

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

January 25, 2022

OFFERING REWARDS FOR THE APPREHENSION AND CONVICTION OF INDIVIDUALS THAT COMMIT HATE CRIMES

A reward is one mechanism that Los Angeles County (County) uses to encourage community members to provide valuable information to help solve the most serious crimes. The continued rise in hate crimes is very alarming and warrants an update to the rewards ordinance. The 2020 Hate Crime [Report](#) by the County Human Relations Commission found a 20% increase in reported hate crimes from 2019, the largest number reported since 2008. One of the largest increases was among crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), who faced a 76% increase from 2019, the largest number reported since 2001. The County’s AAPI residents continue to fear for their safety, including 70-year-old Samuel Kang who was allegedly [attacked](#) at a bus stop in Koreatown on September 20, 2021. Moreover, Black residents were disproportionately targeted in racial hate crimes, comprising 42% of victims when they are approximately 9% of the County’s population. Of the hate crimes reported against transgender people, about 94% were violent.

Overall, in the County, racially motivated hate crimes jumped 53%. The U.S. Department of Justice has estimated that at least half of hate crimes go unreported. Beyond the bodily and property harm that these crimes may inflict, the psychological damage is unquantifiable and compounding. Hate crimes inflict a deep negative impact

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on the collective mental health of entire communities. We need to shed light on this and speak openly against these crimes.

Challenges remain with obtaining convictions for hate crimes. The 2020 Hate Crimes in California [report](#) found that prosecutors obtained a conviction in 43% of all hate crime charges filed for prosecution. An [analysis](#) of clearance rates for homicides in the County – a crime for which rewards are offered by the County Board of Supervisors to help solve open cases -- found that 46% of all homicide cases remain unsolved. This type of targeted terror, a key element of hate crimes, is abhorrent and unacceptable in a society committed to racial justice and equity.

Those intent on inflicting hate appear to be emboldened and striking communities across the County. On Tuesday, January 11, 2022, Charles R. Drew University (CDU), located in the unincorporated community of Willowbrook closed its campus after receiving a racially motivated bomb threat. After a thorough safety assessment and response from the County Sheriff's Department, the campus reopened, but not without lingering questions as to whether these types of threats will become more prevalent. As a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), and the only HBCU in California, CDU is a beacon of excellence in South Los Angeles and, sadly, a target for ignorant, racist attacks. However, this is not an isolated incident. The week before last, multiple HBCUs, including Howard University in Washington, D.C. and Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, were also terrorized with similar bomb threats.

Tragically, many other examples exist in the County and beyond. However, the County's ability to offer rewards for information that leads to the conviction of these perpetrators is limited to those crimes that cause physical harm. We must expand this definition to include these heinous hate crimes. The County must have a system for encouraging members of the public to come forward with information that they may have regarding hate crimes, and the County should be able to offer rewards as it does with other crimes.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Instruct County Counsel to report back in writing in 45 days with an analysis of the current reward system and recommendations to ensure the County can offer a reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of a person or

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persons responsible for the commission of a hate crime, including, but not limited to, crimes driven by racism and xenophobia.

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(CAS/CG)