



## Civil Rights Department

### Commission on the State of Hate

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

### Minutes

## Commission on the State of Hate Community Forum

**November 19, 2025, 6:00 pm PT**

### Commissioners Present

Chair Brian Levin

Vice Chair Andrea Beth Damsky

Commissioner Regina Cuellar

### Civil Rights Department (CRD) Staff Present

Julia Parish, Deputy Director, Legislation, Regulation, and Policy Division

Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist

Kevin Thomas, Research Data Specialist

Fernando Ponce, Staff Services Manager

Alee Gonzalez, Lead Outreach Specialist

Lupe Arellano, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

### Others Present

An estimated 55 members of the public attended in person.

An estimated 47 members of the public attended virtually.

#### I. **Welcome**

Commissioner Cuellar welcomed everyone to the Commission on the State of Hate's fourth community forum of 2025. She reviewed procedures for closed captioning, live automated translation, and access to the Spanish interpretation channel.

Commissioner Cuellar offered a land acknowledgment, honoring the unceded ancestral homelands of the Nine Northern Bands of Winema of the Wintu people in the present-day area of the Redding Rancheria. She also discussed the mission and responsibilities of the Commission and introduced the topic of the forum/

Attendees were reminded to keep comments relevant to the agenda item, appreciate diverse perspectives, and maintain a respectful space. The public was encouraged to report hate incidents

BRIAN LEVIN	ANDREA BETH DAMSKY	CYNTHIA CHOI	REGINA CUELLAR	RUSSELL ROYBAL	BAMBY SALCEDO	ERROLL SOUTHERS
CHAIR	VICE CHAIR	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER

or crimes via the California vs Hate resource line and utilize the free services of the California Civil Rights Department's (CRD) Community Conflict Resolution Unit (CCRU).

Links Shared in the Chat:

<https://www.CAvsHate.org>

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

[CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov](mailto:CSH@CalCivilRights.ca.gov)

## II. Informational Presentations on the Topic: "Approaches to Addressing Hate in Rural Northern California"

### A. Shasta Equal Justice Coalition (SEJC)

Dr. Sharon Brisolara, founder of Inquiry that Matters, presented findings from the Shasta Equal Justice Coalition's *State of Equity Report*. She provided context on the report, including data limitations. Below are some of the findings and recommendations she presented from the report, which included data from January 2022 to December 2023 in Shasta County:

- Evidence suggests disparities in treatment from law enforcement in Shasta County, particularly impacting people perceived as Black/African-American and Native American/American Indian, transgender, female, and minors.
  - Individuals perceived as Black had the highest rate of stops by law enforcement, but the lowest rate of discovery of evidence.
  - Individuals perceived as Native American were more likely to have reportable actions taken toward them, as well as the highest rates of searches of their persons.
  - Individuals perceived as transgender had higher rates of detention on the curb or in patrol cars and property seizure than other groups
  - Individuals perceived as female were more likely to be given field sobriety tests and handcuffed than those perceived as male
  - Minors (ages 17 and under) were more likely to be handcuffed than adults and children ages 10-14 had the highest rates of reportable actions taken toward them by officers during stops.
- The largest proportion of documented victims of hate crimes were Black (40%), and the majority of offenders (80%) were white between January 2022 and March 2024.
- Recommended actions included investing in prevention strategies beyond policing, supporting diversion and restorative justice programs, advocating for robust oversight committees, addressing constraints related to data collection, and establishing a civil rights advocate position. Regarding data collection, Dr. Brisolara suggested that significant investments be made to update current law enforcement databases so that they are fully functional and capable of exporting necessary demographic data.

### B. Shasta County Indian Education Consortium

April Carmelo, the Indian Education Specialist for the Shasta Union High School District Title VI and Johnson O'Malley Indian Education Program, shared information, including:

BRIAN LEVIN  
CHAIR

ANDREA BETH DAMSKY  
VICE CHAIR

CYNTHIA CHOI  
COMMISSIONER

REGINA CUELLAR  
COMMISSIONER

RUSSELL ROYBAL  
COMMISSIONER

BAMBY SALCEDO  
COMMISSIONER

ERROLL SOUTHERS  
COMMISSIONER

- The impact of historical violence and the ongoing Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) crisis.
  - Shasta County and California share a long history of acts of genocide against Indigenous people, with violence funded and sanctioned by the state of California. Between 1846 and 1873, California's Indigenous population dropped from 150,000 to 30,000.
- Data from the Sovereign Bodies Institute as of 2021 show that in Shasta County, there were 10 women missing or murdered, and 80% of those cases have occurred since 2000. In Shasta County, 30% of the missing and murdered Indigenous women are mothers.
- Shasta County ranks within the top 10% of California counties for the proportion of Native American K-12 students relative to total student enrollment, with nearly 1,200 students.
- Discussion of a walk to honor and bring awareness to the MMIP crisis at Shasta Lake
- Discussion of an initiative funded by a grant from the Board of State and Community Corrections to fund MMIP initiatives, which included a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping course for middle and high school students in Shasta and Yuba counties.
- Discussion of Governor Newsom's 2019 executive order that included a formal apology and the 2024 law requiring California K-12 students to learn about the mistreatment of Native Californians during the Spanish colonial and Gold Rush eras.
- Information on additional bills directly impacting Native Californians and additional resources to learn more.

### C. Kaile Brisbon, United Way of Northern California

Kalie Brisbon, President and CEO of the United Way of Northern California, discussed the organization's Building Bridges initiative, including the information below:

- The initiative was designed to respond to deep division and political polarization.
- Building Bridges focuses on three goals:
  - Lowering the temperature of civic discourse
  - Increasing diverse engagement by actively seeking out underrepresented voices (including those from immigrant communities and youth)
  - Investing in grassroots organizations through the North State Equity Fund
- To engage in community capacity building, the United Way of Northern California developed the Learning Lounge series, an interactive virtual adult education curriculum.
  - The series teaches practical skills for constructive engagement, including how to choose curiosity over judgment and practice emotional regulation to stay in difficult conversations.
- She encouraged participants to choose curiosity over judgment and take one action to foster connection, framing the effort as a "movement of love in action".

### D. California Civil Rights Department (CRD)

Alee Gonzalez, Lead Outreach Specialist for the California Civil Rights Department (CRD), provided an overview of resources and initiatives available from CRD related to hate and discrimination. Information presented included discussion of the Ralph Civil Rights Act, the CA vs Hate hotline and online portal, and the Welcome In program. Ms. Gonzalez also provided a

short overview of data from the 2024 CA vs Hate report, noting that hate incidents were reported in 49 out of 58 counties. The most common reported incidents were verbal harassment and slurs (67%). Followed by discriminatory treatment (57%), and intimidation or threats (46%).

Commissioner Cuellar posed two questions to the presenters regarding effective programs and potential statewide policies.

- The first question to the presenters was: What key programs and efforts are effective at reducing and preventing hate in your community?
  - Promising practices discussed included youth-oriented programs (NorCal Outreach, pride events), organizations like the Shasta Equal Justice Coalition and Stand Against Stigma, addressing issues head-on within a community, and the fundamental importance of knowing the historical context of hate and discrimination in the community.
- The second question posed to the presenters was: If you had the power to create one new statewide policy or program to better protect your community from hate, what would it be?
  - Recommendations included expanding the Building Bridges initiative statewide, implementing robust and inclusive K-12 education based on true history and diversity, and investing in prevention strategies beyond policing (such as supporting diversion and restorative justice programs), and establishing robust oversight commissions or a civil rights advocate position for law enforcement.

### Public Comment

Chair Brian Levin offered a personal apology to the Native American population of the state for the centuries of genocide, degradation, abuse, and ethnic cleansing. The public comment section was then opened for this agenda item.

A member of the public asked whether a particular scenario would be considered a hate crime. They were advised to communicate directly with a member of the Commission about their specific case.

A member of the public asked why the first question could not be answered in the public forum. They were advised that the Civil Rights Department representative could not comment publicly about a specific case.

Another public commenter shared his seven years of volunteer work with the Redding Police Department, serving as an advocate for hate crime victims, developing leads, and assisting with officer interviews. He affirmed that the position demonstrated the authorities' seriousness about hate crimes and suggested implementing this kind of civil rights advocate position statewide.

A member of the public commented that they represented the Shasta County Citizens Advocating Respect (SCCAR), an organization with nearly 50 years of history. She discussed SCCAR's work to promote civil rights and social justice in the community.

A member of the public asked a clarifying question about the information shared by Dr. Brisolaro on adolescent interactions with law enforcement, asking if the data includes individuals who may have been stopped repeatedly.

A member of the public shared information about NorCal Outreach, a local LGBTQIA+ center that provides direct services to individuals in the community, support meetings, and training sessions with organizations on how to better support members of the LGBTQ community. He discussed the challenges of collecting data on students who identify as part of the LGBTQ community and the difficulties funding operations, as the center is run entirely by volunteers.

Another member of the public thanked the Commission for coming to Shasta County and requested that the Commission consider holding a future forum in Butte County, noting documented hate crimes there. He advocated for teaching the principles of nonviolence in schools as a way to prevent hate. He noted a recent case where someone pled guilty to a hate crime and was released until sentencing. He also referenced the book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* by Martin Luther King, Jr., and discussed the need for tools like these today.

Another member of the public described her experiences working on the MMIP GIS mapping program discussed in April Carmelo's presentation. She detailed the case of her cousin, Heather, missing since 2012, discussing the impact of her disappearance on her friends and family and requesting a full review of how her 911 calls were handled. She also submitted a statement to the Commission on this matter.

Another commenter from Humboldt County sought justice for her daughter, Angela McConnell, murdered in Shasta Lake. She described her negative experiences with law enforcement related to her daughter's case, the impact of her daughter's murder on her and her family, and her support of the MMIP movement. She also submitted a statement to the Commission on this matter.

Another member of the public added her support for the previous commenter, advocating for justice for Angela McConnell's case.

Another member of the public, the President of the local American Association of University Women, shared her support and allyship for members of the community.

Another member of the public, the Chair of the Shasta Interfaith, shared information about her organization and its annual event, which brings different faith traditions together to express gratitude around Thanksgiving. They support diversity and building understanding in the community at monthly meetings.

Another member of the public, the Shasta County Superintendent of Schools expressed how the MMIP march impacted him and thanked the presenters for their work. He expressed that the challenges in the community and expressed that the outcomes they want in education will be helped by working on healing divides in the community through productive conversations.

Another member of the public expressed a desire for more language diversity in events, particularly including communities within the Hispanic community, such as the Amuzgo community. He also described his work to address racism and hate throughout California.

Another member of the public expressed gratitude for the Commission coming to a rural conservative county. They mentioned the upcoming Transgender Day of Remembrance and asked

what was being done to address the scapegoating of the transgender community and the rights of this community. They also mentioned other marginalized groups and expressed a desire to decrease “othering” of many marginalized groups in California. They expressed a desire to add homelessness and caste as protected characteristics in the definition of a hate crime.

Another member of the public, who serves on the board of directors for Shasta County Citizens Advocating Respect (SCCAR), discussed the Right To Be bystander intervention training they offer to the community. They requested additional information on the Welcome In program.

Another member of the public shared about the work they have done in the field of restorative justice. They are the outreach, education, and engagement manager for California Human Development and work with vulnerable populations. They expressed a desire to collaborate with other community members.

Another member of the public expressed appreciation for the presenters. They expressed a desire to see more representation from the African American community in the panel of speakers, stating that it comes down to a matter of trust. He also discussed an upcoming presentation of the film "Push Out," which examines disparities in the treatment of Black girls in schools. He also promoted the Cultural Reciprocity Center in Redding, which offers free clothing and food, among other resources.

Another member of the public shared that her seven-year-old son, who wears his hair long because it is sacred, was bullied about it in school. She discussed how this has impacted their family and how they have responded to this.

Another member of the public asked how the Commission could incentivize local law enforcement agencies to encourage reports of hate or how they could encourage local law enforcement agencies to gain the trust of migrant communities, so they felt comfortable reporting hate to them.

April Carmelo shared a comment on behalf of another member of the public. She shared that there were 27 Pitt River tribal members who are missing and murdered and a 28<sup>th</sup> member was added this week. April discussed how triggering it is for family members to bring up these cases and said that one-tenth of their adult population is missing from her local tribe. She also commented that bullying native American boys about having long hair has been happening since her own children were young and is still happening. She also questioned the lack of hate crimes reported in the Shasta Union High School District, as she has heard informal reports from her contacts.

### **III. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

One public commenter asked what can be done to make our judicial system appear to take hate crimes seriously and stated their disapproval of the lack of consequences for people who commit hate crimes, asking if judges can be censured.

Another member of the public stated the importance of exercising the right to vote against judges to ensure judicial accountability. They also discussed their work with various organizations to encourage harmonious interactions among people with different viewpoints; they endorsed the Building Bridges Initiative and also discussed a program run by the Shasta County Citizens Advocating Respect (SCCAR) called “Difficult Conversations”.

Another public commenter praised the translation services offered in this meeting and offered his services in community outreach as part of the California Human Development agency.

Another commenter asked about how the Commission addresses caste-based discrimination, given Governor Newsom's veto of SB 403.

**IV. Adjournment of the Meeting**

Commissioner Cuellar thanked all attendees, the presenters, and the staff, noting that the issues and recommendations raised would be included in the Commission's annual report.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.