

# COMMUNITY RESPONSE TOOLKIT

WHEN HATE GROUPS  
COME TO TOWN



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
U N D E R L A W

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## **Dear Community Member,**

Hate can impact every aspect of our lives.

From homes being vandalized with racial slurs, to individuals being harassed on commutes and bullied at school to armed protesters hurling insults at worshipers on their way to pray, and from lives being taken all too soon—hate is an everyday occurrence.

As we have seen an increase in reported hate crimes in recent years, we have also seen an increase in the number of hate groups. Organizing at the grassroots level and on social media, hate groups have taken to recruiting on college campuses, hosting coordinated rallies across the country and organizing protests to object to progress made in removing hurtful relics of the past. The rallies come with messages of hate and exclusion that are aimed at provoking fear.

Yet, while front-line impacted communities have been forced to confront the impacts of everyday hate paired with tragedy after tragedy, we have seen a remarkable response to this increase in hate—the mobilization and outpouring of support from communities across diverse societies.

This resource kit provides information on how communities can respond when hate groups host rallies in their towns, and leaflet their campus or neighborhood. It provides an overview of hate crime laws, background information on hate groups and First Amendment protected speech, as well as action items for concerned citizens and the steps an individual or institution should take if they experience hate. Whether it is holding a unity rally, reaching out to public officials, or contacting leaders from communities targeted by hate to show support, every person can help combat hate.

In addition to these resources, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights—a partner of Communities Against Hate—offers a national resource and reporting hotline. Individuals or organizations that have been targeted by hate may call 1-844-9-NO-HATE or visit [www.communitiesagainsthate.org](http://www.communitiesagainsthate.org) to report an incident and obtain resources. Within 24-48 hours, a trained volunteer responds to provide tailored resources to combat hate affected communities.

This toolkit is designed to aid you in your local work; it is for information purposes only and does not contain legal advice. Please don't hesitate to contact us if there is additional information that you would like included or if you have suggestions for additional resources we should create.

Respectfully,

**Stop Hate Project  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**

# About Us

## Mission

The Stop Hate Project, an initiative of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, seeks to strengthen the capacity of community leaders, law enforcement, and organizations around the country to combat hate by connecting these groups with established legal and social services resources.

## About the 1-844-9-NO-HATE Hotline

The Lawyers' Committee has run an Election Protection Hotline for over a decade, providing resources and assistance to callers on Election Day. Building off of this experience, the Lawyers' Committee launched a resource and reporting hotline for hate incidents: [1-844-9-NO-HATE](https://www.lcpr.org/1-844-9-NO-HATE).

## Resources Provided

Individuals and organizations that call the hotline receive resources they need as we leverage our national network of pro bono attorneys, connect callers and victims of hate to community organizations, mental health services, and in appropriate cases, provide access to counsel. Examples of resources provided have included template letters to make sure undocumented students are admitted to school, support for reaching out to and training law enforcement, and connecting callers with local and national civil rights and service organizations.



CommunitiesAgainstHate.org



@StopHateProj



@StopHateProj

# Know Your Rights

Knowledge is a powerful tool. It is more imperative than ever during times of heightened sensitivities that community members know their rights and how to respond to incidents of hate.

The most recent statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) show that law enforcement reported a six percent increase in hate crimes from 2014 to 2015. Driving this surge was an alarming increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes, which rose by 67%. Law enforcement's reporting of hate crimes by law enforcement to the FBI is not mandatory and thus leads to notoriously low UCR data. In 2015 the UCR reported 7,121 individuals were victims of hate crimes. Comparisons made by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) reveal that over 250,000 hate crime victimizations occur every year in the United States. This demonstrates that nearly two-thirds of hate crimes go unreported to law enforcement, highlighting that many communities may not feel comfortable reporting hate crimes to law enforcement.

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## The Basics: Hate Incident vs. Hate Crime

A *hate incident* may or may not constitute a criminal offence, but is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

A *hate crime* is a traditional offense (like vandalism, arson, assault, or murder) with an added element of bias. Hate crimes are motivated by bias, prejudice, or personal hatred toward the actual or perceived characteristics of a victim, including race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity.

## Hate Crime Laws

In 2009, President Obama signed into law the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This Act made it a federal crime to willfully cause bodily injury (or attempt to do so with a firearm or dangerous weapon) when the crime is committed because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. This act protected a wider class of victims targeted by hate than previously covered.

Additionally, prosecutors may pursue criminal convictions for hate related activity under other federal statutes, including other hate crime laws (e.g. Civil Rights Act of 1968, 18 U.S.C. § 245, willful use of force or threat of force because of a victim's protected characteristic and because the victim was engaged in a federally protected activity; Civil Rights Conspiracy, 18 U.S.C. § 241, conspiracy to interfere with victim's federally-protected rights ) or statutes targeting specific acts such as the criminal interference with the right to fair housing (42 U.S.C. § 3631) or damage to religious property (18 U.S.C. § 247). On top of these laws, prosecutors may secure charges for hate related incidents under relevant federal laws.

State hate crime laws can vary significantly—from covering all of the same classes as the federal law, to excluding protections for various classes including gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, or having no state hate crime law. There are currently five states with no state hate crime laws: Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Wyoming.

For more information on various state hate crime laws, you may call 1-844-9-NO-HATE or in the coming weeks you may visit [www.8449NOHATE.org](http://www.8449NOHATE.org) for user-friendly summaries of hate crime statutes.



## Have You Experienced Hate?



### Reach Out

If you are injured, fear for your safety, or the safety of others, seek emergency services. If you feel comfortable doing so, call 911. For information on how to report an incident to law enforcement, see below.



### Document

Preserve and photograph any physical evidence, for example take photos of graffiti and do not remove it. Document the experience, do not delete texts, emails, or social media posts—including your own.



### Get support

Contact specialized community organizations in your area. To find organizations near you, visit [www.communitiesagainsthate.org](http://www.communitiesagainsthate.org) or [www.8449NOHATE.org](http://www.8449NOHATE.org). For legal information and social resources call 1-844-9-NO-HATE (1-844- 966-4283).



### Report

If you experience hate on your **college campus**, consider filing a report with the University Police Department, or contact your Title IX Coordinator. For confidential counseling and support services, reach out to your campus counseling center. You can also call the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law at 1-844-9-NO-HATE (1-844- 966-4283).

Emotional distress is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation that hate incidents create. If you need crisis support you may contact the Crisis Text Line by sending the text "HOME" to 741741. For more information about the Crisis Text Line, visit their website at <http://www.crisistextline.org/>



## How to Report a Hate Incident to Law Enforcement

Nearly two-thirds of hate crimes go unreported to law enforcement. This demonstrates that many communities targeted by hate crimes may be uncomfortable reporting an incident to their local and federal agencies. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is among organizations that assist community members with responding to and preventing hate should you choose to report an incident to law enforcement, below are several factors provided by HRC to consider.<sup>1</sup>

File a police report with your local law enforcement agency, either in person or by phone, with local law enforcement where the incident transpired. *Please note that in order to make an official report you must file it either in person or over the phone, any correspondence with law enforcement informally or on social media platforms does not constitute filing a formal report.*

In the report, tell the responding officer any and all of the details of the crime you recorded or remember. Including: the perpetrator's gender, age, height, race, weight, clothes or other distinguishing characteristics. If any threats or biased comments were made, such as racial slurs or anti-gay epithets, include them in the report, as well as any damage to property.

Ask for the responding officer's name and badge number. Keep a record of this information along with your record of the incident.

Make sure the officer files the incident report form and assigns a case number. If a police report is not taken at the time of your report, go to the police station and ask for one. Always get your own copy, even of the preliminary report.

If you believe the incident was bias-motivated, urge the officer to check the "hate/bias-motivation" or "hate crime/incident" box on the police report.

In addition to contacting your local law enforcement agency, individuals or institutions that experience hate should also contact their local FBI field office and provide the same information. For a list of FBI Field Offices, visit <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices>.



<sup>1</sup><http://www.hrc.org/resources/what-to-do-if-youve-been-the-victim-of-a-hate-crime>

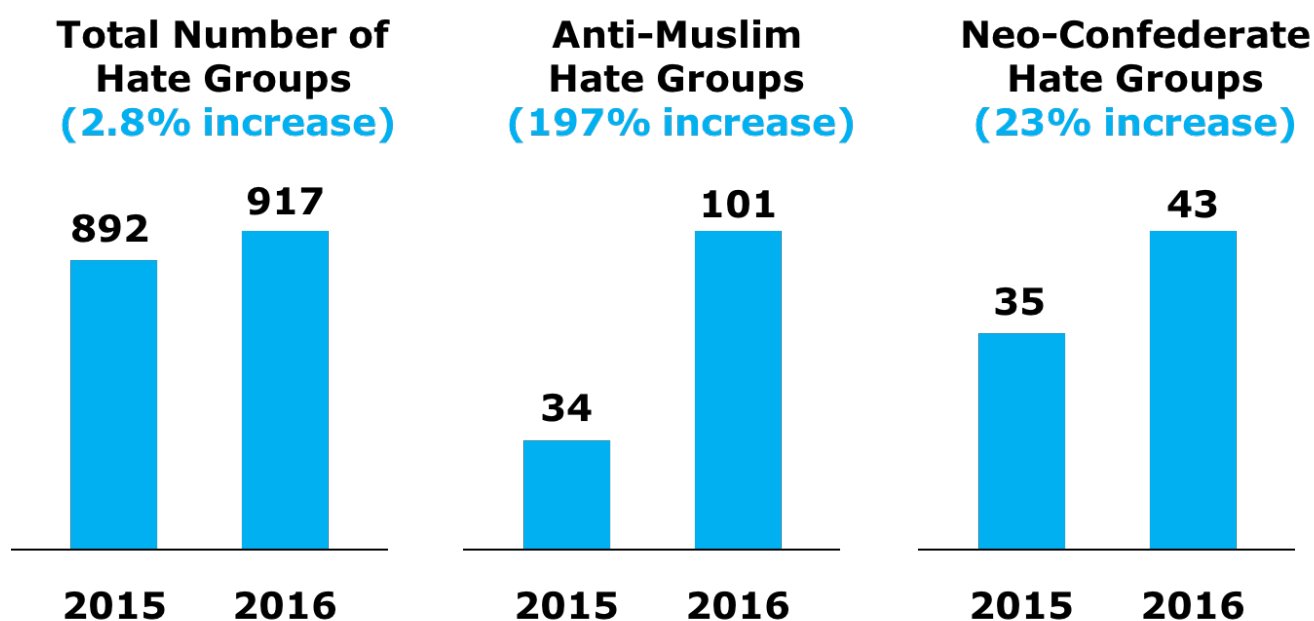


## Background: Hate Groups

In addition to a surge in hate crimes across the country, the number of active hate groups have also increased. The Southern Poverty Law Center documented that active hate groups in the U.S. jumped from 892 in 2015 to 917 in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Anti-Muslim hate groups saw the most dramatic increase of 197%.

Emboldened by divisive political rhetoric, many hate groups have taken to recruiting and rallying in towns and campuses across the country. From white nationalist organizations flying on college campuses to “alt-right” leaders speaking on campus – hate groups have been more visibly organizing on the grassroots levels.

When a hate group rallies in your town or visits your campus, it can make community members feel uneasy, alienated, and fearful. The historic violence committed by organized hate groups in the United States weighs on the significance of their presence.



Source: Southern Poverty Law Center

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/intelligence-report>

## First Amendment Protected Speech

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

*-First Amendment, United States Constitution*

The First Amendment protects a broad range of speech - including speech that individuals may find repulsive, violent, and hateful. Generally, the content of speech cannot be restricted by the government. However, not all speech is protected. Speech which incites or encourages people to take illegal action (e.g., speech encouraging murder or assault) and "fighting words" (i.e. speech which is intended to provoke a physical or verbal confrontation), as well as certain other forms of speech, may not receive protection.

In determining if speech is protected or meets exception, the courts conduct extensive analysis based on the specific facts and context of a situation in which the speech arose. Below are examples of instances that the court found speech was not protected.

### **"Incitement to imminent lawless action"**

In 1969, the case *Brandenburg v. Ohio* went before the Supreme Court. Brandenburg was a member of the KKK and spoke at a rally in Ohio where he made a reference to "revengeance" against minority communities. He was charged under an Ohio statute that criminalized the advocacy of violence. In this case the Supreme Court reversed Brandenburg's conviction and held that the government cannot punish the "abstract" advocacy of violence. The court found that a state cannot prohibit "advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action" *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).

### **"Fighting Words"**

"Fighting words" are not protected by the First Amendment and are words that "which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of peace." *Chaplinsky v. State of New Hampshire*, 315 U.S. 568 (1942).

### **"True threats"**

True threats are statements "where the speaker means to communicate a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals." *Virginia v. Black*, 538 U.S. 343 (2003). There is also no requirement to intend to carry out the threat. *Id.* Intimidation is a type of true threat. *Id.* In *Virginia v. Black*, the Supreme Court concluded that some cross-burnings fall within the meaning of a true threat. *Id.* State courts applying this precedent have addressed situations in which nooses were used. For example, in *Turner v. Commonwealth*, 792 S.E.2d 299 (Va. Ct. App. 2016), the Virginia Court of Appeals upheld a conviction for displaying a black, life size dummy hanging by a noose in a tree when that conviction was challenged on First Amendment grounds. *Id.* The Turner Court applied *Virginia v. Black* and held that the statute prohibiting a display of nooses with intent to intimidate any person or group of persons was constitutionally proscribed conduct that constituted a "true threat". *Id.* The Court took into consideration the history of what the noose represents: specifically, violence against black Americans.

# Action: What YOU Can Do

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When a hate crime or hate incident is committed – or when a hate group actively organizes in your community, it can leave many feeling isolated, uneasy, and fearful. It is important than ever that individuals across diverse communities continue to be vocal in their support. This sections provides examples of ways that you can take action and support your local community.

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## Support Your Local Community

### Contact Local Media Outlets

Submit a letter to the editor or an opinion editorial to your local paper. This is a great opportunity to express the values of your community and condemn the hateful acts. Messages of support by fellow community members and public officials can go a long way in making a targeted community feel less alone.

### Contact Local Community Organizations

Contact local community organizations directly. In the wake of hate crimes and hate incidents, expressing support for local community organizations is significant. In the wake of the implementation of the Muslim Ban, communities across the country visited their neighborhood mosques to express their support. When Jewish Community Centers were the targets of bomb threats, communities came together, denounced hate, and supported their fellow community members..

### Host a Community Service Activity

When Jewish cemeteries were targeted and vandalized, community members raised funds and helped restore the dignity of the burial grounds. When a neighbor's garage was vandalized with messages of hate, neighbors painted over the garage with messages of love and inclusion. Hate wins when it divides our communities. A powerful way to demonstrate our strength is by giving back to our communities.

## Communicate with Law Enforcement

It is important that you are aware of the law enforcement response to situations that are likely to provide heightened tensions. For example, in 2015, anti-Muslim organizations hosted protests outside of mosques in various locations across the country. In open-carry states, rally-goers were encouraged to carry firearms during the protests. Individuals approaching the mosque had to drive or walk past armed protestors and signs with hateful messages. Worshipers were advised before the rally to stay home, or not to engage with the protestors.

In situations such as these, it is important for community members to contact law enforcement and government officials with requests. If a protest is scheduled in advance, and it is known that the rally-goers are encouraged to carry weaponry, it is important to let law enforcement know. Below are some questions that should be asked of government:

1. What steps are being taken to ensure the safety of the community targeted by the armed protest?
2. Is law enforcement available to come brief the community prior to the protest?
3. Will law enforcement be monitoring the site of the protest before, during, and after the scheduled event?
4. How many law enforcement officers will be present during the scheduled protest?
5. What steps should community members take when they feel threatened by the presence of the protestors?
6. If community members want to hold unity rallies or other demonstrations of support for targeted communities, what steps should they take to keep those rallies safe?
7. Are there opportunities for community members to meet with law enforcement and other government officials outside the context of this scheduled event to identify ways to open lines of communication to improve the response to hate groups going forward?

## Hold Public Officials Accountable

Hate crimes, hate incidents, and hate groups do not represent our communities. As such, it is imperative that public officials are (1) made aware of hate activity in their communities, (2) hear from concerned citizens, and (3) respond timely and appropriately to community concerns.

Below are sample template letters that can be sent to your public officials. If you need assistance in drafting your letter you may contact the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights at 1-844-9-NO-HATE.

### Sample 1

**This sample letter is based off of rallies coordinated by the anti-Muslim hate group, ACT for America.** It can and should be modified in response to the incident you seek to bring to your public official's attention. It could be used to report incidents involving hate speech – such as flyering by white nationalist organizations, hate group rallies in your community, or anonymous threats based on a social identity (e.g., race, religion, sexual orientation) to your local officials. Depending on where you live, consider sending it to local officials such as your town's mayor, city or county council members, school board members, your local chief of police or sheriff, or any other office holders.

*COUNTY/CITY OFFICIAL*

*ADDRESS 1*

*ADDRESS 2*

*DATE*

*Dear NAME:*

#### *DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT*

- Start your letter with a short description of the incident you are writing to your officials about. Include basic details such as the date an incident occurred or is planned to occur, who is targeted, why you think the incident is/was motivated by bias, and any responses from officials. For example:  
"ACT for America is an organization that brands itself as fighting for the security and rights of Americans, but has functioned as an organization that promotes anti-Muslim sentiment and hatred. On June 10, 2017 the organization is planning rallies in communities across the country, including [town/city]."

#### *IF YOU REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION*

- If you represent an organization, you may wish to include a short description of your organization and its interest in the current matter. For example:  
"At the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law we are dedicated to securing equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting religious minorities. Acts of bigotry and xenophobia like this one are not isolated incidents. On a daily basis, reports are received from residents across the country who have experienced hate-motivated discrimination. We believe elected officials have a responsibility to respond and to keep everyone in [town/county] safe."

### *DISCUSSION OF FIRST AMENDMENT AND HATE SPEECH*

- Given that many people believe hate speech is completely protected by the First Amendment, you may wish to help educate your reader about limits to the First Amendment. For example:

"ACT for America's presence and activities in [town/county] should not be dismissed simply as a First Amendment issue that merits no government response. Given their history, their continued existence as an organization that promotes hate, and given the increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes across the country - the rally should be treated seriously. These rallies are designed to rob entire religious communities of their dignity and provoke fear. In the past organizers of anti-Muslim rallies have encouraged rally-goers to openly carry firearms and at times protest with their weaponry outside houses of worship. While a broad range of speech is protected, the law allows for punishment of speech and activities that are intended to incite "imminent lawless action". See, e.g., *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).

### *IMPACT OF HATE SPEECH ON THE COMMUNITY*

- You may wish to describe how the hate speech impacts the community. For example:  
"ACT for America's activities send a threatening and intimidating message, especially for Muslims in America who have been the targets of increased hate in recent months. There is a clear social and psychological impact on these communities caused by the vitriol and hate perpetrated by ACT for America's actions and words. Their presence makes community members fearful of violence.

### *YOUR "ASK" TO ELECTED OFFICIALS*

- Specify what you want from the elected official. Do you want them to ask police to open an investigation? Do you want them to make a public statement? Do you want them to pass a resolution or hold a hearing? Example:  
"We urge you to forcefully and publicly condemn the hateful messaging and intimidation that these rallies seek to promote. The immediate response from the legal, social and political community is critical to let those that seek to divide us know that hate is not welcome in [city/town]. We urge you to reinforce the critical message that hate crimes are not only unacceptable, but also illegal. See 18 U.S.C. § 249 (2009). As a concerned constituent, I ask that you heed to calls of our community and reaffirm our values of inclusivity and tolerance. Without such a swift response, perpetrators of hate crimes may be emboldened, and trust between [city/town] government and impacted communities could be strained."

*Sincerely,*

*NAME*

*TITLE*

*ORGANIZATION*

*CONTACT INFORMATION*

## **Sample 2**

**This sample letter is based on Ku Klux Klan (KKK) materials received by residents of a local community.** It can and should be modified in response to the incident you seek to bring to your public official's attention. It could be used to report incidents involving hate speech – such as flyering by white nationalist organizations, hate group rallies in your community, or anonymous threats based on a social identity (e.g., race, religion, sexual orientation) to your local officials. Depending on where you live, consider sending it to local officials such as your town's mayor, city or county council members, school board members, your local chief of police or sheriff, or any other office holders.

COUNTY/CITY OFFICIAL

ADDRESS 1

ADDRESS 2

DATE

Dear NAME:

#### DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

- Start your letter with a short description of the incident you are writing to your officials about. Include basic details such as the date an incident occurred or is planned to occur, who is targeted, why you think the incident is/was motivated by bias, and any responses from officials. For example:  
"On November 15, 2016, the *Boston Globe* reported that Milford residents have received unwanted Ku Klux Klan (KKK) materials over the past several weeks. Milford officials were quoted in the media saying that KKK activities are protected by the First Amendment."

#### IF YOU REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION

- If you represent an organization, you may wish to include a short description of your organization and its interest in the current matter. For example:  
"At the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law we are dedicated to securing equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. Acts of racism and xenophobia like this one are not isolated incidents. On a daily basis, we receive reports from residents across the country who have experienced hate-motivated discrimination. We believe elected officials have a responsibility to respond and to keep everyone in [town/county] safe."

#### DISCUSSION OF FIRST AMENDMENT AND HATE SPEECH

- Given that many people believe hate speech is completely protected by the First Amendment, you may wish to help educate your reader about limits to the First Amendment. For example:  
"The KKK's presence and activities in Milford should not be dismissed simply as a First Amendment issue that merits no law enforcement response. Given the KKK's history and continued existence as a domestic terrorist organization, the distribution of the group's materials should be treated and investigated seriously. KKK activities are designed to rob people of their dignity and to foment hate crimes and violence. The law allows for punishment of speech and activities that are intended to incite imminent lawless action. See, e.g., *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969)."

#### IMPACT OF HATE SPEECH ON THE COMMUNITY

- You may wish to describe how the hate speech impacts the community. For example:  
"KKK activities in Milford send a threatening and intimidating message, especially for racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities. There is clear social and psychological harm: KKK activities create a chilling effect because they signal to minorities that they are not valued as equal members of the community, and that their histories, experiences, perspectives and voices are not respected. Immediate responses from the legal, social and political community are critical to deter further threats of violence. We urge you to respond immediately to reinforce the critical message that identity-based harassment and intimidation are not welcome in Milford and that hate crimes are not only unacceptable, but also illegal. See 18 U.S.C. § 249 (2009). The failure to investigate the KKK—and to protect minority residents—is tantamount to discrimination and raises the specter of liability under federal and state constitutional law."



#### *YOUR "ASK" TO ELECTED OFFICIALS*

- Specify what you want from the elected official. Do you want them to ask police to reopen an investigation? Do you want them to make a public statement? Do you want them to pass a resolution or hold a hearing? Example:

"We urge you to forcefully and publicly condemn the KKK's actions and to conduct a full scale investigation of KKK activities in Milford. Without such a response, perpetrators of hate crimes will be emboldened, and communities of color will grow even more doubtful of Milford's commitment to equal protection."

*Sincerely,*

*NAME*

*TITLE*

*ORGANIZATION*

*CONTACT INFORMATION*

### **Sample 3**

**This sample letter is an example of you how can report or follow up about a hate crime or hate incident with your local officials.** It can and should be modified in response to the specific incident you are reporting or following up on. Depending on where you live, consider sending it to local officials such as your town's mayor, city or county council members, school board members, your local chief of police or sheriff, or any other office holders.

*COUNTY/CITY OFFICIAL*

*ADDRESS 1*

*ADDRESS 2*

*DATE*

*Dear NAME:*

#### *DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT*

- Start your letter with a short description of the incident you are writing to your officials about. Include basic details such as the date an incident occurred or is planned to occur, who is targeted, why you think the incident is/was motivated by bias, and any responses from officials. For example:

"On November 10, 2016, Mr. Joseph Sanchez woke to find his car vandalized, keyed on with the repeated message: "Go Home." Mr. Sanchez and his family are the only Latino family on their street. This is a deeply disturbing hate crime. I am writing you, as an official elected to represent the people of your district, to ensure that all of the officials and agencies charged with protecting Mr. Sanchez and his family respond to this crime fully and appropriately. As detailed below when Mr. Sanchez reported the crime to [town/county] officials, and the officials [did not respond/diminished the incident/said that they could not help]. This event follows on the heels of [describe other recent hate motivated incidents in the town or county]. We know that this crime and this failure to respond do not represent [town/county], and we are asking you to take action to respond appropriately."

#### *IF YOU REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION*

- If you represent an organization, you may wish to include a short description of your organization and its interest in the current matter. For example:  
"At the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law we are dedicated to securing equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. Acts of racism and xenophobia like this one are not isolated incidents. On a daily basis, we receive reports from across the country who have experienced hate-motivated discrimination. We believe elected officials, such as yourselves, have a responsibility to respond and to keep everyone in [town/county] safe."

#### *DESCRIPTION OF HOW OFFICIALS RESPONDED OR FAILED TO RESPOND*

- Include a brief description of what happened when you or your client reported the incident to police or elected officials. For example:  
"We understand that when Mr. Sanchez followed up with the [town/county] police regarding this incident, he was told that the act could not be classified as a hate crime without a suspect. He was also told that there was little the police could do, as there were no cameras in the area or witnesses to the event. To date, Mr. Sanchez' calls to his city council member have gone unanswered and city officials have failed to make any public comments condemning this deeply disturbing hate crime."

#### *YOUR "ASK" TO ELECTED OFFICIALS*

- Specify what you want from the elected official. Do you want them to ask police to reopen an investigation? Do you want them to make a public statement? Do you want them to pass a resolution or hold a hearing? If you need assistance determining what your "ask" should be, please contact the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Stop Hate Project at 844-9-NO-HATE. Example:  
"We urge you to respond immediately to this incident to reinforce the critical message that hate crimes are not only unacceptable, but also illegal. [cite to federal or state hate crimes law – contact 1- 844-9-No-Hate if you need assistance identifying relevant laws]. We ask that the city council hold a hearing on the recent rise of hate crimes and hate incidents in [town/county] and issue a press release condemning recent acts of hate motivated violence. Without such a response, perpetrators of hate crimes will be emboldened."

*Sincerely,*

*NAME*

*TITLE*

*ORGANIZATION*

*CONTACT INFORMATION*



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR  
**CIVIL RIGHTS**  
U N D E R L A W