

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE ON HATE CRIMES

The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) recognizes the historical marginalization and victimization of individuals and groups based upon actual or perceived race, ethnicity, skin color, religion, language, immigration status, physical and emotional disability, sexual orientation and gender identification. Because of the historical failure of the criminal justice system to understand and acknowledge the profound existence of hate crimes and biased incidents, the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes and bias incidents has been profoundly deficient. Consequently, we have failed to hold perpetrators accountable and have further marginalized the victims of these crimes as well as the affected communities.

APA urges and promotes the full and unequivocal investigation and prosecution of all perpetrators of hate crimes and bias incidents. APA is equally committed to providing the necessary support and resources for the victims of these crimes and the affected communities.

APA urges all prosecutor's offices in the nation to ensure that all stakeholders involved in combating hate crime are equipped with the education, information, and resources necessary to successfully prosecute hate crimes and bias incidents. Prosecutors can play an extremely seminal role in the complex, and many times fragile, enforcement of hate crimes.

Significant reduction in hate crime, as well as successful prosecution is dependent on community engagement and trust. A community must feel safe and secure in reporting hate crimes and have confidence that reports will be taken seriously and met with support and services. To that end, prosecutors must:

- First and foremost, educate themselves and their own offices on the issues of hate crimes and biases, and continue to invite those with lived experiences to the table to listen to, better understand, and better serve the community;

- Build community trust in the criminal justice system by engaging and listening to impacted communities and fully prosecuting perpetrators of hate crimes;
- Develop and expand services for victims of hate crimes, including the community affected;
- Provide education and training to all police agencies in your jurisdiction to improve the investigation of hate crimes;
- Create relationships with all community stakeholders (Community Organizations, Civic leaders, Faith Groups, Universities, Local Business owners) to address the prevention of hate crimes as well as the support for the victims affected.
- Create accessible and multilingual reporting procedures and accept reports of bias incidents as well as hate crimes.