoretically Atypical Schools: The Principal’s Centrality in Orchestrating Safe Schools. *American Education Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208329598>

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208329598>

can gain valuable skills and knowledge while doing so.⁴⁵⁹ Moreover, youths often possess unique, localized knowledge about their schools, which is key to developing a successful school program.

A potential vehicle for developing youth-led hate prevention programs is youth-led civic action programs, which were highlighted by Professor Sara Wilf, a former research consultant with the Commission and the Initiative to Study Hate. These programs consist of students leading projects that address social issues. They have been shown to enhance civic knowledge, increase civic efficacy, and promote long-term democratic engagement.⁴⁶⁰ They also encourage cooperative learning and intergroup contact, which, as reviewed in last year's report, have the potential to promote positive intergroup relations and reduce bias.⁴⁶¹

There are numerous benefits to promoting student involvement through programs like youth-led civic action projects. For one, youth-led initiatives will be grounded in local contexts – students have firsthand knowledge about their schools and can tailor their projects accordingly. Second, allowing students to choose the specific issues that matter to them may increase investment and motivation. Third, programs that are led by students, rather than imposed by school administrators, may face less opposition from parents and community members. Finally, such projects would give youths valuable experience developing civic engagement skills and working to uplift their communities.

Schools could support such programs in several ways, including by providing students with resources and mentorship. Teachers and administrators should be mindful, however, of how to facilitate such programs without imposing their own agendas. This could be accomplished by creating spaces for youth voices, ensuring equitable participation, and fostering an environment where students feel empowered to design solutions.

Tailor solutions to specific groups

Hate takes many forms and is often specific to the groups being targeted. For instance, the specific manifestations of hate targeting a student because of their religion may differ from other forms of hate, such as those that target a student because of their race or disability. Tailored interventions to address specific types of hate against specific groups and communities may be more effective than broad-based interventions. The need for tailored anti-hate efforts

⁴⁵⁹ Wray-Lake, L., & Ballard, P. J. (2023). Civic Engagement Across Adolescence and Early Adulthood. APA Handbook of Adolescent and Young Adult Development. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000298-035>

⁴⁶⁰ Andolina, M. W., & Conklin, H. G. (2018). Speaking with Confidence and Listening with Empathy: The Impact of Project Soapbox on High School Students. *Theory & Research in Social Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2018.1435324>; Ballard, P. J., Cohen, A. K., & Littenberg-Tobias, J. L. (2016). Action Civics for Promoting Civic Development: Main Effects of Program Participation and Differences by Project Characteristics. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12103>

⁴⁶¹ Beelmann, A., & Heinemann, K. S. (2014). Preventing Prejudice and Improving Intergroup Attitudes: A Meta-Analysis of Child and Adolescent Training Programs. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2013.11.002>; Paluck, E. L., & Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice. *Annual Review of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163607>; Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751>

was raised by experts and across the CBO listening sessions with the Commission. Some advocates explained that their communities faced unique types of hate and discrimination in schools that were not adequately addressed by overarching, general anti-hate efforts.

When possible, programs designed to combat hate should consider the specific groups being targeted and solutions that directly engage with the histories, stereotypes, and structural

“ [Anti-hate programs should] engage with the histories, stereotypes, and structural inequalities that the targeted group faces.

inequalities that the targeted group faces. While doing so can be onerous, the task can be facilitated by following the previous principles of designing local solutions within the school community and supporting youth involvement. In addition, programs can be designed in collaboration with local CBOs that may have more expertise in the specific issues faced by members of their communities and solutions for addressing them.

” Examples of programs that are tailored to address the needs of specific groups of students come from the Black Youth Leadership Project (BYLP). BYLP has established a set of support network programs, each targeted toward specific groups. For example, they have a Black Boys Support Network and Black Girls Support Network program that brings Black men and women from the community into schools to provide mentorship to Black boys and Black girls, as well as training for staff on how best to support young Black students and other students of color in the classroom. These programs target specific populations that are typically underserved in educational spaces to ensure that students from those populations have support that is tailored to their unique needs. Importantly, while all of BYLP’s programs are tailored to specific student identities, none are exclusive – students from a wide variety of backgrounds participate in each of BYLP’s programs.

Gather data and research

Last year’s report described the importance of monitoring the impact of anti-hate initiatives in schools and, when possible, collecting data to assess their effectiveness. Conducting research and/or gathering regular data and information can help schools understand how hate affects their schools and the impacts of interventions to address it. It can also help schools monitor any adverse impacts of anti-hate programs.

Gathering data and research does not necessarily require specialized expertise. Schools could partner with local universities to conduct research projects on hate prevention programs. In cases where data is already being collected, such as bullying incidents, the efforts could be expanded easily by also documenting whether the incident was motivated by bias. Data can also be collected through qualitative research, such as interviews and focus groups, and can be as simple as gathering input regularly from the school community. To ensure all voices are represented, this input could be collected systematically by identifying different groups within the school community and asking members from each of these groups to provide input.

Improve procedures and processes for reporting hate

Though schools often have mechanisms for reporting hate and bullying, subject matter experts and CBOs shared many shortcomings in the reporting process itself. The Commission learned that current processes for reporting hate and bullying can be confusing and have little transparency regarding what happens after a report is made. This can deter students from reporting and erode their trust in their school and school administration.

The Commission also heard from students who described instances in which, after a report of hate is formally made, there is little to no response or follow-through. This has the potential to result in deleterious effects. A student who reports an incident and hears nothing back may interpret this inaction as an indication that the school staff do not care about preventing hate and bias or that they are not invested in protecting students from their group. This may erode students’ trust in their schools and deter them from reporting future cases.

“ A student who reports an incident and hears nothing back may interpret this inaction as an indication that the school staff do not care about preventing hate... ”

One CBO shared with the Commission how schools could follow up on reports of hate to better meet students’ needs. Depending on the situation, responses could range from restorative justice practices to initiating dialogues to provision of resources, such as mental health support, for those impacted by the incident. Students emphasized that even mere acknowledgement of the wrongdoing would be an improvement over not responding at all.

Our findings point to two types of investments schools can make to improve reporting of hate. First, school communities should advise students and their families of the avenues available to report acts of hate that students experience or observe and should encourage them to do so promptly. For students to feel comfortable making such reports, it is essential that school communities create a culture wherein reporting is encouraged, safe, and not frowned upon by staff or other students. School communities should also proactively notify students that they will not be retaliated against for reporting incidents that may have harmed them or their peers and should affirm their commitment to students’ well-being and safety.

Second, teachers, administrators, and school staff should be trained to respond promptly and effectively if they observe or learn of acts of hate and be advised of the concrete initial and follow-up steps

Creating a safe reporting culture:
Inform students and families of reporting channels, encourage prompt action, and assure them there will be no retaliation.

Training staff for effective response:
Equip teachers, administrators, and staff with clear protocols to respond promptly and effectively, prioritizing student safety.



they should take to prioritize students' well-being and safety. Such professional development should also include guidance on how to monitor students after a hate act is reported and how to ensure that any remedies established in response to the report prevent the hate act from recurring.

Ensure that disciplinary approaches are equitable and respect students' rights

As described in Chapter 2, community-based organizations point to racial disparities in student discipline as a form of hate impacting Black youth. CBOs and members of the public have also described the ways in which students with disabilities experienced exclusionary discipline in cases where they are suspended or expelled from school. Additionally, we heard from experts and the public about reports in which the rights of students with disabilities were violated, including schools' alleged failures to implement students' IEPs and Section 504 plans.

These inequalities in discipline are commonly understood by students and communities as examples of prejudice and bias impacting youth. There are several steps schools can take to begin to address them. First, as described above, schools should invest in professional development that educates school staff and leadership about such inequalities and increases their awareness of the social and psychological dynamics that lead to these inequalities. For example, NAACP-Pasadena has developed a training module on "adultification bias" for the public and stakeholders. Adultification bias is the tendency for people to view and treat Black children and other children of color as older and more mature than they are.⁴⁶² This misperception leads to unfair expectations and standards for behavior, resulting in harsher discipline for Black students for behaviors that may be very typical for students their age. Another type of training that could be made available seeks to shift educators away from a reliance on punitive discipline. As described, research has shown that easy-to-implement empathic discipline interventions can significantly reduce racial inequalities in suspension rates across the school year.⁴⁶³ In addition, some anti-bullying programs, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), have been shown to have strong positive impacts on a variety of student outcomes, ranging from prosocial behaviors to lower suspension rates and fewer disciplinary actions.⁴⁶⁴ Apart from trainings and interventions, schools can also establish processes related to incorporating disciplinary data into their policies and procedures in order to increase equity.

Continually update anti-hate initiatives

Reducing hate over the long term requires ongoing updates and sustainability planning. The Commission learned of schools that successfully made progress creating safe, inclusive

⁴⁶² Goff, P. A., Jackson, M. C., Di Leone, B. A. L., Culotta, C. M., & DiTomasso, N. A. (2014). The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035663>; Epstein, R., Blake, J. J., & Gonzalez, T. (2017) Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood. Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality. <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-inequality-center/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2017/08/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>

⁴⁶³ Okonofua et al. (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1523698113>

⁴⁶⁴ Safran, S. P., & Oswald, K. (2003). Positive Behavior Supports: Can Schools Reshape Disciplinary Practices? *Exceptional Children*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290306900307>

environments but then struggled to maintain progress when key champions such as administrators, teachers, or community leaders moved on.

Schools can take actions to sustain anti-hate programs and cultures in the face of change. One approach is to embed anti-hate initiatives within the practices of the school. For example, ongoing professional development could include regular trainings addressing hate. As described above, hate prevention can be incorporated within school subjects. Sustainability could also be strengthened by establishing policies and practices that feed into the anti-hate programs and become part of the school culture. For example, schools could set up routine listening sessions where students and staff regularly share their experiences with hate. This can help institutions remain responsive to new threats and experiences, update trainings and other initiatives accordingly, and create a culture in which the school community can have regular conversations about the difficult topic of hate.

Implement educational best practices

Though focused anti-hate efforts are important, experts have conveyed to the Commission that following general best practices for education and sustaining investments in schools are fundamental for addressing hate systemically. As one expert described, “Education *is* the inoculation.” High-quality education does more than prepare students academically; it nurtures critical thinking, engagement, and socio-emotional skills. High-quality education provides community, a sense of belonging, and a safe environment for students that promotes trust and positive relationships among members of the school community. All of these are key factors in creating anti-hate climates and reducing hate.

Interim Recommendations for Preventing Hate in Schools

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING HATE IN SCHOOLS

- Invest in school hate prevention research
- Improve support and accountability for the implementation of existing policies
- Consider digital literacy curricula requirements
- Provide state support for teacher training
- Provide support for schools to develop and implement approaches to hate prevention

Invest in school hate prevention research

While there is some research on interventions to prevent hate in schools, the volume of this research pales in comparison to the importance of the problem. California must invest in high-quality, long-term research on hate prevention in K-12 schools. Doing so can ensure that policies and interventions are informed by rigorous, evidence-based research. Below we provide details on specific types of programs and investments that could catalyze research in this area.

Fund research to address critical gaps. There are a few key limitations of existing research on hate prevention interventions that need to be addressed. First, there is a shortage of long-term studies. Second, although many existing programs focus on general outcomes such as empathy-building or bullying prevention, most fail to assess whether they reduce hate specifically. Third, additional research is needed about the impacts of interventions on historically marginalized groups specifically. Finally, experts noted to the Commission that there is also a surprising lack of research on the effectiveness of anti-bias training for educators.

To address these gaps, it is essential to fund research on these topics. Funding could consist of grants from the State as well as from the federal government, philanthropic organizations, universities, and/or private funders. Grants not only provide the financial support needed to conduct research, but they also can incentivize scholars to develop state-of-the-art hate prevention interventions for K-12 schools on critical topics. Moreover, with sufficient funding, the implementation of programs could be monitored and rigorously evaluated to ensure they are beneficial for all students.

Expand existing data efforts. Without robust data collection, we cannot fully understand the scope of hate and bias-related incidents in schools. Currently, statewide bullying data is captured through voluntary surveys. These could be required and expanded. For example, the California Healthy Kids Survey asks ninth and eleventh graders questions related to bias-related bullying. It could include more detailed questions about hate, measuring both overt incidents of hate and more subtle ones, such as microaggressions. It could also be given to students in additional grades. Another approach to understanding the scope of hate is to establish a nimbler statewide survey effort wherein surveys are conducted more frequently but with a smaller, but representative, sample of students. This could allow for the regular monitoring of emerging trends in hate statewide while avoiding the problems of taxing all students in the state with additional survey questions.

Enhance collaborations between researchers and schools. One barrier to better research on hate preventions in schools is access. It is often difficult for researchers to gain access to data from K-12 schools as well as for schools themselves to implement and evaluate interventions. While there are often good reasons for these limitations, including privacy concerns, this hampers the amount of research that could be done. One approach to improving access to schools is to facilitate opportunities for collaboration between K-12 schools statewide and academic institutions. This could be either through mandates, incentives, or programs that encourage collaboration, such as developing a statewide website that matches researchers with specific interests to schools interested in partnering with researchers.

Improve support and accountability for the implementation of existing policies

While California has instituted important policies to protect students from hate, discrimination, and bullying, CBOs and experts consistently reported to the Commission that these policies are not always implemented effectively and equitably. This could be addressed in various ways. Systematic data collection and reporting on the implementation of specific policies could help guide approaches toward better implementation. Better training for school and district staff on existing laws may also be necessary, as described above. Additionally, as described, advocates

have voiced frustration about the lack of follow-through after reporting hate acts to schools. A requirement could be established to require transparent processes for handling reports of discrimination, hate, and bullying.

As described above, advocates have pointed out that AB 2291 (Chapter 491, Statutes of 2018) could be strengthened with new oversight and accountability requirements. This law requires the California Department of Education to offer online training modules on bullying and cyberbullying and for schools to adopt procedures for preventing bullying and cyberbullying. Advocates argue that there are no provisions to track whether schools are using these state-provided training resources and whether schools are adhering to these requirements. To address these concerns, a policy could be instituted that requires greater accountability mechanisms and transparency related to the requirements for schools. Another policy could require an evaluation of the modules.

Consider digital literacy curricula requirements

Ensuring that school curricula address contemporary challenges, such as online hate, is essential for creating safe and inclusive schools. As described, a substantial number of youths have reported experiencing hate online, which can cause psychological and physical harm. Required digital literacy education in K-12 schools should have at least two primary goals: First, it should convey important information to students about online hate, such as the harms it causes, the forms it takes, where they might encounter it, and what to do if they encounter it. Second, it should equip students with the skills to navigate online spaces safely, including skills to critically assess online content and recognize disinformation and misinformation. Doing so could help students better recognize and report hate, as well as reduce the likelihood that they will create or share hate content online. As described, teachers should also be adequately trained in providing such education.

Provide state support for teacher training

As reviewed earlier in this report, teachers play a critical role in creating inclusive learning environments and addressing hate in schools. They should be well-equipped for these tasks. However, teaching is a demanding job with a high rate of burnout.⁴⁶⁵ Thus, as new requirements and responsibilities are established for schools, it is critical to pair them with investments to allow staff the time to thoughtfully implement them.

One step the State can take to support teacher training and schools is to invest in the development and distribution of high-quality trainings, such as those that employ the evidence-based interventions reviewed in this report. The state could support the distribution of such interventions by adopting the most effective trainings as part of state standards.

Beyond intervention-based trainings, another option is for the State to sponsor interschool visits or exchanges for teachers to learn from personnel at other schools. Research has shown that there is significant variation across schools in how well they create safe and inclusive

⁴⁶⁵ Steiner, E.D., Doan, S., Woo, A., Gittens, A.D., Lawrence, R.A., Berdie, L., Wolfe, R.L., Greer, L., & Schwartz, H.L. (2022). Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools. RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-4.html

environments, with some schools being exceptionally effective.⁴⁶⁶ Sponsoring interschool exchanges and visits could allow school staff to observe how practices are implemented in other schools, consult with the staff at other schools, and facilitate the creation of networks between schools in order to exchange learnings.

Provide support for schools to develop and implement approaches to hate prevention

As stated, a one-size-fits-all approach to hate prevention in schools is unlikely to be effective statewide. Solutions appear to be more effective when they are designed by, and tailored for, local contexts and specific communities. Moreover, it is important to plan for sustainability of positive school climates. However, developing such a program requires resources.

The State could establish or promote a grant program for the development of hate prevention programs that draw on these best practices. For example, grants could fund programs that take any or several of the following approaches: building sustainable programs that support long-term hate prevention, developing local solutions in partnership with the school community, youth-led program development, and tailoring initiatives to meet the needs of specific student populations.

The key strength of such a grant program is that it would allow schools to innovate and pursue solutions to hate that fit with their specific contexts and needs. Furthermore, this approach could support school autonomy in the development of anti-hate initiatives, which may help with buy-in and commitment across the school community.

Conclusion

The impact of hate on students and staff in K-12 schools necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to prevention. As discussed, no single approach is sufficient for addressing hate, and the best solutions may be those that are locally created and tailored to the needs of the school community. Informed by research, subject matter expertise, and community input, we introduced 11 interim evidence-based guiding principles for preventing hate in schools, and five interim policy recommendations.

We end with a broad recommendation to invest in the overall well-being of schools. Hate in schools persists for a host of reasons, but in many cases, it exists for the same reason other types of harmful behaviors occur – students may feel unengaged, unsafe, and/or unsupported. They may also be lacking access to necessary resources. Similarly, the capacity of school staff to adequately address hate often hinges on the availability of supports and resources. This includes the institutional support to lead class discussions about sensitive topics and the time to develop new programs, engage with trainings, and to incorporate hate prevention into their classroom culture and lesson plans. Thus, basic investments in improving schools overall may be quite effective at addressing hate, including investments in school staff, humanities and arts programs, and extracurricular programs that allow students to engage in positive intergroup

⁴⁶⁶ Astor et al. (2009). <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208329598>

content and self-expression. Such investments are key to both enhancing academic achievement and creating safe and inclusive environments for students and staff.

Chapter 5

Activities of the Commission:
July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025



Over the past year, the Commission has approached its strategic goals through gathering input from community members and learning from research and data. We held community forums to share information with the public and learn from communities' experiences with hate, as well as their suggestions for combating it. Between 2024-2025, we partnered in hosting forums with other state bodies: the California Civil Rights Council, the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), and the Racial Equity Commission (REC). We also experimented with a new format for our community forums. In December 2024, we hosted roundtable listening sessions with community members, many of whom are underrepresented in data on hate. In addition to proactively gathering community input, we conducted a number of in-house research projects and partnered with academic researchers at the state's leading research institutions. Among other projects, we also partnered with the Initiative to Study Hate at UCLA to host a first-of-its-kind convening of scholars and policy experts to generate approaches to preventing hate.

MEETINGS OF THE FULL COMMISSION

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the Commission has held eight public meetings: July 24, 2024; August 28, 2024; October 23, 2024; December 9, 2024; February 26, 2025; March 26, 2025; May 2, 2025; and May 28, 2025. In the first meeting of 2025, on February 26 of that year, the Commission elected Brian Levin and Andrea Beth Damsky to be chair and vice chair, respectively. Each meeting was publicly accessible and provided a notice and agenda, adhering to the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

The Commission meetings featured speakers on various topics. In the December 9, 2024, meeting, Assemblymember Chris Ward gave a presentation on the efforts of the California Legislature and California Legislative LGBTQ caucus to combat hate. In addition, Professor Yotam Shem-Tov and Professor Shirin Sinnar, a former Commission member, presented research on the application of restorative justice practices to hate crimes. Professor Sinnar discussed the breadth of restorative justice programs and challenges to their implementation. Professor Shem-Tov described his research on a youth-based restorative justice program that led to significant reductions in recidivism. Chair Levin also presented his findings at Commission meetings, describing key trends in hate crimes based on the latest available data. These presentations included hate crime trends in cities across the United States, the underreporting of hate crimes, and increases in hate relative to catalytic events.

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Since July 1, 2024, the Commission has held three community forums. Two of the forums were conducted in collaboration with community partners and other California commissions. On September 26, 2024, the Commission hosted a forum in collaboration with the California Civil Rights Council at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center. Titled "Inclusive Justice: Addressing Hate and Upholding Civil Rights for People with Disabilities," the forum featured presentations from the following subject matter experts: Eric Harris, associate executive director of external affairs of Disability Rights California; Professor Karen Nakamura of the University of California,

Berkeley; and Greg deGiere, civil rights advocate at the Arc of California. As described in Chapter Two, the presenters discussed ongoing challenges for people with disabilities and recommendations for the protection of people with disabilities from hate violence and other harms. Over 100 members of the public attended, many of whom shared their experiences with anti-disability hate and discrimination.

On December 4, 2024, the Commission hosted a joint community forum listening session with CAPIAA and the REC titled “Together We Rise: Sharing Stories of Discrimination, Healing, and Change in Fresno” at the Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM). The forum was open to all, and ahead of the forum, FIRM conducted targeted outreach with members of the local communities they serve, including the Punjabi, Oaxacan, Hmong, Cambodian/Khmer, Afghan, and migrant communities. Many of the attendees spoke a language other than English and used real-time listening devices to share their experiences of hate and discrimination with Commission members. Commissioners Regina Cuellar and former Commissioner Cece Feiler attended on behalf of the Commission. Overall, four main themes emerged related to the challenges faced by these communities: safety and security, language access, discrimination broadly, and the overall well-being of their communities. See Chapter 2 for more details.

On May 22, 2025, the Commission hosted a community forum to uplift the work of community-based organizations serving immigrant communities titled “Hate Against Immigrant Communities: Resources and Solutions from Community-Based Organizations.” The forum featured presentations from three organizations in different regions of the state. Speakers included Emily Romero, program coordinator for the Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights; Annie Lee, managing director of policy for Chinese for Affirmative Action; and Christine Barker, executive director of Fresno Immigrant and Refugee Ministries. Each speaker discussed patterns and trends in anti-immigrant hate activity that they were observing in their communities. They also described the specific services their organizations provide, as well as their organizations’ efforts to protect the rights of immigrants. The forum was attended by over 50 members of the public.

RESEARCH PARTNERS

Government Code section 8010 requires the Commission to engage in fact-finding and data collection on hate. In accordance with this mandate, the Commission has invested in rigorous data and research to inform and develop evidence-based policy recommendations. The following is a list of formal research partnerships the Commission has established to date.

Initiative to Study Hate, UCLA. The Initiative to Study Hate (ISH) at UCLA is an interdisciplinary research institute that supports cutting-edge research and fosters collaborations between subject matter experts and policymakers to better understand and reduce hate. The Commission has contracted with ISH to provide ongoing research support for its efforts, including literature reviews related to mental health interventions in response to hate, bystander intervention trainings, and hate prevention in K-12 schools. As described, the Commission also partnered with ISH to host a convening on preventing hate online and in schools.

California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), UCLA Center for Health Policy and Research. The CHIS, which is administered by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, is the nation’s largest state health survey. The Commission has maintained an ongoing partnership with CHIS to carry out several research projects related to the measurement of hate. Most significantly, the Commission entered survey questions into the 2023, 2024, and 2025 CHIS. CHIS also led the design, testing, and fielding of the survey questions and conducted a qualitative research study with victims of hate in California in 2024.

Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law is the nation’s leading research center on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy. Given the disproportionate impacts of hate on the LGBTQ+ community and the dearth of data on hate against the trans community in California, the Commission has partnered with the Williams Institute to conduct projects that address important gaps in the research on hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people in California.

Professor Joseph B. Walther, University of California, Santa Barbara. The Commission has partnered with Professor Walther at UCSB to conduct research on hate prevention on social media. This project includes two literature reviews – one examining the prevalence, characteristics, and impact of online hate, and another analyzing strategies for counter-speech, or replies to hate. Additionally, a field experiment is being conducted on the effectiveness of various counter-messages in reducing hate speech.

Chapter 6

Conclusion



In this year's report we described detailed patterns and trends in hate in California, including how hate impacts many communities across the state. Our findings were informed by the first representative, statewide dataset measuring Californians' experiences with hate. We also continued our focus on hate's intersection with public institutions, including its role in elections and its impacts on public officials. We reviewed evidence of law enforcement responses to hate, identifying persistent gaps in data and training in California. Drawing on peer-reviewed research, we also provided evidence of various mental health approaches for helping people impacted by hate.

To help build a California free of hate, we identified evidence-based, community-informed recommendations for hate prevention. We examined prevention with respect to three topics: online hate, hate in schools, and the effectiveness of public messaging campaigns. Online hate is complex, and we describe a set of considerations that often hinder efforts to address it. Despite these complexities, we described strategic approaches that appear promising for reducing hate online and its impacts. Building on our findings in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, we introduced a broader set of principles for guiding efforts to prevent and reduce hate in schools. These principles drew heavily on the input of community-based organizations, educational experts, and research. Similarly, we introduced a broader set of principles for the development and implementation of public messages targeted at reducing hate.

Across our work, we introduced interim recommendations for policies to address hate in California. Many of these recommendations are broad, strategic approaches, and we provide more specific details on how they could be applied throughout the report. Importantly, though the policy recommendations could be adopted statewide, many could be adopted by local bodies, such as school boards, police commissions, and other local government bodies.

In addition to policy recommendations, we introduced two interim sets of tools to guide hate prevention efforts. These tools can be used by a range of groups, including practitioners designing evidence-based interventions to prevent hate, community-based organizations developing anti-hate programs, communications professionals creating public service announcements, parents selecting a program to protect their children from online hate, teachers designing messages against hate in their classrooms, and school administrators intent on building a school culture free of hate.

Despite the evidence the Commission has collected to date, the policies and tools introduced should be considered preliminary. We introduce interim recommendations each year to balance our obligations to engage in thorough, continuous fact-finding and the pressing need to provide guidance to address the crisis of hate today. Over the next year we will continue to gather new evidence, which may result in modifications to the interim recommendations. But given the devastating impacts of hate that Californians are experiencing today, it was important to provide guidance based on the best available evidence the Commission has gathered and analyzed to date.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

As we describe below, over the next year, the Commission will continue to advance each of its strategic goals. To do so, we will continue our work conducting research and learning from subject matter experts and communities across California.

Comprehensive Accounting of Hate

To continue to provide a comprehensive accounting of hate, the Commission will continue gathering evidence from a variety of sources, both qualitative and quantitative. The next Commission report will contain data analyses based on two years of data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). With a more robust dataset, we expect these analyses will allow us to speak to more detailed patterns and trends impacting specific groups. To develop a more in-depth understanding of patterns and trends in hate, we will also continue to learn from communities through community forums and listening sessions.

Resources and Support

To develop recommendations for enhancing resources and support, we will draw on additional research and data. The Commission added survey questions to the 2024 CHIS designed to measure the impacts of hate, the needs of victims, and their access to resources and services. Because the survey data can be analyzed on a smaller geographic level, the data may yield insights into the statewide landscape of available resources and services for victims of hate. For example, the data can show whether resources or services are less available in rural or urban areas or in certain counties. We expect to provide analyses of these data in next year's report.

The Commission will continue to explore the role of the criminal legal system in responding to hate. Next year, we plan to provide findings from original research conducted by UCLA's Williams Institute on hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people in California. These studies will provide insights into, among other topics, patterns and trends related to anti-transgender hate crimes in California and LGBTQ+ interactions with law enforcement. The research will also consider the unique threats and challenges that LGBTQ+ people of color encounter when they interact with law enforcement. A separate project will analyze patterns in recidivism and punishment with respect to hate crime offenders. We will also gather additional evidence on the role of restorative justice in responding to hate crimes.

The Commission will continue to explore resources and support outside of the criminal legal system. We plan to review evidence related to the effectiveness of bystander intervention trainings when applied to interactions involving hate.

Prevention

To develop additional recommendations for preventing and reducing hate, the Commission will continue its research on online hate prevention. In next year's report we expect to include findings from research on counter-messaging. This research is designed to measure the effectiveness of different approaches in replying to hate posts online. The Commission will also

gather evidence of successful hate prevention efforts broadly, searching for best practices and case studies both locally and outside the state.

Other Activities

Over the next year, the Commission plans to engage with communities across the state. We will continue to host community forums throughout the state to provide information on pressing topics and proactively gather input from the public. During Commission meetings, we plan to host more regular presentations from subject matter experts on various topics, similar to the Commission’s December 9, 2024, meeting featuring presentations on restorative justice. We also plan to develop presentations, stand-alone tool kits, and other resources to present our findings in a clear and accessible way for the public.

MOVING FORWARD

Over the past year, our continued fact-finding efforts point to several challenges. Our analysis of patterns and trends underscores the point that hate continues to be a stubborn, wide-ranging problem. Our discussions with community members reveal that, though California has robust laws protecting its residents, there are significant gaps in implementation and enforcement. Our reviews of research point to promising general directions for preventing hate but also illuminate significant gaps in academic knowledge on hate. Additionally, despite our significant fact-finding efforts, we have yet to encounter a one-size-fits-all prevention program that could be implemented statewide.

Despite these challenges, our efforts point to a few ways forward. For example, we highlight the importance of supporting local prevention solutions that are evidence-based and designed in partnership with communities. We also highlight the importance of fostering collaborations between policymakers and scholars to catalyze evidence-based policies and policy-informed research. Our recommendations include suggestions for closing gaps in existing laws and establishing programs and structures to enhance the State’s responses to hate.

The Commission wishes to remind policymakers, community-based organizations, and the people of California that a key activity of the Commission is advisement. Questions or requests

“ We end with a call to the people of California to share their stories and have their voices heard. ”

for meetings can be sent to CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov. Understanding that the recommendations and tools provided in this report are preliminary, we are available to provide additional context and guidance.

” We end with a call to the people of California to share their stories and have their voices heard. As a public body, the Commission is committed to hearing from members of the public. Community forums and public

meetings are open to all and include time for public comments. In addition, public comments may be sent to the Commission through its email address CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov. It is only through understanding the experiences of the people of California that the Commission can help create a California free of hate.

Appendix A

Data on the Prevalence of Hate in California

Several governmental and nongovernmental entities collect data on hate activity in California using varied approaches.

The Commission has found four primary sources of data about hate activity in California:

- Data collected by law enforcement
- Representative data from surveys
- Community-based data
- Administrative data collected by non-law-enforcement governmental entities

In this section, we review each type of data and explain its strengths and limitations. Then we describe the patterns and trends gleaned from these data and other sources.

Law Enforcement Data

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 13023, law enforcement agencies in California are required to report hate crimes to the California Department of Justice (DOJ). Using this data, the Office of the Attorney General publishes statewide statistics on hate crimes, available online at openjustice.doj.ca.gov/resources/publications. Additionally, local law enforcement agencies are required to post the data and information reported to the DOJ on their websites monthly.

Nationally, law enforcement agencies may also choose to voluntarily report data on hate crimes to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) or the newer National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). However, because data submission is voluntary, many law enforcement agencies do not do so. Moreover, in 2021, the FBI initially required all law enforcement agencies to report hate crime data only through the newer system, NIBRS, but many law enforcement agencies were unable or unwilling to submit their data through this system. As a result, national data on hate crimes compiled by the FBI contains significant gaps.

A key strength of law enforcement data is that, for the most part, it is collected relatively consistently over time each year and can therefore indicate broad trends in many types of hate crimes across the state and over time. In addition, a law enforcement agency only reports those events that the agency considers to be a hate crime. As a result, law enforcement data is frequently cited in news reports to speak to year-over-year changes in hate crimes in California.

Despite the importance of law enforcement data for understanding patterns and trends in hate crimes, evidence indicates that these data underestimate the true prevalence of hate activity. According to one estimate, nationally, law enforcement data may only capture 3% of the total number of hate crimes that actually happen.⁴⁶⁷ One source of this underestimation is variation

⁴⁶⁷ Sill & Haskins (2023). <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/using-research-improve-hate-crime-reporting-id/#:~:text=Federal%20Data%20Captures%20Roughly%201,5> (compares FBI hate crime data to data from the National Crime Victimization Survey.)

in how law enforcement officers and other staff record and investigate suspected reports of hate crimes. This variation can arise from several factors, including differences in resources, training, policies, and emphasis placed on investigating reports of hate across law enforcement agencies.

A second source of the underestimation of law enforcement data is that many times members of the public do not report hate crimes to law enforcement. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects nationally representative data on hate crimes, finds that about two in five (42%) violent hate crime victimizations were never reported to law enforcement.⁴⁶⁸ This gap may actually be larger, however, because the NCVS undersamples some of the same populations that are less likely to report hate crimes to law enforcement, such as immigrants and youth.

The reasons for not reporting to law enforcement are diverse and often reflect individual and community experiences. For instance, some communities may be reluctant to report due to distrust arising from negative law enforcement encounters in the past or a fear of the potential consequences of involvement with the criminal legal system. This is particularly true for undocumented people and other immigrants who may fear that reporting will result in negative consequences, such as deportation or being denied a visa. They may also face practical barriers, such as language barriers or a lack of cultural competence among law enforcement officers. In other cases, hate activity against particular communities may be so normalized that community members do not believe it warrants reporting. For some individuals and communities, reporting may not seem worthwhile if they reported in the past and never saw evidence of an investigation or prosecution. In addition, individuals in communities that have disproportionately experienced mistreatment from law enforcement and over-policing may be reluctant to report to these entities.

Importantly, law enforcement data often do not consistently capture noncriminal hate incidents, which, like hate crimes, can cause significant harm to individuals and communities. It is an open question whether and to what extent law enforcement should collect noncriminal hate incident data. On one hand, some law enforcement agencies, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, collect reports of hate incidents. Collecting incident data, if done well, would be useful for providing a fuller understanding of hate activity overall (although this understanding would be limited to hate activity reported to law enforcement). Law enforcement agencies that collect hate incident data also provide a channel for members of the public to report noncriminal hate incidents. In some cases, this information may help law enforcement with investigations of hate crimes. On the other hand, law enforcement's collection of hate incident data may have adverse collateral effects, such as violations of privacy and chilling effects on speech and expression. Moreover, many individuals may not feel safe reporting hate incidents to law enforcement. Consequently, a more effective governmental approach for reporting hate incidents and compiling such data may be through channels not affiliated with law enforcement, such as *California vs Hate (CA vs Hate)*.

⁴⁶⁸ Kena & Thompson (2021). https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/hcv0519_1.pdf

Representative Data

A second category of data, representative datasets, consists of surveys that ask a sample of people that is reflective of a population about their experiences with hate activity. The primary strength of these datasets is that they allow researchers to develop reliable inferences about patterns and trends across large populations. This is done by employing sophisticated sampling techniques that survey a relatively small number of people. Another strength of surveys, generally, is that they can overcome the underreporting limitation of law enforcement data. Because surveys proactively reach out to a sample of people, rather than relying on a person to report, they can measure whether a crime or incident happened regardless of whether the victim reported it to law enforcement or any other entity.

An example of a statewide representative survey is UCLA's California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), which surveys households each year on a range of health matters, including experiences with hate. Because the CHIS uses a rigorous sampling strategy that randomly surveys 20,000 households across the state, including targeted oversampling of underrepresented populations, researchers can use CHIS data to make robust inferences about tens of millions of people statewide as well as the populations in 41 of California's 58 counties. As we discuss in more detail in Appendix B, the Commission, the Civil Rights Department, and CA vs Hate staff have been partnering with the CHIS to include additional questions to understand how hate has impacted Californians.

Other examples of representative datasets that measure topics related to hate include the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, administered by the U.S. Census Bureau; the California Healthy Kids Survey, sponsored by the California Department of Education; Stop AAPI Hate's AAPI Civil Rights Survey 2022, administered by NORC at the University of Chicago; and the Human Rights Campaign and University of Connecticut's LGBTQ+ Youth Surveys.

Representative datasets are critical for gaining a broad, representative picture of hate activity, but it is important to understand their potential limitations. These limitations vary across datasets, but we describe a few common limitations here. In surveys, some respondents may skip certain questions, especially those that are confusing or sensitive, resulting in missing data points. Additionally, like many of the other types of data discussed, some populations may be systematically undercounted or excluded, depending on the sampling strategy of the survey. For instance, surveys that employ a sampling strategy using addresses or places of residence may exclude people living on military bases, those living in institutional settings (that is, correctional or hospital facilities), and the unhoused population. In practice, there may also be individuals who are underrepresented because they are reluctant to participate in the survey. This can include individuals who do not legally reside in the United States, who primarily speak a language other than those offered by the survey, or who are disinclined to trust authority figures or governmental agents, such as those administering the survey questions. Nevertheless, representative datasets can address many of these limitations through various techniques, including sampling strategies that oversample specific populations and a statistical technique known as weighting, which involves adjusting how a representative dataset is

analyzed so that the results are more inclusive of the broader population being studied. Indeed, many datasets, such as the CHIS, invest in targeted oversampling and weighting to develop datasets that speak to the experiences of smaller populations.

Some representative surveys, such as the CHIS, include supplemental interviews of a subset of respondents to gather in-depth, qualitative information. Because surveys are often limited in the types of questions they can ask respondents, supplemental interviews can be helpful for asking more complex questions and gathering details. In addition, interviews give interviewers opportunities to ask clarifying questions, enhancing the ability of researchers to understand complex topics and responses in more depth than survey questions allow.

Community-Based Data

A third category of datasets is community based. These data are primarily gathered by community-based organizations (CBOs) through various methods, such as nonrepresentative surveys, reporting portals that allow anyone to report hate directly, or documentation of requests these organizations receive from individuals seeking assistance with a hate crime or incident. Given the barriers to reporting to law enforcement among some communities, in some respects, the data collected by nongovernmental organizations and CBOs can provide a more comprehensive, qualitative, and sometimes real-time understanding of hate activity than law enforcement data alone. Not only are these organizations trusted by community members, but they also often allow people to report in their preferred languages. In some cases, they also help people connect to resources, which incentivizes reporting and addresses the immediate needs of those harmed. Some of the community-based datasets on hate include data from Stop AAPI Hate's reporting portal, the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hate Map, the Council on American-Islamic Relations' incident report tracker and their report on bullying in California, the Anti-Defamation League's incident reporting portal, and the Human Rights Campaign's surveys on violence against LGBTQ+ populations and online hate.

As with all datasets, community-based datasets can have limitations, though the exact limitations vary across different datasets. Some datasets are not collected using statistical sampling techniques, resulting in challenges to making valid statistical inferences about patterns and trends within the broader population. In addition, data from reporting portals is often limited to those who are aware of the reporting portal and are inclined to report. Some factors can limit reporting, such as reporting fatigue or limited access to technology. Furthermore, although some organizations organize and publish analyses of their data, some organizations do not have the resources to do so. Finally, it is difficult to combine findings from various datasets to examine overall patterns and trends, as organizations often collect data in varying ways, such as using different definitions of hate activity.

Despite their potential limitations, community-based datasets are critical for portraying the landscape of hate that communities face. They often provide deep qualitative insights that are essential for understanding the state of hate, such as how hate manifests, why it occurs, the range of impacts it has, and the barriers individuals may face to getting support. These datasets also give voice to members of communities who face barriers to reporting elsewhere.

Non-Law-Enforcement Governmental Data

A fourth category of datasets consists of administrative data collected by non-law-enforcement governmental entities, including local, state, and federal agencies. For example, CA vs Hate, which was officially launched in May 2023, encourages people from around California to report hate and connects them to resources. CA vs Hate publishes a summary of its data every few months. As discussed in the Commission's previous report, data collected from CA vs Hate complements existing datasets in several respects. First, the phone line and online portal allow people to report both hate crimes and hate incidents. Second, because CA vs Hate is not a law enforcement reporting channel, people who do not feel comfortable reporting to law enforcement may be more likely to report to CA vs Hate and get support. Third, it allows individuals to report in over 200 languages, reducing barriers to reporting among people who primarily speak a language other than English. Fourth, it incentivizes people to report by offering them support with accessing culturally competent services. As a result, data from CA vs Hate can also provide important information about the resources that Californians need in the aftermath of hate.

Another type of administrative dataset consists of data that the California Department of Social Services collects from organizations that received Stop the Hate grants. These data can speak to the range of activities the grantees are engaged in and the number of people they have served. In addition, the California Department of Social Services is conducting an impact evaluation of grantees. The Commission anticipates that this evaluation will provide a deeper, systematic understanding of these organizations' activities and their impacts.

The limitations of governmental data vary depending on the source. As with law enforcement data, some non-law-enforcement governmental data may not fully capture the experiences of communities who distrust government resources. A challenge of data from reporting lines is that they are one of many resources available for Californians to report hate incidents. As a result, while some people may report to just one reporting line, others may report to multiple. This makes merging datasets challenging. A limitation of CA vs Hate data specifically is that, as a relatively new resource, many people may not be aware of it. This makes the data somewhat limited for understanding deeper trends statewide, especially changes in patterns over time. As Californians become more aware of and use CA vs Hate, the data will likely provide a more robust picture of patterns and trends in hate across the state.

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations addresses many of these limitations through an innovative, rigorous data synthesis process. Each year, it publishes an annual accounting of hate in the county through a synthesis of data from law enforcement, school districts and universities, community-based organizations, and reports to LA vs Hate.⁴⁶⁹ For their annual reports on hate crimes, a team of researchers compiles reports of hate and analyzes the data, removing duplicate reports and reviewing each case to verify that it meets the criteria of the California penal code definition of a hate crime. Although this process requires considerable

⁴⁶⁹ LA vs Hate is a community-centered system designed to support all residents and communities targeted for hate acts of all kinds in Los Angeles County. LA vs Hate allows residents of Los Angeles County to report hate crimes and hate incidents online or over the phone.

time, resources, and expertise, it produces a dataset that harnesses the strengths of data from community-based organizations, law enforcement, and direct reports from victims to provide a more detailed accounting of hate than any of the datasets provide independently. These nuances include quantifying levels of hate crime activity targeted at specific racial and ethnic communities and detailed information about the intent of the perpetrator. But as with all datasets, there are limitations. The combined dataset does not contain information about hate crimes that are never reported to the organizations represented in the dataset. Moreover, reports of hate that do not meet the legal definition of a hate crime, such as noncriminal hate incidents, are not included in the report.

Appendix B

OVERVIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY

Background

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) is an annual population-based, omnibus health survey of Californians. It is the largest continuous state health survey in the country. Overall, the CHIS sample is designed to provide population estimates for most California counties and all major ethnic groups, including several ethnic subgroups. Population estimates are calculated by extrapolating from the sample data using a methodology that applies sample weights to compensate for possible sampling and selection biases. More information about the CHIS, including background, design, and methodology, can be found on UCLA's Center for Health Policy Research website:

<https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/california-health-interview-survey-chis/about-chis>

<https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/california-health-interview-survey-chis/chis-design-and-methods/chis-design>

CHIS respondents (2023)

In 2023, over 21,000 adults (18+), nearly 1,000 teens (12 to 17 years old), and over 3,000 children (0 to 11 years old) participated in the CHIS survey. The numbers presented in this report are based on only adult and teen respondents, as children were not asked about their experiences with hate.

Participants are recruited from households across California. Households are randomly sampled based on a geographically stratified, address-based sample design that incorporates strategic oversampling of households predicted to have certain attributes. To accommodate a broad range of respondents, the CHIS is conducted in seven languages: English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

The CHIS sample is designed to meet and optimize two goals: To provide local-level estimates for counties with populations of 60,000 or more, and to provide statewide estimates for California's overall population and its major race/ethnic groups, as well as for several Asian and Latine ethnic groups.

For more detailed information, see https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/chis-2023-sample-design_final_08212024.pdf

Appendix C

LOCATION CATEGORIES OF THE DOJ DATA

To harmonize data between the CHIS and the DOJ, the DOJ locations were grouped into the following categories that corresponded to the locations listed in the CHIS.

- **Street or Sidewalk**
 - Highway/road/alley/street
 - Parking lot/garage
- **Store, Theater, Gas Station, or Other Business**
 - ATM separate from bank
 - Auto dealership new/used
 - Bank/savings and loan
 - Bar/nightclub
 - Convenience store
 - Day care facility
 - Department/discount store
 - Drug store/doctor office/hospital
 - Gambling facility/casino/race track
 - Government/public building
 - Grocery/supermarket
 - Hotel/motel/etc.
 - Liquor store
 - Rental storage facility
 - Restaurant
 - Service/gas station
 - Shopping mall
 - Specialty store (TV/fur/etc.)
- **Home**
 - Residence/home/driveway
 - Shelter/mission/homeless
- **Work**
 - Commercial/office building
 - Construction site
 - Dock/wharf/freight/modal terminal
 - Farm facility
 - Industrial site

- **Online**
 - Cyberspace
- **School**
 - School, college/university
 - School, elementary/secondary

Appendix D

PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSION

Chair

Brian Levin – Gubernatorial Appointee

Vice Chair

Andrea Beth Damsky – Senate Rules Committee Appointee

Commission members

Cynthia Choi – Gubernatorial Appointee

Regina Cuellar – Speaker of the Assembly Appointee

Russell Roybal – Senate Rules Committee Appointee

Bamby Salcedo – Gubernatorial Appointee

Erroll G. Southers – Gubernatorial Appointee

Ex-officio members of the Commission

Monisha Avery – Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

Damon Brown – Office of the Attorney General

Commission staff

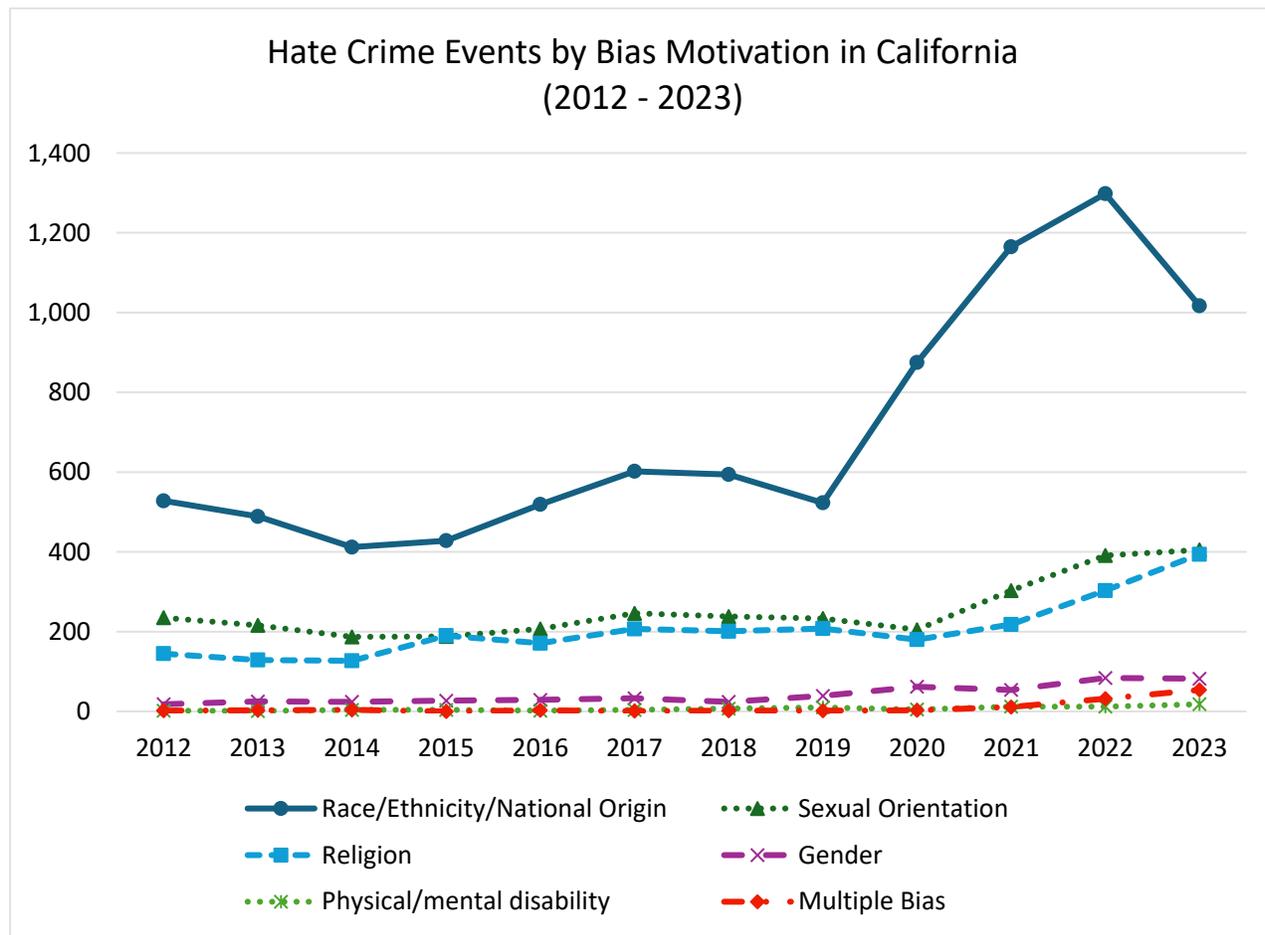
The following staff at the California Civil Rights Department provided substantial support for the Commission’s work:

- Kevin Kish, Director
- Rishi Khalsa, Deputy Director for Communications
- Alec Watts, Assistant Deputy Director of Research and Policy*
- Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist*
- David Kalkstein, Research Data Specialist*
- Kevin D. Thomas, Research Data Specialist*
- Monica Chavez, Analyst*
- Zelene Molina, Program Manager*

**Position funded by the annual appropriation for the work of the Commission on the State of Hate*

Appendix E

STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS IN REPORTED HATE CRIMES

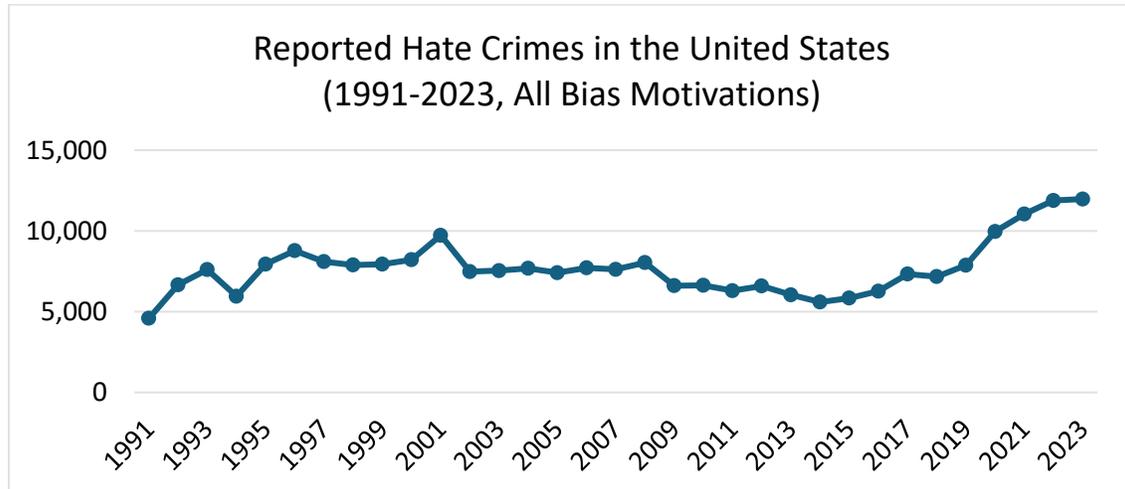


Source: California Department of Justice (accessed May 2025)

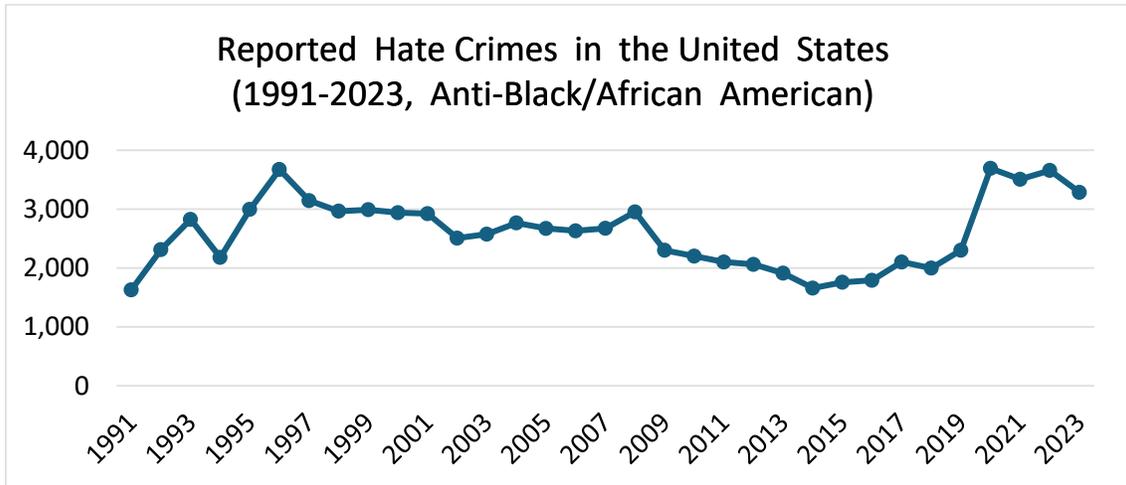
HATE CRIME EVENTS BY BIAS MOTIVATION (2012 – 2023)

Year	Race/Ethnicity/ National Origin	Sexual Orientation	Religion	Gender	Physical/Mental Disability	Multiple Biases	Total
2012	528	235	145	18	2	2	930
2013	489	216	129	25	1	3	863
2014	412	187	127	24	4	4	758
2015	428	188	190	27	4	0	837
2016	519	207	171	29	2	3	931
2017	602	246	207	33	4	1	1093
2018	594	238	201	24	7	2	1066
2019	523	233	208	39	10	2	1015
2020	875	205	180	62	5	3	1330
2021	1165	303	218	54	12	11	1763
2022	1298	391	303	84	12	32	2120
2023	1017	405	394	82	18	54	1970

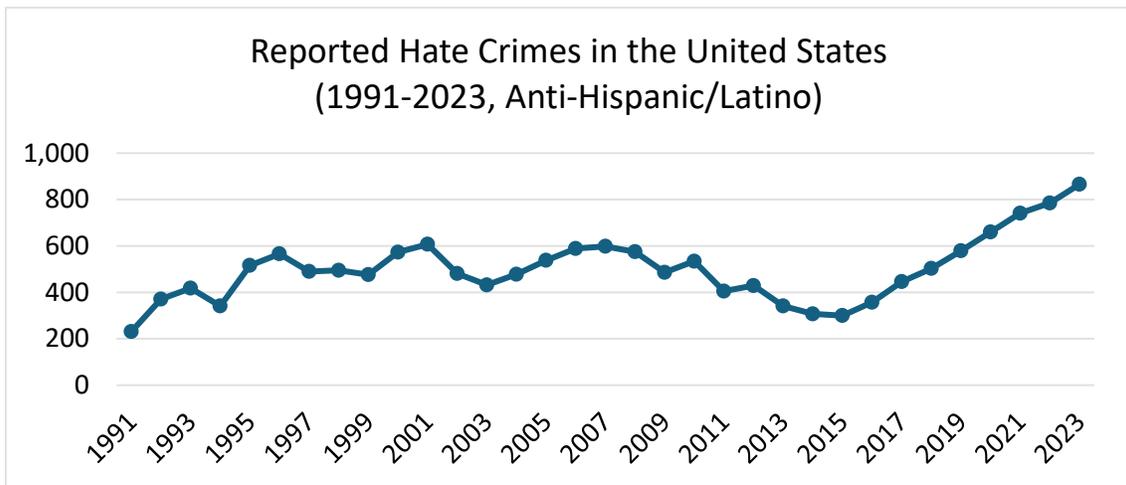
Source: California Department of Justice
(accessed May 2025)



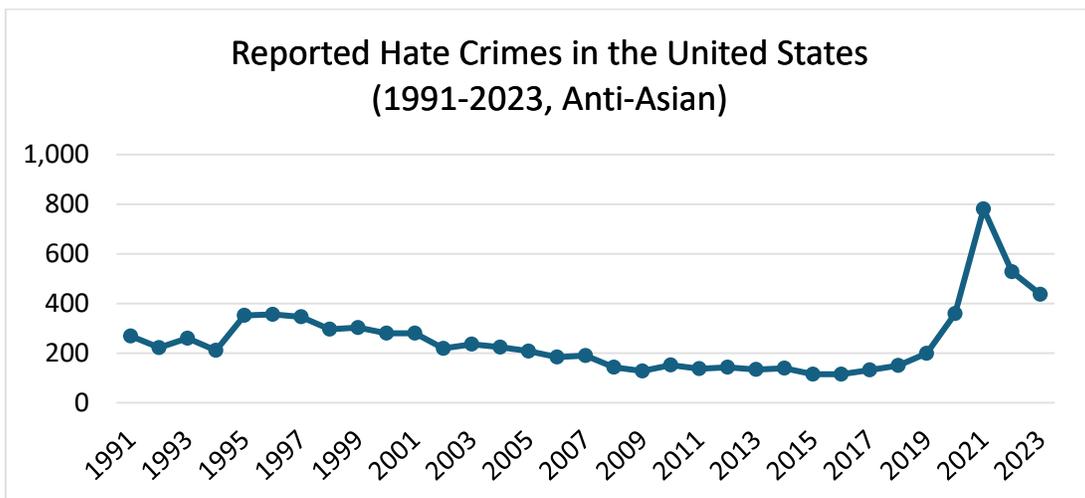
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



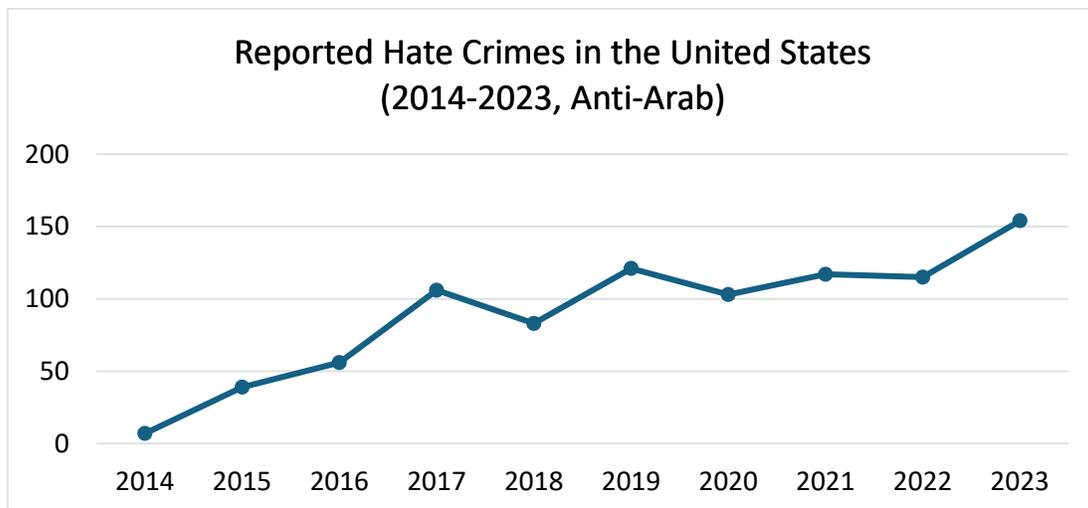
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



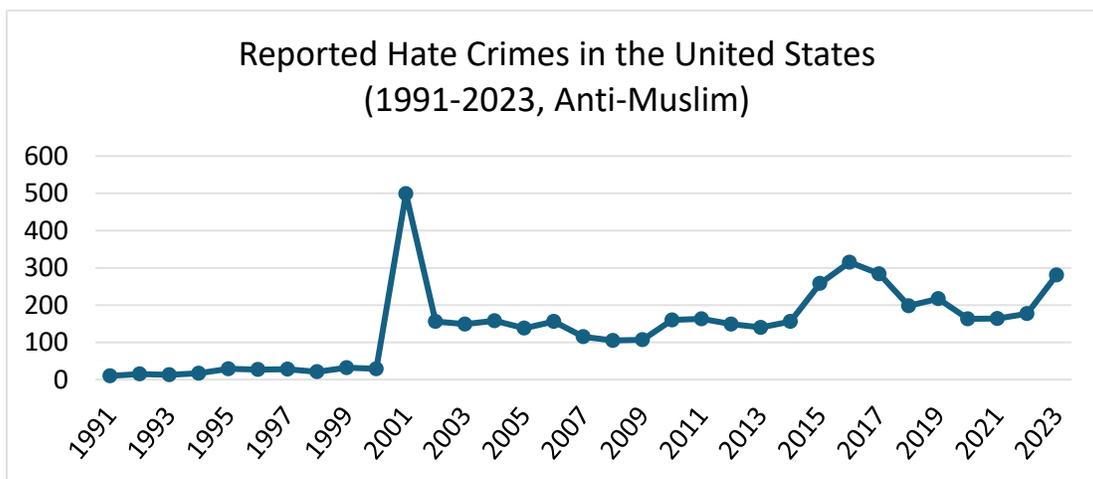
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



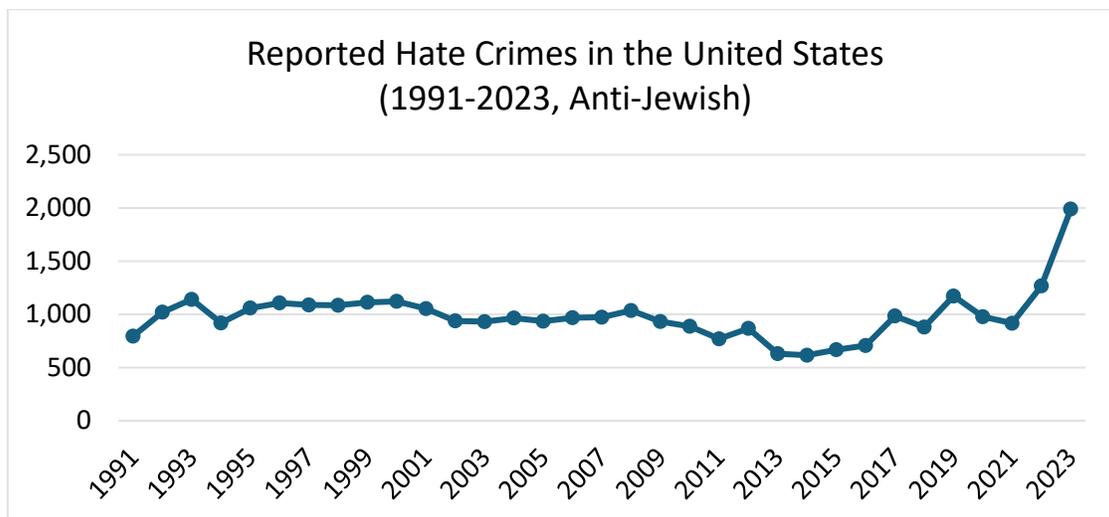
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



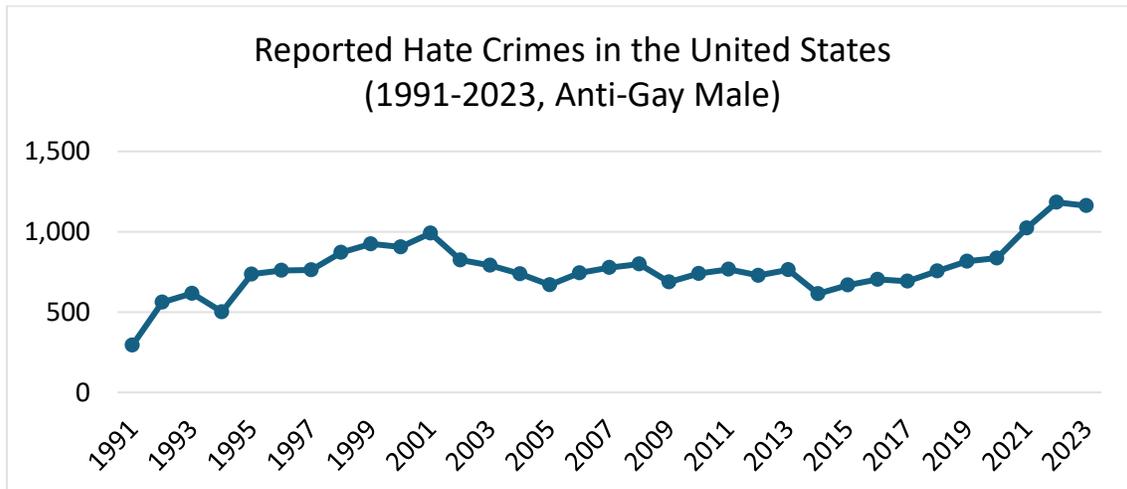
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



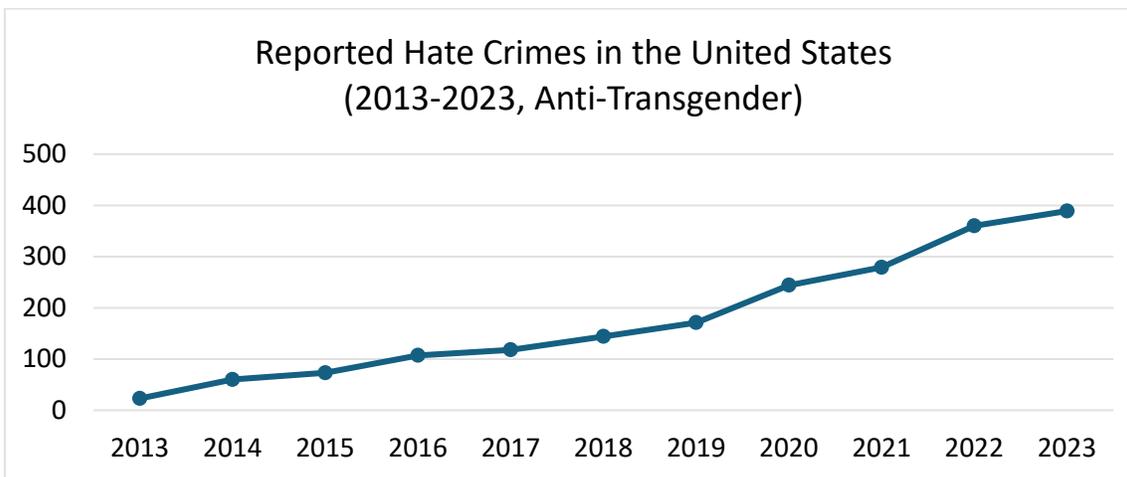
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



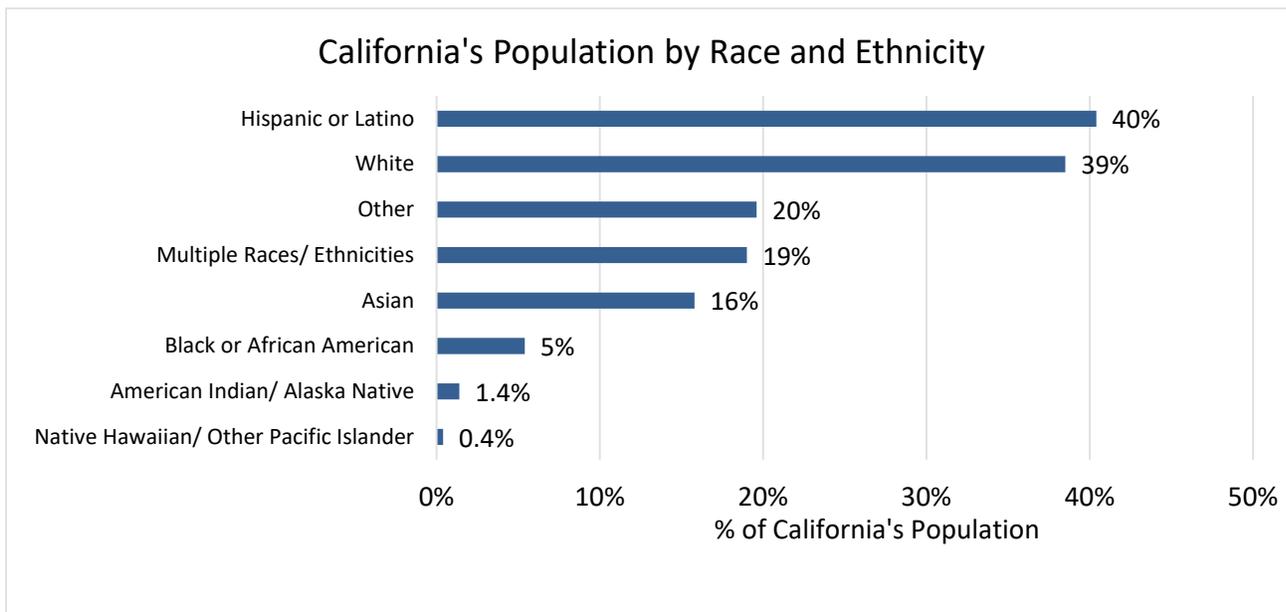
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer



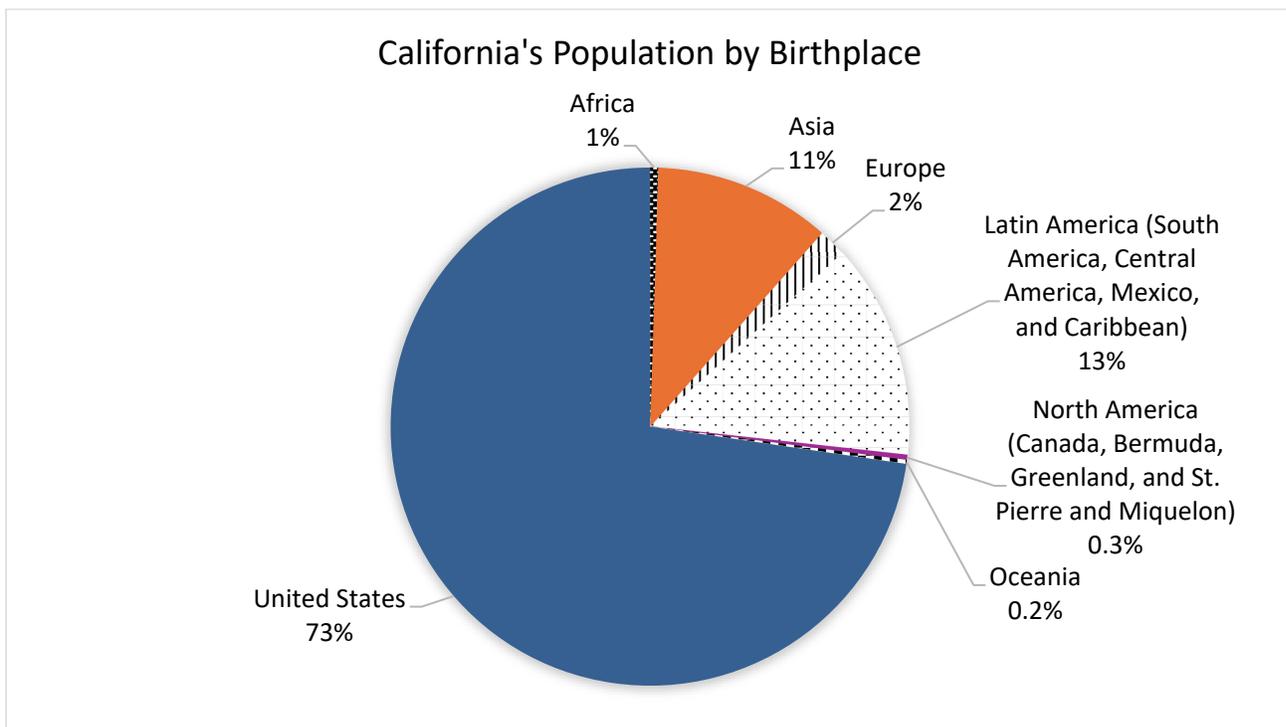
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer

Appendix F

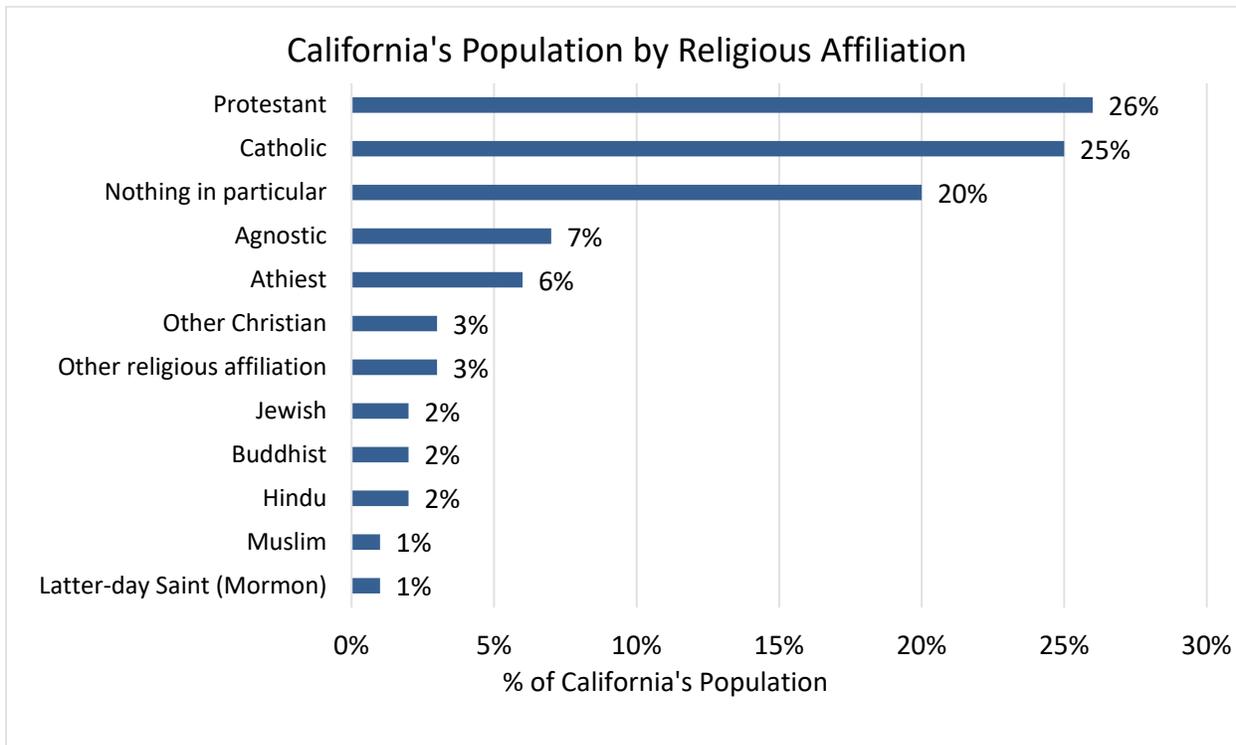
DEMOGRAPHICS OF CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION



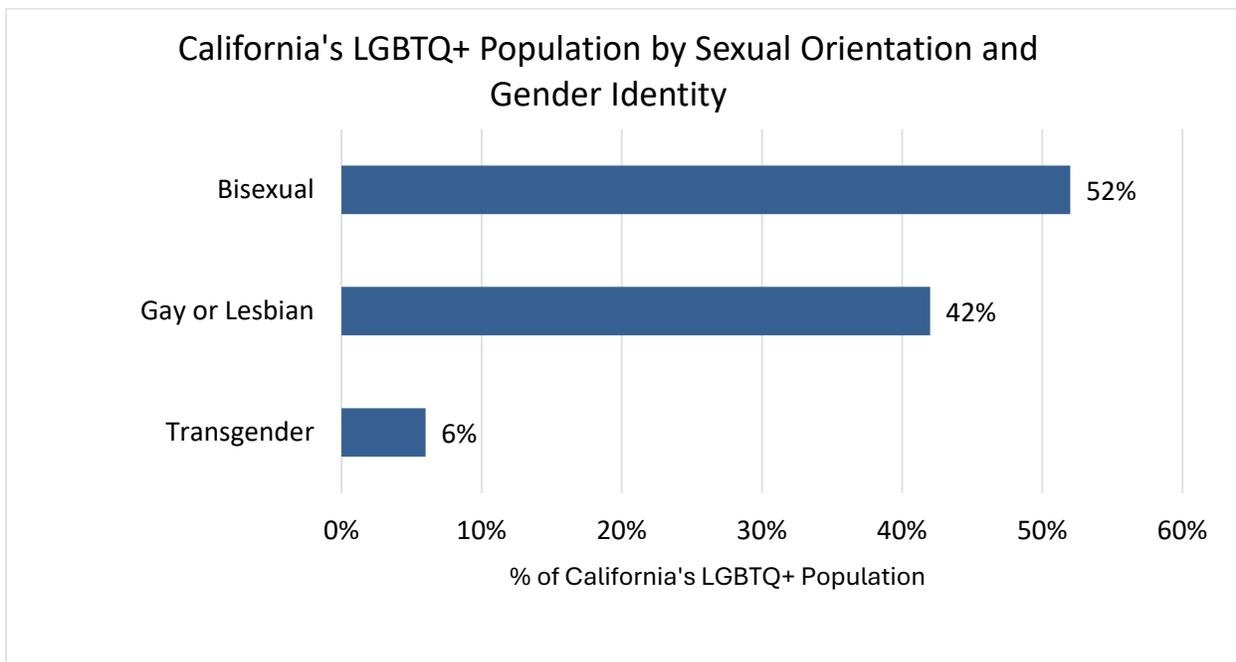
Source: American Community Survey 2023



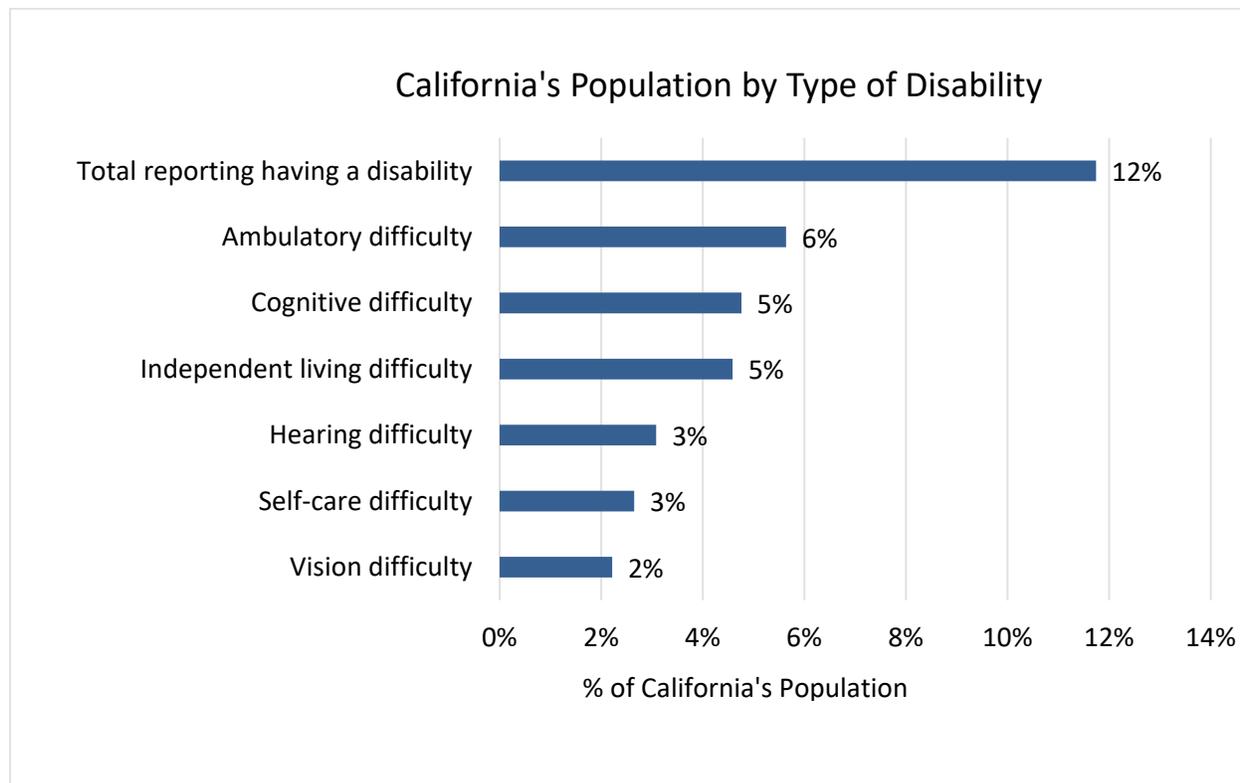
Source: American Community Survey 2023



Source: Religious Landscape Study 2023- 24
 Note: 2% of respondents did not answer



Source: PPIC Blog, June 2024 (using Household Pulse Surveys February- April 2024)
 Note: The category of transgender includes individuals with various sexual orientations;
 9.5% of California's adult population identify as LGBTQ+ (2.8 million people)



Source: American Community Survey 2023

Note: Respondents could select more than one type of disability

Appendix G

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION CHAPTERED IN 2024 RELATED TO HATE

AB 2621 (Gabriel) Law enforcement training.

This bill added new requirements for the hate crimes guidelines and course of instruction that the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training provides to peace officers. These requirements include instruction related to waves of hate crimes and gun violence restraining orders. This bill also revised the policies and standards that law enforcement agencies must adopt pertaining to gun violence restraining orders.

AB 2925 (Friedman) Postsecondary education: Equity in Higher Education Act: prohibition on discrimination: training.

This bill created new requirements for antidiscrimination or diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings offered by postsecondary education institutions, among other provisions. The trainings are required to address discrimination against the five groups most targeted by hate crimes in California, as specified.

SB 1277 (Stern) Pupil instruction: genocide education: the Holocaust.

This bill established the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, contingent upon appropriation. The duties of the collaborative include developing curriculum resources and a teacher professional development program on genocide and Holocaust education.

AB 3024 (Ward) Civil rights.

This bill prohibited, as a part of the protections afforded by the Ralph Civil Rights Act, the distribution of materials on the private property of another person for the purpose of terrorizing the owner or occupant of that private property.

SB 939 (Umberg) Educational equity: school site and community resources: neurodivergent pupils.

This bill expanded the information that the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to post on the California Department of Education's (CDE) website to include information to support students who have been subjected to discrimination or bullying on the basis of neurodiversity; required local educational agencies to ensure that resources related to neurodiversity are readily accessible to students and parents; and required CDE to include in its online training module information about how to support students who are bullied for being neurodivergent.

AB 1821 (Ramos) Pupil instruction: course of study: social sciences: treatment of Native Americans.

This bill required that, for the course of study for grades 1 to 12, any instruction on the Spanish colonization of California and the Gold Rush Era include instruction on the treatment and perspectives of Native Americans during that period.

For an overview of all California laws related to hate crimes, see the following information bulletin from the California Department of Justice: <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2025-dle-04.pdf>.