Law Enforcement Standing Against Hate

HATE CRIME
A criminal act motivated by hate or bias on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

HATE CRIME STATUTES
Generally, hate crime laws create standalone criminal charges for hate crimes or penalty enhancements to existing crimes. Statutes require the prosecutor to prove that an underlying bias against a person’s race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability motivated the crime.

HATE CRIME REPORTING GAP
The discrepancy between the number of actual hate crimes committed, the number of hate crimes reported to law enforcement, and the number of hate crimes officially reported to the FBI.

HATE CRIME LAWS
State hate crime laws provide authority to state and local law enforcement officials and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. Federal hate crimes laws provide authority to the FBI and federal prosecutors to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

Improve Hate Crime Reporting

➤ The Hate Crimes Reporting Gap poses urgent challenges:
  • Hate and bias crimes can escalate if not identified and addressed and
  • Inadequate response to hate crimes can lead targeted populations to distrust law enforcement and civic institutions.

➤ IN 2016
  13,478
  Law Enforcement Agencies
  (88%) REPORTED
  ZERO hate crimes
  —FBI 2016 UCR Hate Crime Statistics

➤ Factors related to law enforcement reporting include:
  • UCR reporting to the federal government is voluntary
  • Public officials may fear increased numbers reflect poorly on the community.
  • Officers and prosecutors may need training to identify, investigate, and accurately report hate crimes and bias incidents.
  • Establish a culture, from top leadership to rank-and-file, that prioritizes a clear, decisive response to hate crimes, and invests in training and community outreach.
  • Communicate to officers, investigators, and the public that increased reporting can not only bring justice to victims and communities, but it can also strengthen community trust in law enforcement.

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RESPOND VIGOROUSLY to hate and bias incidents

The message of a hate crime is that “people like you” are not welcome or safe here. Acts of vandalism or threats of violence send shockwaves of fear and uncertainty through the targeted community. A strong, consistent response:

• demonstrates support for victims and all members of the community;
• increases public safety; and
• helps prevent future hate crimes.

Easy, transparent reporting procedures encourage victims and other residents to reach out after an incident.

• Create and publicize a telephone hotline and online information about reporting.

FOR MORE TIPS AND RESOURCES GO TO: stophateaction.org

FIVE THINGS LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN DO

1 Be Proactive in Community Outreach
   Establish relationships with communities likely to experience hate. Recent statistics indicate that hate crimes are most often motivated by race, followed by religion and sexual orientation. Appoint liaisons to communities affected by hate, and partner with diverse organizations to build trust.
   Engage youth. Promote appreciation for the diversity in the community, and make it clear that bullying, racial slurs, and vandalism are hate-fueled incidents with consequences.

2 Establish a Specialized Hate Crimes Unit
   Designate at least one representative to work hand-in-hand with the District Attorney and the public to spot trends, serve as a friendly point of contact, and conduct outreach.

3 Form a Law Enforcement-Community Hate Crimes Task Force
   A law enforcement-community coalition encourages the entire community to build trust outside of crisis situations and to work together to improve public safety and crime prevention.

4 Work closely with Victim Witness Units
   Even when no perpetrator is identified, make referrals to victim witness units and community groups to make sure victims' needs are addressed.

5 Support Officers in Recognizing and Reporting Hate Crimes
   Law enforcement agencies can work with organizations like the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to identify free or low cost training options to help law enforcement identify and accurately report hate crimes.

ONGOING Community Engagement

Hate crimes are not just a criminal justice problem, they are a community issue. All residents, including civic leaders, educators, faith leaders, labor groups, media, and people of every age can help - and law enforcement can play a vital role in educating and guiding the community forward.

Make a plan to promote a safe, inclusive community:

• Implement community policing strategies that emphasize partnerships and outreach;
• Convene with residents and community leaders on a regular basis;
• Create a public affairs campaign that reinforces the values of the community.

NOT IN OUR TOWN offers training and community engagement resources: www.niot.org

THE STOP HATE PROJECT offers free legal information and resources: www.844nohate.org 1-844-NO-HATE