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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RICHARD NICOLELLO,
PRESIDING OFFICER

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD, CHAIR

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

April 6, 2022

1:12 P.M.

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

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4 LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

5 Chair

6 LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS

7 Vice Chair

8 LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

9 LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI

10 LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

11 Ranking member

12 LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

13 LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

14 MICHAEL J. PULITZER, Clerk

15 Also Present: Legislator John J. Giuffre

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Good afternoon.
3 I would like to call the Public Safety
4 hearing on hate crimes to order. I
5 will ask the clerk to call the roll and
6 then have Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton
7 lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

8 MR. PULITZER: Thank you,
9 Chairman Ford. Public Safety Committee
10 roll call. Legislator Debra Mule?

11 LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

12 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Siela
13 Bynoe?

14 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

15 MR. PULITZER: Ranking member
16 Delia DeRiggi-Whitton?

17 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: Legislator John
19 Ferretti?

20 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

21 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Mazi
22 Pilip?

23 (No verbal response.)

24 MR. PULITZER: Vice Chairman
25 Steven Rhoads?

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present.

3 MR. PULITZER: Chairwoman Denise
4 Ford?

5 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Here.

6 MR. PULITZER: We have a quorum.

7 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

8 Could you do me a favor and give me the
9 honor of asking my friend from North
10 Hempstead to lead us in the Pledge of
11 Allegiance, our Vietnam veteran, Mr.
12 Joseph?

13 (Whereupon, the Pledge of
14 Allegiance was recited.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
16 much, sir. Thank you for your service
17 to our country.

18 Thank you very much for joining
19 us here today as we discuss the issue
20 of hate crimes here in Nassau County
21 and the impact on our communities.

22 It is frightening as we see a
23 rise in them and yet we find not all
24 are reported.

25 Without my going in to further

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2 ado, I'm going to go out of line I
3 guess with the way we have everybody
4 set up because I'm going to ask Eric
5 Post to at least step up and he can
6 give the synopsis as to why we are
7 here, and, afterwards, I would ask our
8 distinguished guests from the county
9 then to testify. Thank you.

10 MR. POST: Thank you, Chairwoman
11 Ford, and Presiding Officer Nicoletto,
12 Ranking Member DeRiggi-Whitton, Vice
13 Chairman Rhoads, Legislator Pilip,
14 Legislator Ferretti, Legislator Bynoe
15 and Mule for convening today's hearing
16 on hate crime reporting. Thank you to
17 Commissioner Ryder and representatives
18 from the DA's office and the Office of
19 Crime Victim Advocate also for joining
20 us.

21 As the legislator mentioned, my
22 name is Eric Post. I'm the Long Island
23 director of the American Jewish
24 Committee.

25 A little bit about AJC and our

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2 Community of Conscious which is
3 represented today. AJC was founded in
4 1906 to protect the Jewish community
5 and provide democratic values for all.

6 As a 501C3, we conduct our
7 strictly nonpartisan advocacy through
8 24 offices in this country, 13
9 international posts and 37 partnerships
10 with Jewish communities abroad.

11 For 116 years, we have stood with
12 America's diverse and ethnic groups to
13 seek a more perfect union with
14 anti-Semitism and all forms of hate on
15 the rise, our job has become even more
16 urgent.

17 Indeed, our 2021 report on the
18 state of anti-Semitism in America
19 showed that one out of four American
20 Jews were the victims of anti-Semitism
21 in the past year.

22 We only have to turn our heads to
23 the news this week to remind ourselves
24 that over the weekend there were two
25 anti-Semitic incidents, one in Brooklyn

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2 and one had occurred on the west side.

3 We all have seen violence against
4 all our groups that are represented
5 today here. Just in the past year
6 alone, your committee held a hearing on
7 anti-Asian American hate which we are
8 particularly grateful for.

9 AJC became the Community of
10 Conscience in November of 2020. It is
11 a national AJC initiative that is in
12 many of our 24 regional offices across
13 the country.

14 The Long Island Community of
15 Conscience is comprised of 18 diverse
16 groups including the Muslim, Chinese,
17 Latino, Sikh, Hindu, African American,
18 disability rights, LGBTQ, Korean, LBS,
19 and Jewish communities.

20 We come together to combat hate
21 legislatively. We are united based on
22 nine principles, several of which I
23 will read from our preamble.

24 We invite all who share our
25 concerns for the future of this great

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2 country, our appreciation of its
3 fundamental strengths, our conviction
4 that it must overcome its challenges
5 and our resolve to honor the American
6 spirit to join us in our Community of
7 Conscience.

8 Join us in the spirit of the
9 American motto E Pluribus Unum as we
10 unite across difference, celebrate our
11 diversity, contribute to a shared
12 society and resolve to advance the
13 welfare of all.

14 Join us in the spirit of
15 patriotism as we strongly strive
16 proudly and boldly to uphold the
17 American ideals of equality of dignity
18 of opportunity for all.

19 Join us in the spirit of civility
20 as we reject all forms of bigotry
21 incendiary partisanship, whatever its
22 sources, dehumanizing and demonizing
23 rhetoric and threats of violence.

24 Lastly, we invite all who share
25 our common concerns for the future of

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2 this great country, our appreciation of
3 its fundamental strengths, our
4 conviction that it must overcome its
5 challenges and our resolve to honor the
6 American spirit to join us in the
7 community of conscience.

8 Over the past year and a half, we
9 secured the co-sponsorship of all five
10 Long Island's Members of Congress for
11 the No Hate Act, which was signed into
12 law in 2021 and amongst other
13 provisions provides resources to police
14 nationwide to report hate crimes to the
15 FBI.

16 We supported a New York State
17 bill that became law in 2021 to create
18 a cyber bullying task force in Albany,
19 and in 2022 have focused on increasing
20 hate crime reporting on a local level
21 which brings us here today.

22 We have met with Commissioner
23 Ryder, the county employees who manage
24 Language Line, the Nassau County Human
25 Rights Commissioner, and other county

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2 stakeholders to better understand how
3 hate crimes are reported in Nassau
4 County and share why our communities
5 don't report.

6 AJC's 2021 report on the state of
7 anti Semitism in America showed that
8 that 80 percent, yes, 80 percent of
9 Jewish Americans do not report hate
10 crimes or bias incidents because they
11 don't think it's a big enough deal or
12 think that nothing will come of their
13 report.

14 All the communities represented
15 here today bring their own reasons that
16 their communities don't report and I
17 suspect some of their numbers may be
18 even higher than 80 percent in the
19 Jewish community.

20 So, how can we, the Community of
21 Conscience, the Nassau County Police,
22 District Attorney's Office, the crime
23 advocate's office and the Nassau County
24 Legislature work on this problem?

25 How can we create an environment

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2 where hate crimes and incidents are
3 more readily reported?

4 Nassau County has become
5 incredibly more diverse over the past
6 several decades and it's becoming more
7 so. This is an issue we must address
8 and today is a great start.

9 We thank the Legislature, police
10 and DA's office for showing how
11 seriously they think of this issue by
12 being here today and I hope by the
13 close of the hearing we'll have taken
14 some important first steps on solving
15 this problem. Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
17 much, Eric. Of course this is the
18 first step. I guess when we first had
19 the zoom meeting where the presiding
20 officer and I were on it, and to hear
21 from the various groups as to some of
22 the challenges and why it is important
23 to discuss this in public and make sure
24 we have all the parties involved so we
25 can come to some sort of action that

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2 can be taken and, you know, address the
3 hate crime issue here throughout Nassau
4 County.

5 So today we have from the county
6 Patrick Ryder, our commissioner of
7 police, Joseph Gim, Deputy Bureau
8 Chief, County Court Trial Bureau and
9 Unit Chief, hate crimes unit, and
10 Jeanine Diehl, Crime Victim Advocate.
11 Thank you for joining us.

12 I guess what we will do,
13 Commissioner Ryder, perhaps we will
14 start with you because a lot of times I
15 guess when these crimes happen it does
16 go to the 911 bureau where people
17 report it and they do report it to the
18 police officer.

19 So if you can give us some
20 insight as to what the police are doing
21 and maybe what more we can do.

22 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Absolutely.
23 Thank you for having me.

24 Just as a comment, again, this is
25 not -- we are here to help and work to

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2 make sure that we help and increase our
3 reporting. We do know, we all know
4 that there are many victims that don't
5 come forward and report so that
6 assistance as I just met this past week
7 with Eric and Dr. Isma Chaudhry, Zack
8 Bazine, and Gordon Zang, and we
9 discussed on how we can increase that.

10 I brought a suggestion from the
11 group to the County Executive's level
12 and we are in discussion how to
13 formulate that and how it would work
14 best for everybody involved. That's
15 getting the Nassau County Police
16 Department, aggressively along with the
17 DA's office investigates all acts of
18 hate crime and bias crimes.

19 To give some numbers to give some
20 context to this. In 2020, our bias
21 hate crime combination we had 49
22 reports taken.

23 In 2021 it was 54. And in 2022
24 year to date it's at 12. So we are
25 about the average of where we were in

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2 2020.

3 Every time a 911 call is made
4 whether it's a swastika that is drawn
5 in the snow or hate crime of act of
6 aggression towards somebody because of
7 their race, religion, gender, we
8 investigate it from the detective side.

9 So it goes up to the bias
10 coordinator which is the deputy chief
11 in charge of the detective division.
12 That's from the investigative side.
13 Every command in Nassau County's deputy
14 commanding office, the deputy inspector
15 for most positions, he is the bias
16 coordinator for each precinct. He
17 takes both to make sure that the
18 detectives are doing their
19 investigative side and to push it off
20 to the chief of department side through
21 the patrol division. That ends up in
22 the lap of the chief of the department
23 who removes it to our liaison sergeant,
24 Sabrina Gregg, who is here with me
25 today.

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2 Also here with me is Chris Ferro
3 who is our chief of detectives, he
4 oversees and supervises deputy chief
5 Jimmy Barchow who couldn't be here
6 today.

7 Sabrina is also the language
8 coordinator for Nassau County and works
9 with again our domestic situations. So
10 it kind of -- many of these situations
11 intertwine with each other.

12 All of our investigations are
13 investigated thoroughly. There are
14 checks and balances to make sure we are
15 doing it both correctly and reporting
16 it correctly. When those reports are
17 done through the chief of the
18 department, it then goes to the county
19 and both the DA's office, the DCJS, and
20 the ADL. So we are pushing it out many
21 different ways to make sure we are
22 being transparent in giving the
23 numbers.

24 We have a very, very low -- when
25 you compare ourselves to New York City

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2 and Suffolk County, very low in the
3 numbers, and, again, we can make that
4 argument that it's not being reported
5 or we can make that argument that we
6 are a safe county and we are doing the
7 right things with our complainants and
8 our investigations.

9 So with me today again is both
10 Sergeant Sabrina Gregg and Chief Ferro
11 and we'll answer any questions that the
12 committee has.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: My question
14 would be, I know you have this unit and
15 I'm sure it's very effective, but what
16 if -- sometimes when people have to
17 report crimes, and we're talking about
18 people who they themselves may be
19 immigrants or new immigrants to the
20 county and the country, so they're -- a
21 lot of times it's not in their mindset
22 to complain about anything and they'll
23 take what is thrown at them.

24 Do we find that there is anything
25 that we can do to encourage even people

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2 like that to at least, if something
3 happens to them, to feel comfortable to
4 call and report something that may
5 happen to them?

6 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Well, those
7 that have been reported, obviously that
8 comfort level has to come from my
9 police officer and my police officer
10 doing the right thing with the
11 community and that happens every day.

12 It's those that don't report that
13 I think we're here to address. The
14 problem is, I can't send a police
15 officer to make that better. I need
16 the community to assist me on that.

17 One of the conversations we had
18 with that group the other day was if
19 there is a committee out there -- and
20 we started this a while back, called
21 the Points of Light. It never took off
22 because of the change of government,
23 everything changed.

24 So it's similar to the Points of
25 Light. We get people from within the

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2 communities that joined this committee.
3 We meet once a month. We discuss
4 problems. But they become that
5 ambassador to the community, that trust
6 level that they can go to that that --
7 they're not going to trust the man or
8 woman wearing the blue uniform, they'll
9 trust someone from their own community.

10 The complaint goes to that person
11 and then to us and then from there we
12 can start to reach, maybe going back
13 through the same person to get the
14 victim to come forward and address
15 those issues. That's one of the ways.

16 It's difficult to come from law
17 enforcement. We have language line.
18 We have our officers who have gone
19 through all sorts of training regarding
20 how to address our victims. We do a
21 great job in our solvability rate when
22 it comes to these crimes, but if
23 someone doesn't have trust it's -- we
24 need to build that trust and to build
25 that we need the community's help and I

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2 think there's a bridge between us and
3 the community that can be those points
4 that get us there to help the victims
5 feel comfortable and come forward.

6 MS. GREGG: I just want to add to
7 that that there are plenty of fires
8 that we have out that we don't conduct
9 civil immigration enforcement because
10 the more that you see that we don't
11 have that as a policy, that any time
12 you speak with us, you interact with
13 us, we're not going to report to anyone
14 else or anyone, we are not even going
15 to ask you what your immigration status
16 is. And if you are a victim of a crime
17 there are even visas to afford you an
18 extra buffer of comfort.

19 So obviously that's coming from
20 law enforcement, as the Commissioner
21 said, there's a level of trust that
22 needs to occur but that information is
23 out there, it's on flyers, our
24 community affairs office, they are
25 always telling people and trying to

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2 ensure people, and those are the faces
3 that people see on the daily basis when
4 there isn't any level of crime.
5 They're out there engaging with the
6 community on a daily basis.

7 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: To build that
8 trust, is there any special training
9 that they go through in dealing with
10 hate crimes? Because I know sometimes
11 some people may not realize what would
12 be a level of hate crime. Even if
13 they're the victim. Maybe if someone
14 calls them names, or they think, well,
15 everybody calls me names, but it really
16 is hateful. Do the residents realize
17 that that is something that they can
18 report?

19 COMMISSIONER RYDER: All the
20 officers receive training in the
21 academy. Now, with the new in-service
22 training --

23 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
24 don't think you're microphone is on.
25 Hold it a little closer.

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2 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I've never
3 been told I'm not loud enough.

4 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
5 don't want to miss a word of your
6 wisdom.

7 COMMISSIONER RYDER: So there is
8 training that they receive at the
9 academy level. Now, because of
10 reforms, we have instituted their
11 yearly training and part of that is
12 about dealing with immigration, bias,
13 bias awareness, hate crimes and how to
14 address our victims, so, yes, they are
15 receiving that. It's once a year now
16 and it's part of the new police reform
17 training.

18 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Does anyone
19 else have a question?

20 LEGISLATOR MULE: Commissioner,
21 you mentioned, and correct me if I'm
22 wrong, in 2020 there were 49 reports,
23 in 2021 there were 54 and so far there
24 are 12.

25 Do you have statistics on what

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2 happened after those reports are made,
3 like how many make it through the court
4 system or are convicted?

5 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I don't have
6 that. I will get you that. I
7 apologize. But all of them are
8 investigated. Our solvability rate is
9 very high in Nassau County but I will
10 get you those exact numbers, but if
11 they're investigated and found, we then
12 bring it to the District Attorney.

13 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Don't go
15 anywhere. I'm sure after the other
16 speakers there will be others. Because
17 it just seems so low to me. I know we
18 have such a great community but to only
19 have maybe 54 from last year reporting
20 crimes, hate crimes, just with the
21 population of 1.3 million, does that
22 seem low to you? I'm not on the law
23 enforcement side so I don't even know.

24 COMMISSIONER RYDER: No. It's a
25 low number and, again, I'd like to

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2 think that that's because of the county
3 that we live in.

4 I'm not going to disagree. There
5 are many victims that don't come
6 forward in a lot of crimes and we want
7 to make sure we collect that data and
8 investigate it to give them some kind
9 of closure.

10 When you look at late crimes, and
11 I gave you the total numbers, but in
12 hate crimes itself, in 2020 there were
13 eight, in 2021 it jumped up to 19, but
14 then it dropped down to -- I'm sorry,
15 it went from 19 to 17. It dropped down
16 ten percent in that time period. So
17 small numbers.

18 When you deal percentages I could
19 use smoke and mirrors and give you a
20 percentage it doesn't work. It's a
21 small number, 19 to 17, it's still
22 around the same.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm sorry,
24 Commissioner, could you repeat those
25 numbers again year by year.

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2 COMMISSIONER RYDER: In 2020
3 there were eight. In 2021 there were
4 19. In 2022, year to date, there is,
5 I'm sorry, we don't have that number
6 year to date, that's where I messed up.
7 But from the -- I'm sorry 2020, 8 and
8 2021, 19.

9 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you.

10 LEGISLATOR MULE: Commissioner,
11 I'm sorry, how are those numbers
12 difference -- what is the distinction
13 between 2020, 49 versus 8?

14 COMMISSIONER RYDER: The first
15 number I gave you, that 49, 54 now 12,
16 that's combined, hate crime and bias
17 together. If I break out hate crime
18 for 2020, 8 and 2021, 19.

19 LEGISLATOR MULE: Do you have
20 numbers for years before that?

21 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I only did
22 the last two years breakout, sorry.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Just want to
24 ask another question while you are on
25 that data. Are those categorized?

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2 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes. Do
3 want to hear it?

4 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I would love
5 to.

6 COMMISSIONER RYDER: For the hate
7 crime. So anti Black in 2020 there
8 were zero in 2022 -- I'm sorry, 2021
9 there were two. No anti Hispanic, no
10 Islamic, and Jewish there was 2000, 24
11 and 2021, 2.

12 And sexual orientation there were
13 zero, and 2020, and there were two in
14 2021.

15 If I break it down by the crimes
16 and I'll just run down 2020, aggregated
17 harassment was three, bias was one,
18 burglary commercial was one, criminal
19 mischief was one and making graffiti
20 was one and possession of a weapon was
21 one.

22 I jumped to 2021, aggregated
23 harassment is six, bias incident was
24 four, criminal mischief was two,
25 criminal mischief to an auto was two,

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2 harassment was one, menacing was two,
3 and possession of weapon, one, and
4 robbery other was one.

5 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
6 Commissioner. Could you provide those
7 numbers in some form to us, that would
8 be helpful?

9 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.

10 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
11 Rhoads and --

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you,
13 Madam Chair. Commissioner, good to see
14 you today. Is there a way for us to
15 estimate how many hate crimes that
16 occurred that are not reported?

17 Is there any empirical data or
18 research that would assist us? In
19 other words, I mean, it's obviously
20 wonderful that the numbers appear to be
21 decreasing, but is there a way for us
22 to be able to analyze or capture
23 unreported crime?

24 Understandably, I don't know how
25 you would do it.

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2 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, you
3 don't know what you don't know.
4 Especially in our world. Look, you can
5 do comparisons to New York City and
6 Suffolk county. But we police
7 different than New York City and
8 Suffolk County. We are service
9 oriented.

10 I don't know how you would report
11 something like that or us to collect
12 how. You can look at averages around
13 the country but then you have to
14 compare demographics, you have to
15 compare size of the county and you have
16 to compare all the other factors that
17 will come and change that number and
18 why it is.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In terms of
20 community outreach, what do we do to
21 encourage people to report a hate crime
22 if it occurs, do we work with any
23 specific communities?

24 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Absolutely.
25 So we have a zero tolerance when it

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2 comes to hate crime and bias. We are
3 out both in Ramadan during the high
4 holy days, during the Easter season, we
5 visit -- I just spoke at saint Francis
6 this week. I was out speaking this
7 Friday in Hicksville and we always
8 bring up hate crime and we say, if
9 there are victims that need to come
10 forward, and if you do it through
11 somebody else that's okay with us, we
12 will accept it any way that we can.

13 Our Community Affairs Office is
14 out every day in the schools speaking
15 to the kids about bullying, which many
16 times can lead to a hate crime or bias
17 crime. We are also out with our pop
18 cops out speaking at community
19 meetings.

20 We are encouraging our victims to
21 come forward and we very much welcome
22 that and we want to make sure we give
23 them a thorough investigation.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'm curious
25 and I'm just kind of spit balling here

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2 and I apologize for the term, but when
3 we're going out and speaking to these
4 groups when you have community affairs,
5 for example, when we're going out or
6 the pop cops go out, do we pass out any
7 type of survey or any way to get
8 feedback from a community to ask if
9 anyone has been a victim of a hate
10 crime and did you report it, why didn't
11 you report it, and what services could
12 we be providing that would make it more
13 likely to report. Just to try to get
14 some feedback. I don't know if that
15 would work, I'm just trying to --

16 COMMISSIONER RYDER: We don't.
17 We don't hand out a survey. We
18 encourage reporting.

19 Are you going to get honesty in
20 the survey? That's the other next
21 question. And who is going to answer
22 the survey? Only those that have been
23 victimized and not reported or those
24 that believe people have been
25 victimized and not reported?

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2 Again, this is not a challenge at
3 all because we are on the same side
4 when we sat down last week with Eric,
5 we want to get more reporting, we want
6 to make sure the victims come forward.

7 I don't know how -- I know we
8 need community assistance. This is one
9 of the situations where, without the
10 community, for me to break into that
11 community and try to get the inroads to
12 get victims to come forward that are
13 afraid, it's difficult. It's
14 difficult.

15 So we make sure that we let them
16 know that there are services that are
17 there in the county for them. We give
18 out flyers. We give out anonymous
19 complaints that you can call this
20 number to file a complaint. We give
21 all the options and sometimes it's just
22 difficult. Again, it's that victim
23 that has its fear, for whatever that
24 fear is that drives them.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate

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2 it. Thank you, Commissioner.

3 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you,
4 Chairwoman.

5 Commissioner, when someone makes
6 a report, who is the person who
7 determines what type of crime it is?
8 How does that happen; what is that
9 process?

10 COMMISSIONER RYDER: So when the
11 initial report is taken, the detective
12 is the person who is looking at what
13 the crime is, the desk officer, he
14 reviews it and he says, okay, this is
15 harassment, this is aggregated
16 harassment, it's a bias or hate crime,
17 and we follow up with the penal laws.
18 When we make an arrest, we confer with
19 the District Attorney's Office and say
20 we are arresting this individual. This
21 is the rhyme we are arresting him for.
22 Tell me the facts involved, okay, that
23 reaches the threshold, yes, we will
24 move forward in that direction.

25 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you. I'm
3 wondering as a result of all of this we
4 can all work together and even as
5 legislators come up with a public
6 campaign to start educating our
7 residents what would constitute a hate
8 crime and maybe if people learn about
9 it they will be more encouraged to
10 report it, if they saw it or
11 experienced it themselves.

12 So now we will move on to
13 Mr. Joseph Gim, here from the DA.

14 Good afternoon, welcome.

15 MR. GIM: Chairwoman Ford, Vice
16 Chairman Rhoads, the rest of the Public
17 Safety Committee, good morning.

18 On behalf of District Attorney
19 Anne Donnelly, I would like to thank
20 the Legislature and specifically the
21 Public Safety Committee for addressing
22 this important topic of hate reporting.

23 My name is Joe Gim and I am the
24 chief of the hate crimes unit for the
25 Nassau County District Attorney's

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2 Office. District Attorney Anne
3 Donnelly is deeply concerned about hate
4 crimes and the affect it has on victims
5 and communities.

6 The Hate Crimes Unit of the
7 Nassau County District Attorney's
8 Office works with our law enforcement
9 partners such as the Nassau County
10 Police Department to ensure that each
11 case where bias is suspected is given
12 the proper attention necessary to
13 pursue justice for our victims and our
14 ethnic and religious communities.

15 The issue of hate crimes
16 reporting is an important issue. It is
17 important to realize that all crimes
18 are under reported. Being the victim
19 of a crime is a trauma inducing
20 experience which can be life changing
21 and have long lasting psychological
22 effects.

23 Reporting crimes not only causes
24 the victim to relive the experience but
25 also face the scrutiny of others in the

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2 recounting of a traumatic experience.

3 I know this personally. My
4 father was shot while our whole family
5 was at our corner store in Baltimore in
6 the early 80s. I only learned more of
7 the story as an adult.

8 I learned that my father had been
9 shot by a hired assassin for a rival
10 store owner who do not want us to
11 compete for his business.

12 After my father was shot, our
13 family was living and sleeping at the
14 business with my father in the hospital
15 and no one else to mind the store or
16 watch the kids.

17 The man who hired someone to
18 shoot my father was eventually caught
19 when he attempted to hire an undercover
20 officer to burn down our corner store,
21 the one we were sleeping in at the
22 time.

23 Such an event changes the life
24 and is a large part of why I do what I
25 do today, but for many of our victims

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2 it is a scar that haunts them for the
3 rest of their lives.

4 Reliving that experience and
5 bringing more attention to themselves
6 is often the last thing they are
7 concerned about.

8 Crime reporting is that much more
9 difficult for members of immigrant
10 communities or those that live in
11 ethnic or religious enclaves.
12 Witnesses do not want to get in trouble
13 or get involved in matters that don't
14 involve them and victims are faced with
15 dire choices as well.

16 Often, these immigrant families
17 are operating on paper thin margins to
18 begin with and a day missed at work can
19 mean the closure of business, losing a
20 job or getting evicted. They simply do
21 not have the time to make a report or
22 come to the precinct to look at
23 photographs.

24 Many communities have immigrated
25 to the United States to avoid

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2 corruption, corrupt government.

3 They are from countries where
4 making waves or drawing attention to
5 oneself can invite scrutiny from local
6 officials and increase shame for the
7 family simply by being a victim.

8 Add to that the fear that the
9 police would not understand the
10 language the victim is speaking or more
11 importantly not understand the cultural
12 context of what they are saying and it
13 becomes a dire task to report to the
14 police.

15 I myself am Korean but often met
16 with Chinese or Indian witnesses and
17 victims who have told me that they were
18 with an immigrant's child who could
19 understand them because we understood
20 what it was like to live between two
21 worlds.

22 I have also met with members of
23 religious communities that did not
24 believe that I can understand the
25 significance of their experience

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2 because I was not of their background.
3 I understand that feeling. I do. It
4 is important that we're prepared to
5 meet our victims where they are.

6 Again, I know what our
7 communities are going through because I
8 felt it with my own skin. Over my
9 life, my father and my mother have
10 suffered countless robberies, theft,
11 burglaries and even violence. I have
12 also worked in that store throughout
13 high school and that's a large reason I
14 was able to be before you today.

15 My own parents have always been
16 reluctant to speak with the police and
17 I am bit ashamed to tell you that they
18 often did not cooperate.

19 This experience has informed my
20 practice as a prosecutor and highlights
21 some of the endemic hurdles to victim
22 reporting. There are most certainly
23 things, however, there are things that
24 we can do and we are doing to improve
25 our responsiveness to these communities

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2 and to improve our services for them.

3 It is important that those who
4 report hate crimes an bias incidents
5 are treated with respect and greeted in
6 a culturally sensitive environment
7 ideally in their native language,
8 recruiting and retaining a diverse
9 office and training our staff to be
10 culturally sensitive increases our
11 ability to interact with our victims
12 and the affected communities.

13 In the hate crime unit alone, we
14 have ADAs capable of speaking in
15 Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Urdu and
16 Hindu.

17 It is important that we recruit,
18 train, and retain this talent. Part of
19 our mission towards increasing
20 reporting and more importantly
21 detering punishing and eliminating
22 bias crimes is informing people what a
23 hate crime is as chairman you picked up
24 on.

25 I have heard some say that words

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2 alone can never be a hate crime but

3 this is patently false. Truth death

4 threats made against a victim due to

5 their race, national origin, sexual

6 orientation or any of the other

7 protected classes of individuals may be

8 a misdemeanor under the aggregated

9 harassment in the second degree

10 charge.

11 Most of our hate crimes in the

12 penal law are not even in the hate

13 crimes statute. Aggravated harassment

14 in the second degree, in particular, is

15 often charged for crimes not having to

16 do with hate crimes at all.

17 It is important that we invest in

18 informational campaigns for affected

19 communities and also that we train and

20 retain our law enforcement officers to

21 spot these crimes and elevate these

22 reports so we can ensure that the ones

23 that do come in are counted and

24 prosecuted to the fullest extent that

25 we can.

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2 DA Donnelly is aware of many of
3 these barriers to reporting and we have
4 instituted changes so we can receive
5 hate crime complaints directly from the
6 public. This is something new, this is
7 something that we have not done in the
8 past.

9 I will say when reporting a hate
10 crime, 911 must be the phone call that
11 is made to alert the proper
12 authorities. After the emergency has
13 passed however, and incident may be
14 reported to your local precinct.

15 Now, the District Attorney's
16 Office is also a place where you can
17 initiate a complaint. We can assign
18 one of our detectives and we can also
19 investigate it through the hate crimes
20 unit.

21 The Nassau DA complaint's unit
22 which can be reached on the internet at
23 NassauDA.org or at 516-571-3505, is
24 staffed with investigators and
25 prosecutors who will take complaints

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2 from the public. If the complaint is
3 suspected of hate crime, the hate
4 crimes unit will investigate those
5 allegations and staff trained and
6 dedicated and passionate about pursuing
7 hate crimes will evaluate the case.

8 Our hate crimes unit will review
9 the complaint to determine if this is a
10 bias incident or if it is a potential
11 crime and we can initiate that
12 investigation.

13 Nassau County is one of the most
14 diverse counties in America and it is
15 continuing to trend towards diversity.
16 It's important that we meet these
17 communities where they are to ensure
18 that are our community is safe and
19 justice is being pursued for our
20 vulnerable immigrant, religious and
21 ethnic communities. Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I think you
23 said it all. Thank you very much and I
24 could only imagine, with your parents,
25 with the store and everything that

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2 happened to you, I'm in a way
3 speechless on that end and I feel bad
4 because I would like to say that maybe
5 yours is the only family that this ever
6 happened to but we all know that in
7 many of these cases that immigrants do
8 open up businesses and suffer greatly
9 from people that rob them, attack them,
10 or whatever, so your family -- I'm glad
11 to see you're here and I think DA
12 Donnelly is very fortunate to have you
13 working for her and I thank her for
14 being proactive and starting to look at
15 this and setting up a unit to help deal
16 with hate crimes here in Nassau County
17 because we see the trend and trying to
18 make sure that everybody does.

19 Like you say, even at times
20 didn't want to report, it's sad, if
21 everybody, if anything happens to them
22 they have the right and they will be
23 heard, and we will take action to
24 protect them from future occurrences.
25 Go right ahead.

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2 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
3 just want to say I was very impressed
4 with what you just said.

5 My aunt married a very successful
6 and smart Philippino doctor when she
7 was a nurse and my cousins are half
8 Philippino and half Italians and they
9 happen to be very stunning, very good
10 looking family.

11 But I remember being with them
12 especially when we were all little and
13 unfortunately there might have been
14 some type of an awkward feeling
15 sometimes. There were a couple of
16 incidents that happened with my uncle
17 and he could never quite grasp the
18 English language like he wanted to and
19 he was always very self conscious, the
20 most brilliant man you could find, he
21 was very self conscious, and that pride
22 that he had.

23 I think that is our obstacle in a
24 lot of this. As the Commissioner
25 mentioned, there's a hesitation to

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2 admit that anything is wrong or that
3 you need help.

4 I don't know how -- I think it's
5 a little bit that way in many cultures
6 but I found it just growing up as a kid
7 in that family than maybe the rest of
8 us, the family. There is a real keep
9 it in and don't show any problems. It
10 happened a few times and he was very
11 hesitant to reach out for help. Don't
12 know how to get around that. It's a
13 complicated thing and it's basically
14 establishing trust with that community,
15 that if they do come forward their
16 concerns will be addressed and in a way
17 they are safe, the family is safe and
18 there won't be any retaliation. I
19 think retaliation is one of the biggest
20 fears like what happened with your
21 family in the city.

22 I just hope with you -- and I
23 love this idea of reporting to the DA,
24 that's a big step, only because the
25 police are feared by some cultures

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2 sometimes and maybe their might be more
3 of a kept quiet with the DA. I don't
4 know.

5 But any ideas you ever have we
6 would love to explore them because it's
7 a real psychological issue as well as a
8 public safety issue. And I think it
9 takes a lot of care and all of us up
10 here are willing to put in the time and
11 effort to do it. We just want to do it
12 the most effective way possible that we
13 can. So thank you for coming today and
14 you were very impressive.

15 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you,
16 Chairwoman. So thank you for your
17 testimony. I have two questions
18 related to it.

19 Given that you also take reports
20 of bias crimes, hate crimes, would that
21 add to the numbers that the
22 Commissioner gave to us or is that all
23 together?

24 MR. GIM: So it potentially
25 could. As of right now we have been

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2 actually accepting and initiating our
3 own investigations for a total of one
4 month. So there is not much to report
5 there and we do have an incident that
6 we are looking at.

7 Again, I think part of what we're
8 dealing with here is, especially in
9 incidents where there is a racial
10 element or there is a racial animus
11 involved and perhaps no one got
12 injured. There might have been
13 threats, might have been physical
14 contact, but nothing where sort of your
15 typical call the cops to the scene and
16 arrest the other person.

17 In many of those cases, many of
18 them can be, as I described to you, a
19 violation of aggregated harassment in
20 the second degree which is a crime, but
21 it's also the kind of case where, you
22 know, do I really want to report it, is
23 it really to that level, I'm not
24 calling 911 over this.

25 So really I'm hoping that we will

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2 start to -- and we haven't done any
3 campaigns to advertise this necessarily
4 but those are sort of -- I actually
5 expect a large number of those not to
6 be criminal in nature and actionable,
7 but that is what we want. We want the
8 community to feel like, hey, there's
9 this going on, you guys should know
10 about this.

11 For a lot of these crimes -- and
12 I've actually spoken to our friend from
13 the AJC specifically about this issue
14 is, a lot of these non criminal
15 incidents become criminal incidents
16 later and one thing I have to do is
17 prove that they were motivated based on
18 hate.

19 Now, if they're just reporting
20 what happened during that crime, your
21 stuff with the four corners of whatever
22 it was that was observed or said to the
23 police. But if we have that database
24 of non criminal incidents of he's
25 constantly accosting people from the

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2 same category of individuals, that
3 availability of information, when there
4 is an actionable criminal offense is
5 what we like to call evidence of intent
6 or motive and that's is the kind of
7 thing that pushes us over the edge and
8 gets us beyond the four corners of
9 what's directly in front of us.

10 So there's actually a lot of
11 value to be had in the cases that don't
12 result in criminal prosecutions and
13 certainly we're open to receiving those
14 complaints and listening to them.

15 LEGISLATOR MULE: So you're
16 storing all that information?

17 MR. GIM: Correct. We are
18 categorizing it and having it available
19 to us. There are certain DCJS
20 reporting requirements as the
21 Commissioner mentioned. There is
22 certain state wide reporting that
23 occurs with regards to hate crimes and
24 they have their own criteria of what
25 should be reported. So to the extent

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2 we are receiving them internally we
3 would have to start with that program
4 as well.

5 LEGISLATOR MULE: I think I heard
6 you answer my second question. So you
7 have been in existence for one month;
8 is that correct?

9 MR. GIM: No. So the actual unit
10 has existed in some form for an
11 extended period of time. I can't speak
12 to the exact roots, I can get that
13 information later. I have been the
14 chief of the hate crime unit since
15 April of last year.

16 Prior to that there was another
17 deputy chief who was in charge of the
18 hate crimes unit.

19 We instituted some changes before
20 the transition, but this particular
21 aspect which is where we can take our
22 own complaints and investigate
23 themselves is something that DA
24 Donnelly instituted upon her come to
25 the office.

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2 LEGISLATOR MULE: I see. So the
3 unit has existed for quite some time
4 but this new investigative ability,
5 that is new?

6 MR. GIM: Correct.

7 LEGISLATOR MULE: I just want to
8 reiterate what my colleagues said, I
9 think so we would all be interested if
10 partnering with you in whatever you
11 think is appropriate so we can get the
12 word out.

13 MR. GIM: We are looking for
14 partners so I'm absolutely am excited
15 to hear that.

16 LEGISLATOR MULE: I think you
17 have 19 partners.

18 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Plus a roomful
19 out there that are willing to work all
20 together. Legislator Rhoads.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: First off, I
22 want to thank you for sharing your
23 personal story and I always touched by
24 individuals who take personal
25 occurrence and personal tragedy and try

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2 to turn it into the positive and use
3 that negative to use it as a
4 springboard to create a positive
5 difference in the world and your story
6 struck me as a prime example of that
7 and I want to thank you for getting
8 involved and thank you for serving the
9 people of Nassau County in the way you
10 do. I appreciate that greatly.

11 It seems as though trust is part
12 of the challenge, that's what we are
13 all talking about. I guess part of the
14 question is, I know that we reach out
15 to communities of faith and community
16 leaders, so is there a way to encourage
17 or what again are the challenges from a
18 prosecutorial standpoint? I may not
19 be, and if something happens to me, I
20 may not be comfortable calling 911. I
21 may not be comfortable calling the DA's
22 office, but I may be comfortable
23 speaking to my pastor, or rabbi, or
24 speaking to someone else in the
25 community.

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2 Is there a way in the absence of
3 being able to encourage people to
4 report crimes directly to the police,
5 is there a way to encourage them to
6 report to other community leaders who
7 then in turn can notify us?

8 I don't know from a prosecutorial
9 standpoint that seems to be a non
10 starter, you need the actual
11 complainant who actually witnessed the
12 crime I would imagine.

13 But since it's not always about a
14 prosecution and simply about being able
15 to tell someone what occurred and being
16 able to effect positive change within
17 that community and address the
18 underlying circumstances, is there any
19 benefit in trying to do that?

20 MR. GIM: So the District
21 Attorney's Office actually does
22 currently have, we call them advisory
23 councils. So there was a faith level
24 advisory council and various ethnic
25 groups and that involves leaders from

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2 throughout the community and we do
3 actually get referrals of concerns,
4 people talking about particular
5 instances or giving us information on
6 the back end that we can now follow up
7 and be a little bit more proactive as
8 to how that happens. So that actually
9 is an important part of what we do at
10 the DA's office.

11 Vice Chairman Rhoads, you bring
12 up an excellent point. First of all,
13 if the victim is Korean, I
14 automatically have a completely
15 different conversation with them than
16 any member of law enforcement has had.
17 That's before I even speak in Korean,
18 although I can speak in Korean and do
19 with them.

20 But the very fact that I am who I
21 am and they have a sense that I
22 understand where they're coming from
23 makes a difference.

24 One of our ADAs, actually our
25 felony assistant District Attorney who

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2 works in the hate crimes unit, she is
3 Black but she is also Jewish and she
4 has a connection with our faith leaders
5 in the Jewish community, that puts them
6 immediately at ease in a way that I
7 cannot.

8 I find that that type of
9 resource, that type of cultural
10 sensitivity, yes, can be achieved
11 through training, language can be
12 achieved through the language line.
13 You can certainly bring over other
14 individuals to sort of bridge that gap,
15 but there is no replacing the real
16 thing, right?

17 So, to the extent that -- and I
18 want to bring up this point, those
19 categories of individuals, people with
20 that cultural sensitivity, people who
21 come from certain backgrounds,
22 recruiting them, like everyone is
23 trying to go, just think about the
24 layers to become an assistant District
25 Attorney, right, you have to go to law

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2 school, you have to show an interest in
3 law enforcement, and you have to want
4 to go into a field that has been
5 unfortunately much aligned for the last
6 few years.

7 So you are dealing with a pool of
8 potential candidates that looks a
9 certain way and also you're dealing
10 essentially with -- there has been
11 plenty of articles about the burden
12 that the discovery laws have placed on
13 assistant District Attorneys and how
14 much work has really blown up for us in
15 general without necessarily our income
16 going up. It's already a tough road
17 for a prosecutor.

18 Add to that trying to recruit
19 people from these diverse backgrounds,
20 and also when we're looking for, for
21 example, crime victim assistance.
22 There are people that work for our
23 office and transition between the
24 victim, keep in touch with them, make
25 sure that everything is going on

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2 correctly, direct them to different
3 services like even getting in touch
4 with my good friend here Jeanine from
5 the County Victim Services Agency and
6 having a language capable crime victim
7 assistance is difficult. It's a civil
8 service position which is going to have
9 its own requirements for hiring and
10 there's no way that we can incentivize
11 hiring diversity or retaining diversity
12 and certainly that's an area I think
13 where we can all work together to try
14 and build in and understand that aspect
15 of what we do.

16 A diverse office of like minded
17 prosecutors is always going to be in a
18 better position to be responsive than
19 one that isn't.

20 Providing us with the resources
21 to be able to do that certainly is
22 helpful. Creating civil service
23 positions that recognize that extra
24 capability such as speaking a language
25 and allowing them to get paid a higher

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2 salary, that can incentive someone with
3 a language capability to round it up,
4 and become good enough to get that
5 position and do that type of work for
6 us as well.

7 Those are some of the things -- I
8 just think it was a great question. I
9 don't know if that was where you were
10 heading towards but that was a very
11 much, in my eye and the work that I
12 have seen, it's one of the big
13 difference between getting a public,
14 building that trust, is having that
15 kind of a platform where people are
16 going to be speaking to folks that are
17 looking for that.

18 I think also, one thing that the
19 DA recognizes is that, because we do
20 have a hate crimes unit at the DA's
21 Office, it's like minded people.

22 Every one in my unit goes to
23 specialized training for this
24 particular subject. Everyone in my
25 unit I'm pushing them to know the

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2 things that they need to know. I'm
3 also pushing to find the right
4 candidates who want to work these
5 cases, right? These types of cases are
6 most effectively prosecuted, most
7 effectively argued, I think you can
8 feel my passion here, from a person who
9 actually cares. Someone who might have
10 gone through that experience before,
11 who has some point of reference for it.
12 So I think that also is a big benefit
13 that DA Donnelly has recognized and we
14 kept that model where we can do that
15 kind of work.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate
17 that answer. Thank you. It almost
18 sounds as though, and I don't know to
19 the extent we can, that might be a
20 Chris question.

21 MR. GIM: Get him in here.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Taking a look
23 at the way civil service works, in
24 terms of being able to hire for
25 specific needs, as you alluded to, so

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2 thank you. I appreciate the answer.

3 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: The
4 Commissioner knows that we have to
5 upgrade our specs with civil service
6 and that would be something that we can
7 look at.

8 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Your
9 question was, would we cake take a
10 complaint from a third party and the
11 answer is yes. Would we investigate it
12 and the answer is yes. Would we
13 continue to look at it and collect that
14 data, and the answer is yes.

15 We take reports for everything.
16 It doesn't matter. That goes in the
17 categories that are there to look for
18 hot spots or a repeat third party
19 saying that this person did something.
20 So the answer is yes.

21 The difference becomes, and in
22 the DA's office, they hire people for
23 that unit, the bias crime unit, that
24 have the multitude language and
25 diversity.

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2 In the police department we go to
3 the victim. Of course they go to the
4 victim. I mean, physically, every day,
5 we're with the victims, going to them,
6 and we don't have that luxury to say, I
7 speak Korean, I speak Chinese, so
8 that's why we end up using a language
9 line which creates another discomfort
10 level. I mean, it would be great to
11 have someone that spoke every language
12 at every scene to address the victims.

13 But my police officers are just
14 as passionate and just as thoughtful
15 and caring and respectful to our
16 victims in those types of cases.

17 There are challenges, yes, and
18 careful how I answer this. You are
19 never going to meet all the challenges.
20 It's just not going to be there. The
21 most important thing is you are fair
22 and are being respectful and those are
23 the two things that we push our
24 officers all the time and then use the
25 resources like Jeanine or the DA's

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2 office, or the multitude of languages
3 that we have in the police department,
4 hey, get me somebody in this type of
5 case, I need to have an actual
6 translator and not the man or woman on
7 the other side of this phone if that
8 helps.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It does.
10 From that time standpoint, are there
11 any additional resources that you need
12 from this Legislature that would
13 assist?

14 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I think the
15 biggest thing that we took on was
16 language line. How do you actually use
17 language line? And now we put police
18 officers with a phone in every car.
19 The County Executive's approach to give
20 every police officer a phone now. But,
21 again, there are conversations we have
22 to have with both the union and
23 government side.

24 This is also cost effective. Is
25 that the right way to go? Is it the

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2 best way? Or is it a better way to
3 improve our language line?

4 Hiring the more diverse and
5 having the extra languages is always a
6 great thing, but, again, it becomes the
7 same issue, does it work?

8 I honestly think, and I spoke
9 with the County Executive about this,
10 and we are mulling it over now is that,
11 what Eric and I spoke about, I go back
12 to that Points of Life, but we didn't
13 call it Points of Life, Eric and I
14 called it the Advisory Council on Hate
15 Crime Reporting. It would be the
16 District Attorney, obviously Jeanine,
17 it would be Sabrina, some members from
18 the government side but more
19 importantly the community side that has
20 the outreach. Who do they trust in
21 that Korean community? Not Pat Ryder,
22 but they may trust somebody else from
23 the community that they will go through
24 that third person to build that trust
25 to get us in the room. It may not be

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2 me. It may be -- hey, you don't have
3 to come to me for the complaint, I'll
4 push you to Jeanine. You can go that
5 way and then it will come back to us.

6 This is, again, the only way you
7 reach such diversity is use the diverse
8 communities to work with us. That's
9 the only way it's going to work.

10 I don't have the luxury of having
11 30 people on call that work for me that
12 can speak multiple languages.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Sure. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
16 Bynoe.

17 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
18 Madam Chair. Hi. Good afternoon. I
19 have questions for the DA's office. So
20 you mentioned languages. Could you go
21 over those languages again that you
22 said are in the office equipped to take
23 these types of complaints?

24 MR. GIM: So in my unit, I can
25 only speak for my unit, I speak Korean,

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2 one of our ADAs speak Mandarin Chinese.
3 We also have an Urdu speaker and also
4 Hindi which is like a second language.
5 But those are the four languages that
6 we have available to us.

7 As far as the Spanish language is
8 concerned, we have a number of CVAs who
9 speak Spanish. We also have an Urdu
10 speaking CVA. That's just our unit. I
11 think throughout our office we have
12 some other language capabilities as
13 well.

14 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So CVA?

15 MR. GIM: CVA, that's crime
16 victim's assistant.

17 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: You are the
18 chief of the hate crimes unit, correct?

19 MR. GIM: That's correct.

20 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: And the folks
21 in your unit, what are their titles?

22 MR. GIM: So we have -- so the
23 way the structure in our office is
24 made, I actually have a day job as well
25 as this job. So this is a second

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2 designation for me.

3 I am the chief of the hate crimes
4 unit but I'm also the deputy chief of
5 the county court trial bureau which
6 prosecutes all felony crimes that are
7 not in a specialized bureau.

8 We also have one felony assistant
9 District Attorney who I directly
10 supervise and meet with the victims
11 with as well and obviously during at
12 trial I will also be doing that with
13 her.

14 Then we also have in district
15 court, we have three assistants.
16 District Court is where misdemeanors
17 are handled and the pass through on
18 those is a little bit -- they generally
19 move on, used to be they would move on
20 in one and a half years to two years.
21 So it's good to have sort of a number
22 of individuals down there.

23 So we have three but one is out
24 on maternity leave and one is also
25 cross designated for the military. So

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2 essentially it works out to one and a
3 half.

4 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm trying to
5 get at, who are the individuals when
6 you say they can take these types of
7 complaints when they come into your
8 office? I'm trying to understand
9 exactly who those individuals are that
10 are speaking the various languages that
11 you just enumerated.

12 MR. GIM: Okay. So when the
13 complaint comes in it's going to go to
14 the complaints unit. I don't know the
15 specific language capabilities of the
16 individuals in that complaints unit,
17 but they take the complaints there.
18 Then it will get assigned to our unit.
19 They're just open to take it. Then it
20 comes to us.

21 At that point there's going to be
22 an ADA assigned along with our
23 detective investigator.

24 We also have as I said a crime
25 victim's assistant who will help with

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2 that process.

3 But, basically, once it gets
4 elevated from the complaint unit it
5 comes to us and then we're going to
6 figure out the best way to sort of
7 bridge that gap.

8 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Yes, because
9 what I'm getting at is that in your
10 particular group based on the expertise
11 of that particular division it seems
12 like there are higher levels of maybe
13 training and experience, and I would be
14 concerned that we would be going to the
15 CVA, which, to me, I don't know, but it
16 sounded like those individuals aren't
17 as skilled or trained, and they are the
18 ones that are dealing with the
19 languages that you did not enumerate
20 when you listed it out. That would be
21 the Spanish speakers as well as the
22 Haitian Creole speakers.

23 So we're here talking about
24 diversity and what have you, but, you
25 know, the number one language aside

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2 from English in this county is Spanish.
3 So we need to be culturally competent
4 in diversifying that experience.
5 Haitian Creole has got to be second or
6 close to it. I don't know how we
7 breakdown language access, it's third?
8 It's third.

9 We have to make sure we have the
10 ability to communicate with the number
11 one and number three, you know, second
12 language learners or second language
13 communicators and be proficient in
14 doing that that, so raises a concern
15 for me.

16 MR. GIM: We actually do have
17 Haitian Creole speakers they're just
18 not in my unit, but in that event --

19 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: But if they're
20 not trained to delicately engage in
21 that type after discourse between
22 someone who is a victim and someone who
23 is trained to engage at a level where
24 they are proficient in this exchange is
25 concerning to me. That's what is

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2 concerning to me, is that we don't have
3 someone at those higher levels engaging
4 with our number one and number three
5 language communicators second language
6 communicators here.

7 I will leave that with you and I
8 do know the police Commissioner has his
9 hands tied to a large extent on how he
10 can diversify, but I do know that in
11 the DA's office these are the routinely
12 non competitive appointments that are
13 made and so that should make
14 diversifying there just that much
15 easier. So I would hope that we would
16 pay some attention to that in the DA's
17 office.

18 Let me stay with you before I go
19 to the Commissioner. So it's my
20 experience as a lay person that when
21 we're looking to investigate, sometimes
22 prevent crimes, that we use every
23 resource available to us, every
24 platform, and that includes social
25 media. I'm going to go further and say

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2 some folks are -- just I'm backing away
3 from that point to go back to it, give
4 me a second, I realize I wanted to set
5 this up for you differently.

6 My family, I'm first generation
7 American. My father comes from a very
8 mall country named Sirinam where they
9 speak Dutch as a second language but a
10 dialect of Dutch which is Tacki. No
11 one here in this room I'm sure has ever
12 engaged in that language. It's a
13 challenge, right?

14 Then you have the more common
15 languages and you have the more common
16 immigrants here who are subjected to
17 these types of interactions that
18 borderline on hate crimes or are hate
19 crimes, right? And they're less likely
20 to engage because of fear.

21 But I'm going to go a step
22 further today and say because it's
23 become normalized. The exchange and
24 the hate and rhetoric in this country
25 has become normalized to the extent

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2 that individuals are subjected to it
3 and just feel like, well, that's the
4 way it goes. I think it's in part
5 because of social media has created all
6 of these environments and platforms
7 where people can just bully people and
8 people can spew hate and threaten
9 people.

10 I know when we are looking for
11 child predators we use technology to
12 try and bubble those people out. I
13 know when we had these problems with
14 the individuals, I'm going to be
15 totally wrong, I'm not even going to
16 try, when these folks are taking over
17 mansions and throwing parties and doing
18 all of those things and we use social
19 media to be able to identify those
20 people, am I correct, Commissioner?

21 What is the DA's office doing,
22 are they doing anything in an effort to
23 use those platforms to be able to
24 identify those individuals who are more
25 likely to commit these hate crimes? Or

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2 police Commissioner you can jump in,
3 either one or both.

4 COMMISSIONER RYDER: So exactly
5 what you said about -- exactly what you
6 were talking about regarding the
7 parties and so forth. We do data mine
8 and social media. We data mine and
9 social media both for hate crimes, for
10 gangs, for predictive parties that we
11 can shut down before they get out of
12 control. We just did one last weekend.
13 Some we miss. Some we don't get.
14 Social media is a wide platform to deal
15 with.

16 We do speak with a lot of groups
17 through our undercover accounts that
18 are out there. Again, open source, not
19 diving into somebody's private
20 business. We get into these groups.
21 We become somebody in that group and
22 then they communicate with us.

23 So when it comes to hate crime
24 and bias crimes, we look at groups that
25 are the KKK type groups that we have

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2 that are out in Suffolk County putting
3 the pamphlets on the poles, we look at
4 the Annicus type groups. We have a
5 large investment in searching social
6 media every single day and working into
7 these accounts to prevent.

8 The world of prevention though is
9 something that we don't see the number
10 on. We only see the number of the
11 crime that's committed unfortunately.

12 I'll just use New York City and
13 terrorism, if people knew how many
14 terrorist attempts were made towards
15 the City of New York that were stopped
16 because of the intelligence side that
17 was being done, but we don't advertise
18 this but the number do come forward.

19 So that's why a lot of the
20 reasons why our numbers are so low is,
21 again, I believe there is under
22 reporting, 100 percent.

23 I believe what you just said, I
24 was shaking my head, yes, the world as
25 gone in the direction, yes, it's the

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2 norm now, and you watch that on social
3 media all the time.

4 We stay proactively involved in
5 it and try to get in front of it. We
6 call it predictive analysis. We do it
7 all the time.

8 Again, it's worked. Could we do
9 more? Absolutely. If we go forwards
10 as earlier discuss that type of group
11 that we formulate with the community,
12 it would be a way to get us in into
13 more doorways that are closed to us.
14 So we say, hey, you need to get into
15 this chat room, you need to get into
16 this group, I can help you, I can
17 invite you and listen to the rhetoric
18 that's going on. We do see a lot of it
19 from a lot of our Annicus type groups
20 out there, hate groups out there
21 spewing it.

22 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
23 Commissioner.

24 Is there anything to be added by
25 the DA's office?

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2 MR. GIM: I just wanted to point
3 out that, I guess to clarify, that the
4 police department has an extensive
5 investigative and arrest function.
6 Anything that the DA's office does is
7 to supplement the fine work that the
8 police department is doing.

9 As far as our investigative
10 capabilities, on that front, we do rely
11 primarily on the police department and
12 what they're doing, that it's
13 definitely something that I will bring
14 to the District Attorney to talk about.
15 That is something that is certainly a
16 capability where we can collaborate
17 with the police department more. But
18 the police department is absolutely the
19 leader in staying in front of these
20 things and keeping us safe.

21 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you.
22 Then, Police Commissioner, in terms of
23 trying to diversify the police force,
24 I've been told that the specs on hiring
25 is like from 1970 something, I don't

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2 know, how true that is -- the civil
3 service, period, it wasn't for the
4 police. She said it was for civil
5 service.

6 But, nonetheless, in terms of
7 hiring, when we were here, I guess last
8 year or even the year before, that
9 seems like so long ago, on the reform
10 plan, one of the things I had requested
11 was a diversity and inclusion
12 consultant that would be able to assist
13 the police department in review of the
14 current test product that's out there
15 and reviewing civil service policies,
16 reviewing, recruitment, you know,
17 initiatives, being able to assist the
18 department in being able to really put
19 together a comprehensive, and I know
20 you've done great work working with the
21 guardians and some of the other
22 organizations with the mentoring
23 program, but someone who is steeped in
24 this DEI world that comes fully
25 equipped with that level of experience

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2 to be hired to assist the police
3 department in being able to go down the
4 path of diversity in the police
5 department, it wasn't included.

6 I don't think, the only
7 requirement for this body to support
8 that initiative would be to approve a
9 contract for that. That's not a local
10 law that needs to pass. It's really an
11 interdepartmental policy that you could
12 set or that you and the County
13 Executive could align on.

14 I do think there is significant
15 value in that and it's something that I
16 would like to hear that you've evolved
17 on that.

18 I know there is some committee
19 that was supposed to assist in that
20 effort and it was a real eye opening
21 report in Newsday last year and that's
22 how that group, or committee was
23 birthed out of that. But where are we
24 today? That committee, does it still
25 exist? Does it still meet? Is there

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2 any opportunities that revolve on
3 hiring a consultant to come in and
4 assist the county in doing the
5 diversity work that's necessary?

6 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank you.

7 So we all know there were several
8 committees formed and groups and
9 everybody is looking at different
10 things.

11 The police department doesn't do
12 the hiring. The police department
13 doesn't do the test. It's done by a
14 company.

15 The police department, civil
16 service sets the standards. To be
17 honest with you, the standards for
18 police hiring are on the lower side of
19 my partners to the east and the west.
20 We only require 32 college credits, New
21 York City requires 62, and I believe
22 Suffolk is up there also. We are on
23 the lower end of it.

24 What we have done, what I do
25 control, and we have spoken about is

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2 creating a mentoring program. I know

3 for a fact that we had a batch from the

4 last test that we have to deal with

5 that batch first until that test is

6 done. But we control mentoring as you

7 come through the process now. Right.

8 We didn't control mentoring to take the

9 test because the test was already done.

10 Now we do control on the physical

11 side of it. We do it as they go

12 through the process. And I know there

13 actually was one young lady I took a

14 personal interest. She was

15 African-American in the academy. I

16 seen her standing on the wall one day

17 and I said, what's wrong? It's my

18 knee. I said what happened to your

19 knee. I went through the process with

20 her. I said, listen, this is a tough

21 environment but you can't quit. And

22 she had thoughts of quitting. I said,

23 did you speak to your mentor? She

24 goes, I don't have one. She did it by

25 the end of the day and she saved and

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2 graduated at the last class. Good kid.

3 So our last group as far as
4 testing goes, the last group was 33
5 percent minority which, again, not in
6 many of the groups, but there was 33
7 percent minority. Why? Because in the
8 consent decree it says, if you get to
9 this grade, this is the number. If you
10 get to this grade, this is the number.

11 In Nassau County's history, we
12 don't go that low on the test because
13 we don't hire the volume that New York
14 City does. And I lose many of my
15 applicants because they go to the
16 resident requirement, Hempstead,
17 Roosevelt, Freeport -- not Roosevelt,
18 Freeport, Hempstead, Glen Cove.

19 So, again, what we've done is by
20 this test now going as long as it
21 would, went down, again because I
22 scored an 80 and you scored a 90
23 doesn't make you any better or smarter
24 than me. It's just that you hit the
25 right question at the right time. The

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2 questions have no rhyme or reason
3 sometimes when you answer them.

4 So what we have done, we are
5 actually starting to see a larger
6 increase of minorities into it. The
7 mentoring program is getting them
8 through the process, we have seen an
9 increase.

10 Going forward with the next test,
11 there will be mentoring to take the
12 test. There will be processes put in
13 place to help you get to the test. As
14 I said before, the number of applicants
15 that drop from 3,000 that signed up to
16 take it, 1,100 actually showed up to
17 take it. That's a big loss in that
18 community.

19 So we're putting all those
20 programs in place. A lot of it we
21 don't have that control. The new test
22 and design is being discussed with the
23 current County Executive and his team.
24 That's being work worked on as to how
25 we are going to do it going forward.

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2 We've done a lot of things to
3 help with that. I know Sabrina Gregg
4 wanted to add something to it. Hold
5 on. Big moment for her.

6 MS. GREGG: Very passionate about
7 this. We just had a conversation
8 yesterday and, when I say "we," I mean
9 chief of the department, myself, about
10 what we can do further. Just to share
11 some of the frustrations, I was a
12 mentor and I lost my mentee at the
13 agility. So these are things that are
14 frustrating in particular because they
15 are beyond our control.

16 As the Commissioner said there
17 are certain things we can do that is
18 within our control and we're going all
19 that we can, but it does frustrate me
20 that I lost my mentee in the physical
21 agility and that's something that we
22 can change. She petitioned, and I
23 suggested that she petition, but, no,
24 she is not the only person. I know
25 Vicki O'Hada who is the president of

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2 Hispanic society, the same thing, a
3 young lady failed by two minutes on her
4 run because of her nerves. She
5 practiced, the day before she said she
6 had it, but, again, it's beyond our
7 control.

8 Trust me, I can't express enough
9 how passionate I am to have more women,
10 more people of color, how important
11 diversity is, and without being
12 prompted which is why I was so glad you
13 asked this question, having this
14 conversation with the Commissioner,
15 because he's also I feel passionate
16 about it, we are having conversations
17 unprompted. Just the fact that we
18 talked about it yesterday and we're
19 doing things.

20 I just want you to know, assure
21 you as much as I possibly can without
22 you actually knowing me that the
23 conversations are still ongoing and we
24 are trying to be innovative about how
25 we can do that.

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2 I know that cost, because I'm a
3 dreamer, there is an idea person and
4 then someone tells you, you know, how
5 much does that cost? So being an idea
6 person and starting to be more about
7 what does that cost, what's the end,
8 what does that look like, I wanted to
9 share that this is a conversation that
10 does go on. We are thinking about how
11 to be innovative, having conversations
12 about what's attracting younger people,
13 how does that look, how do we get
14 studies, how do we reach out to
15 different communities that we don't
16 have access to, whether that be the
17 schools, whether that be the guidance
18 counselors, just some ideas that we
19 have. I just wanted to show you that
20 this is something that we are all very,
21 very passionate about and the
22 Commissioner is passionate about and we
23 are working on it.

24 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Excellent.

25 COMMISSIONER RYDER: You gave her

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2 and excellent you can give me an
3 excellent.

4 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm going to
5 give you an excellent. I'm going to
6 give you a chance to get an excellent.

7 Commission, I do know your heart
8 is in this process, right. And thank
9 you, sergeant. I can feel your passion
10 and I can feel the passion when I speak
11 to the Commissioner on this issue.

12 In fact, I think it was some time
13 in February, it was a Saturday morning
14 or afternoon, I bothered the
15 Commissioner to talk about a program
16 that I think could help here in Nassau.

17 So in New York City they have
18 paid cadets that they are funneling
19 through a system that I think in many
20 cases there are college students --
21 they're not full time, but it's an
22 opportunity for them to earn and learn
23 and get exposed to policing. I believe
24 that that could be a tool that we could
25 use here in Nassau County.

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2 There are a lot of things that I
3 would love to see this department do to
4 compliment what they do so very well.
5 You guys are on point, you know, I have
6 the greatest respect for your officers.
7 I just think sometimes we need someone
8 to guide us in the conversation and in
9 the process and that's why I stated
10 that I think we should evolve on the
11 thoughts of having a consultant who can
12 assist in being able to identify
13 opportunities and then guide us through
14 a process that allows us to optimize
15 those outcomes.

16 The idea of diversity equity and
17 inclusion it's a science. It's an
18 actual application. It's not something
19 that only our passions and energy can
20 bring forward. I think that we do need
21 some real assistance in getting where
22 we need to go.

23 I do like the idea of a mentoring
24 program. I think it's fantastic. I
25 think sometimes the mentees help the

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2 mentors more than we can even imagine
3 so I think it's great. But I do want
4 to see us have someone guide us through
5 a process. You are talking right now
6 of the next phase of designing the next
7 test; is that what you said?

8 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
9 Bynoe, I don't mean to cut you off but
10 we're trying to get back into the hate
11 crimes.

12 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: We'll go
13 there.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Because now we
15 have a room full of people that can
16 give us guidance on how we can deal
17 with hate crimes.

18 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I think the
19 idea of credible, not messengers, but
20 individuals who --

21 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: They are from
22 the communities.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm going to
24 wrap up right now. The test, did you
25 say it was in design phase?

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2 This is where I think that
3 professional comes in handy. Thank
4 you. Excellent.

5 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I love the line
6 of questioning but we have somebody
7 else, and we do have legislator Mazi
8 Pilip who would like to ask a question.

9 LEGISLATOR PILIP: Hi. Thank
10 you. If it's okay, I want to ask
11 questions regarding the last question
12 you were speaking, but since that isn't
13 the reason why we are here I will hold
14 on my question.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
16 much. We're going to here from Jeanine
17 Diehl, our crime victim advocate.

18 MS. DIEHL: Good afternoon,
19 Chairwoman Ford, Vice Chairman Rhoads,
20 and members of the Public Safety
21 Committee. I'm Jeanine Diehl, the
22 executive director of the Nassau County
23 Office of Crime Victim Advocate or OCVA
24 for short. I would like to thank the
25 majority for having the foresight to

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2 introduce the legislation that created
3 the Office of Crime Victim Advocate and
4 for the unanimous support of the entire
5 Legislature.

6 I am grateful for the opportunity
7 to provide testimony today in a
8 prepared statement which will address
9 the subject of hate crimes and bias
10 incidents including the effect it has
11 on victims, reporting, services
12 available and outreach.

13 Becoming the victim of a crime is
14 traumatic but hate crimes are unique
15 because the act is committed because of
16 who someone is or what they believe.

17 Hate crimes can cause profound
18 emotional, physical, social, financial
19 and spiritual impacts and leaves
20 victims needing supports on multiple
21 levels including reestablishing a sense
22 of physical safety and control, being
23 heard and emotionally validated, and
24 knowing that they are supported by
25 their communities. It is imperative

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2 that victims of bias incidents and hate
3 crimes report the occurrences as soon
4 as possible.

5 It ensures that law enforcement
6 can vigorously investigate, identify
7 patters, prevent others from being
8 victimized and it allows us advocates
9 to provide resources and services
10 expeditiously.

11 While I just explained why
12 reporting is so important in September
13 2021, the US Department of Justice
14 bureau of statistics issued a special
15 report on hate crimes victimization
16 from 2005 through 2019 which is based
17 on data reported from victims in the
18 national crime victimization survey,
19 the report indicates there are a number
20 of reasons that hate crimes are under
21 reported including that a victim may
22 believe that the incident just was not
23 important enough to report to police.

24 They may feel their complaint
25 will not be taken seriously. They may

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2 not trust the government to act on it
3 and they certainly have concerns about
4 retaliation.

5 So how do we respond to this?

6 How do we help victims feel empowered,
7 feel heard and validated regardless of
8 the outcome. Here in Nassau County we
9 do this through the collaborative work
10 that you see here today of law
11 enforcement and victim advocacy.

12 The Office of Crime Victims

13 Advocate is one of those resources in
14 Nassau County available to support the
15 victims and witnesses to hate crimes in
16 the aftermath.

17 OCVA was created by this
18 governing body to support and serve as
19 a voice within government for victims
20 and witnesses who may be affected under
21 the new discovery and bail laws that
22 took effect on January 1st, 2020. New
23 York State's criminal justice reform
24 impacts both victims of crimes and
25 witnesses to them.

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2 These impacts include new
3 discovery rules in criminal cases, they
4 may compromise the identity and
5 personal information of witnesses or
6 grant criminal defendants the right to
7 access their homes where the alleged
8 crime occurred.

9 The mission of my office, the
10 Office At Crime Victim Advocate is to
11 ensure that all victims and witnesses
12 to crime are afforded all their legal
13 rights protection and services that
14 they are entitled to under the law and
15 that they are treated with dignity,
16 fairness, and respect which is their
17 legal right.

18 I am pleased to report that since
19 opening our doors on April 10, 2020 we
20 served 643 clients including victims,
21 witnesses and co-survivors.

22 Through December 21st of 2021, we
23 have submitted 127 New York State
24 Office of Victim Services compensation
25 applications, 25 emergency

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2 applications, and our victims have
3 received approximately \$740,000 in
4 financial compensation from New York
5 State, which is financed by criminal
6 fines, forfeited bail bonds, and
7 penalties paid by convicted federal
8 offenders, not from tax dollars.

9 OCVA has developed a victim
10 centered trauma informed and culturally
11 competent response to victims and
12 witnesses. This approach is based on
13 the idea that victims all have a
14 different set of needs and there's not
15 a one size fits all approach.

16 All client matters are
17 confidential to maintain a client's
18 privacy interest unless consent is
19 given. We receive victim referrals
20 from the federal government, state and
21 county agencies including Office of
22 Minority Affairs, Office of Hispanic
23 Affairs and Office of Asian Affairs,
24 local law enforcement, hospitals,
25 funeral homes, elected officials,

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2 office of court administration, county
3 and victim service providers just to
4 name a few.

5 OCVA assists all victims and
6 witnesses regardless of the
7 victimization type, whether or not the
8 case has been reported or its posture
9 within the criminal justice process.
10 OCVA also supports victims related to
11 juvenile adjudications. We provide
12 case management and vertical advocacy
13 which facilitates continuity of
14 relationship and services throughout
15 their journey.

16 We have Spanish speaking advocate
17 and interpretation services available
18 in over 100 languages.

19 We also utilize bilingual staff
20 of the office of Asian American
21 Affairs, and the Hispanic Affairs and
22 we have also translated all of our
23 primary documents into the six baseline
24 languages in the county. OCVA has a
25 comprehensive range of direct services

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2 that we provide to the victims and
3 witnesses which include but are not
4 limited to information on how to report
5 to law enforcement, assistance in
6 accompaniment with actually reporting a
7 crime; education regarding the criminal
8 justice process; managing people's
9 expectations knowing what comes next.

10 We liaison with the Nassau County
11 District Attorney's Office and the
12 Nassau County Police Department.

13 We provide court accompaniment,
14 line and docs registration, those are
15 victim notification registrations, we
16 provide crisis intervention,
17 stabilization and safety planning. My
18 deputy director Nora Doran is a
19 licensed mental health counselor.

20 We provide assistance with
21 preparing victim impact statements to
22 the courts, probation and parole.

23 As I said earlier, we assist with
24 New York State Office of victim service
25 compensation applications for financial

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2 assistance with things such as, again,
3 not limited to, medical expenses,
4 counseling expenses, rehabilitation,
5 loss of essential personal property,
6 funeral expenses, loss of support, lost
7 wages, security systems, lock change,
8 transportation, crime scene clean up
9 and moving expenses.

10 We also provide referrals for
11 basic needs, social services, mental
12 health, civil legal assistance, victim
13 and community service providers.
14 That's our direct services.

15 We also have established a
16 network of agencies and service
17 providers that refer our clients to
18 that we link them to.

19 Again this list is not exclusive.
20 It includes but is limited to the
21 Nassau County District Attorney's
22 Victim Services Unit, the Nassau County
23 Special Victims Unit, the Nassau County
24 Domestic Violence Liaison, the Safe
25 Center of Long Island, the Family and

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2 Children's Association, Domestic
3 Harmony, Circula De La Espanidad,
4 Hispanic Counseling Center, CN
5 Counseling and Guidance Center, the
6 Long Island Crisis Center, LGBTQ PFY,
7 the Nassau County Bar Association, the
8 Nassau Suffolk Law Services, and all of
9 our county agencies.

10 Supporting our victims does not
11 start when a crime occurs. It starts
12 well before by trying to prevent people
13 from becoming victims in the first
14 place. We do this through education
15 and targeted outreach.

16 Some examples include our
17 participation in the Asian Pacific
18 Islander Heritage Month, know your
19 rights presentation on hate crimes,
20 special presentation on hate crimes for
21 all advisory councils to the District
22 Attorney which I was invited by Chief
23 Gim to, and our newest initiative which
24 is the hospital outreach program where
25 we will be presenting to county

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2 hospitals to educate their staff about
3 our office, about victim services in
4 the county, and about OVS compensation.

5 Our first stop will be NUMC and
6 we already have that scheduled for the
7 end of the month.

8 OCVA also provides recruit and
9 inservice training to the Nassau County
10 Police Department, Corrections and
11 Probation where we focus on victims'
12 rights, services available throughout
13 the county.

14 OCVA is committed to partnerships
15 in collaborating because this work
16 cannot be done alone.

17 OCVA partners with agencies on a
18 local and federal level, including
19 membership in over 20 task force
20 committees coalitions and advisory
21 councils.

22 These partnerships extend our
23 reach and visibility, they connect us
24 to the community and help us to
25 mobilize resources that can be used to

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2 assist victims with their systemic
3 needs.

4 One of these partnerships
5 specific to this topic at hand is the
6 work that we do in conjunction within
7 Nassau County DA's hate crimes unit
8 which is run by Chief Joseph Gim. We
9 work collaboratively in servicing
10 victims of crime. He assists us with
11 facilitating reports of hate crimes and
12 we engage collectively in public
13 outreach events and we actually have
14 one coming up in two weeks.

15 In conclusion, hate crimes stand
16 apart because they are meant to send a
17 message.

18 At the same time, how we respond
19 as a county also sends a message that
20 hate crimes and bias incidents in
21 Nassau County have no place.

22 Thank you so much for your
23 attention.

24 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
25 much. How many people work in your

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2 department? Sounds like you need about
3 300.

4 MS. DIEHL: There's four of us in
5 total.

6 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Wow. And you
7 helped provide with the 643 clients.
8 It's amazing you are able to coordinate
9 all of that and be able to get them
10 funding through I guess the state crime
11 victims.

12 I love the outreach aspect and I
13 think it's something that we need to
14 let everybody know whether or not, yes,
15 with your ideas I think is very
16 important, but where we can educate our
17 residents here in Nassau County that
18 there is a place that you can report
19 crimes and how to avoid being victims
20 of crime and I like that you are going
21 into hospitals and whatever. Yes, go
22 ahead.

23 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So
24 if we do publicize the fact that you
25 are taking calls as an alternative to

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2 calling the police and use your number,
3 are you prepared to take on more calls,
4 do you have the staffing and
5 everything? The last thing I would
6 want is for someone's call to go
7 unanswered just because of the volume.

8 MR. GIM: So our complaints unit
9 is a full time staff for receiving the
10 public already. So members of the
11 public come in to report a wide range
12 of things but it includes in sort of a
13 similar fashion things that may be
14 borderline civil versus criminal
15 financial transactions like fraud, that
16 sort of material will come in from the
17 public so we have a full time staff to
18 sort of address it.

19 But I also want to say that DA
20 Donnelly has been very responsive to
21 things that come in so to the extent
22 that the volume then goes up, we're
23 going to have to shift resources and
24 move appropriately to that.

25 Obviously we are already on paper

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2 thin margins, every penny counts, but
3 ultimately when you are managing
4 something like this, I would love to
5 have that problem in conclusion.

6 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: But going into
7 the hospitals I think is very
8 important.

9 What about high schools? I find
10 that sometimes like with families, if
11 they're new into the neighborhood, they
12 don't know anybody, they don't know
13 their neighbors just yet, but when
14 their children go to school, especially
15 middle school and high school, they
16 make friends, and then they become
17 aware of the people in the
18 neighborhood. So parents can meet
19 other parents through their fellow
20 students, so do you ever go into high
21 schools in schools?

22 MS. DIEHL: I think you would be
23 happy to know that October, my deputy
24 and I presented to all of the
25 superintendents in Nassau County, all

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2 of the board of education
3 superintendents. We introduced our
4 office and our servicing, talked about
5 different initiatives that we had going
6 on and it appeared to have been very
7 well received.

8 We have gotten calls from the
9 social workers in certain schools and
10 we quantify that as a victory because
11 we know that our outreach is effective
12 and working.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: That's great to
14 hear. Because you get the students
15 when they're younger so that they are
16 aware. Yes, Mr. Gim.

17 MR. GIM: Actually I wanted to
18 just mention, one of the first times I
19 was at a podium with anyone was with
20 the Commissioner. We were at a school
21 district addressing a bias incident
22 that had occurred there as well. So we
23 do -- unfortunately, that's not the
24 ideal scenario of speaking to a student
25 body, that was actually an impromptu

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2 meeting.

3 But when there have been
4 incidents that occur at schools, one
5 thing that we wanted to do particularly
6 was respond to the school districts and
7 to develop programming specifically for
8 them.

9 I know that our office is already
10 in talks with some individual high
11 schools even to developing some
12 programming so we can talk to them;
13 just about this question that we're all
14 discussing here, what is a hate crime
15 and what is a bias incident. It's
16 something that the kids should
17 understand like where that line is,
18 even if it is sort of a fungible line,
19 and that's one of the things we want to
20 address.

21 Also, when there is a hate
22 incident at a school district, that's
23 not even coming to us for prosecution,
24 that's going to be the County
25 Attorney's Office, but we perform a

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2 function, right?

3 So, to the extent that we can
4 address the student body so that they
5 can contextualize actually what
6 happened there and some of the
7 ancillary criminal justice aspects of a
8 hate crime situation is really
9 important.

10 I want to mention specifically
11 there was an incident that happened
12 last year in a school district that
13 kind of regularly had -- was an
14 anti-Jewish incident, a swastika
15 incident and that school district had
16 regularly had sort of programing on
17 anti hate from an outside agency, sort
18 of talking about that sort of thing.

19 So one thing that I felt like we
20 could perhaps do for the student body
21 was, get into, okay, well, here's just
22 the generalize, don't do this it's bad,
23 but then there's the real world
24 consequences, the things that you do or
25 post online, can actually change your

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2 life and actually put you in a terrible
3 situation.

4 So that type of program is
5 something that we definitely want to
6 do. I don't have the juice to get all
7 of the superintendents in one place but
8 certainly to the extent that that could
9 be facilitated where we can put
10 something together in a fashion where
11 we could address the student body,
12 that's something that we absolutely
13 want to do and I think would be
14 helpful.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Perfect.

16 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Just to add
17 to that, the community affairs and pop
18 officers did over a 1,000 visits with
19 our schools and religious institutions
20 last year in the calendar year.

21 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: They are a
22 great resource so that helps. So any
23 questions?

24 (No verbal response.)

25 No, so then I guess, Eric, you're

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2 up to bat now.

3 MR. POST: I just wanted to
4 introduce, we have three members of the
5 Community of Conscience here which is
6 our interfaith inner group body that I
7 wanted to introduce to speak; Dr. Isma
8 Chaudhry, Long Island Islamic Center;
9 next is Sabitir Singh who is a member
10 of multiple Boudoirs in the Sikh
11 community, a Sikh leader, and
12 representing Long Island Board of
13 Rabbis; and Jaimee Shalhevetz who is
14 the senior rabbi at North Shore
15 Synagogue.

16 MS. CHAUDHRY: Good afternoon,
17 everyone. May the peace and blessings
18 of God Almighty be with all of us.

19 I would like to thank Chairwoman
20 legislator Ford, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and
21 all the esteemed legislators of the
22 Public Safety Committee, Police
23 Commissioner Ryder, the DA's Office,
24 and all the county officials, thank you
25 for your time and for your commitment.

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2 As Legislator Bynoe said, the
3 passion to make this right which is
4 very palpable in this room and on that
5 screen. So I think we have a
6 responsibility to do it right.

7 My name is Isma Chaudhry. I'm a
8 physician public health practitioner
9 and a member of Community of Conscience
10 and co-chair of Islamic Center of Long
11 Island.

12 As a health care provider and a
13 member of a minority community, I see
14 the detrimental affects of micro and
15 macro aggressions and hate crimes on
16 communities.

17 Where we are not able to dress or
18 feel comfortable to address in ethnic
19 cultural or religious garb, a fear of
20 being attacked in public spaces or
21 schools or even in our own backyard is
22 detrimental to all of us.

23 Before I raise concerns about
24 under reporting of hate crimes in the
25 Muslim community, I would like to go on

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2 record and commend the efforts of
3 Nassau County Commissioner Patrick
4 Ryder in bringing vulnerable and
5 minority communities and police
6 departments closer by exhibiting
7 cultural humility and evidence based
8 common sense policing. Thank you for
9 that.

10 Legislator Bynoe recognized
11 Commissioner Ryder's passion to do it
12 right and the communities also want to
13 partner with your department, DA's
14 department, and with our legislators to
15 make sure that we move forward with
16 some positive results on this.

17 When we talk about reporting hate
18 crimes, there are numerous challenges
19 and multitude of variables that are
20 playing in the dynamics of under
21 reporting of hate crimes.

22 It's not easy to share personal
23 stories. Thank you so much for sharing
24 yours.

25 I'm going to take a couple of

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2 minutes to share my own. I wish
3 Commissioner Ryder you were the police
4 Commissioner at that time, and I wish
5 that the legislature's good will 16
6 years back was what it is now.

7 My son was five years old and he
8 was hit, called names. His name is a
9 Muslim name. Now he is a tall guy, 6
10 foot 3, it's embarrassing for me to
11 yell at him. He was a very petite,
12 very thin kid. He was hit. His kidney
13 was bruised. We took him to the ER.
14 We came home after the ER visit and to
15 a phone call which said that, go back
16 to the country you came from. Was
17 calling us by our religious tradition
18 as Muslim terrorists and also saying
19 that if you don't take your son out of
20 that school you'll find him in dirt.

21 This happened to me and we live
22 in Nassau County and I did report it.
23 We had to face the kids being socially
24 isolated in school. Granted that was
25 18 years back. A lot of times people

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2 think, what am I doing in the arena of
3 being a physician and a person of
4 science and a boring person. What am I
5 doing in this arena of advocacy for
6 minorities? This is the reason.

7 I don't want any other parent,
8 whatever their socioeconomic status,
9 where ever they are living, to ever
10 experience to take back a hate crime
11 report because they were not sure of
12 what they're doing. They were not sure
13 of the advocacy. They were not sure of
14 the fairness. That's why it's
15 important that we all understand and
16 the importance of this commitment that
17 we are doing.

18 Though we do acknowledge that
19 Nassau County is the safest county in
20 America, we are a suburbia that is
21 surrounded by incidences of horrific
22 uptick in anti-Semitism, Asian hate,
23 African American targeting,
24 disparities, Islamaphobia, and
25 Zenophobia. These incidences do create

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2 undress, a state consistent and
3 constant constant anxieties amongst
4 minorities and vulnerable communities
5 in Nassau County.

6 The reaction of this is a lack of
7 trust for the system, a lack of trust
8 for being heard, a lack of trust for
9 being a part of a fabric of a
10 community.

11 Adding to these challenges I
12 would like to mention that there are
13 challenges of culture of not disrupting
14 the system, the system of authority,
15 the system of power that is conceived
16 by the minority communities. Also not
17 complaining.

18 Language access we have talked
19 about. We often forget and one of the
20 legislators mentioned that spoken
21 English and accents, a lot of times
22 that becomes a barrier to
23 communication, how we are expressing it
24 and how it is perceived.

25 Also lack of understanding and

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2 trust for the laws, your own rights and
3 system. I would request your attention
4 to insuring pathways to strengthen the
5 communities and police relationships by
6 putting together resources to bridge
7 the gap by identifying cultural
8 challenges the communities face in
9 under reporting.

10 The social, economical and
11 psychological burden of hate crimes,
12 micro aggressions are huge. We have to
13 show that commitment to insure that
14 this stops happening.

15 Thank you for your attention.

16 MR. SINGH: Good afternoon
17 everyone, Honorable Legislators, the
18 Public Health Committee, Patrick Ryder,
19 Commissioner, you have been absolutely
20 amazing, and all the honorable guests
21 here that are listening, thank you so
22 much. Your testimony was absolutely
23 amazing.

24 My name is Sabitir Singh. I
25 stand here as a father of a hate crime

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2 victim just about ten months ago. It's
3 very -- listening to everyone it just
4 fills your heart because I come here to
5 the land of the free about 40 years
6 ago. Escaping India at the 1984 riots
7 against at Sikhs. Then you come to
8 this country and you feel, wow, this is
9 the land of the free.

10 Then 9-11 happens. And a person
11 like me that wears my turban as a crown
12 feels all of a sudden taking ten steps
13 back. Hate crimes is nothing new.
14 That's been happening over and over.

15 But we stand here today, we are
16 much better off than we were back in
17 the days and thankfully we are in
18 Nassau County.

19 One of the first calls I made
20 when my son was attacked in Walt
21 Whitman mall was Commissioner Ryder
22 because I didn't know what to do as a
23 parent. My son had come back home and
24 I called Commissioner Ryder, he said,
25 listen, it happened in Suffolk, go

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2 here, go back to the crime scene, call
3 911 and this is a process you have to
4 go through. Thank heavenly, but not
5 every parent knows that, we're scared.
6 We didn't even know the fine line
7 between what is a hate crime or a
8 scuffle between two teenager groups
9 which was reported in the police
10 report.

11 The next day when I saw it, I
12 said, wait, what happened here? My son
13 was called names and talk about
14 Islama-phobia because of our turban, my
15 son was wearing a turban and he was
16 called, Mohammed, go back, do this and
17 do that and we're going to knock that
18 that thing off your head.

19 Then one of the persons, you
20 probably saw it on the news came around
21 and punched my son in the face.

22 Now, when you see the reporting,
23 you see two teenage groups got into a
24 scuffle, it kind of shakes you up. But
25 coming to reality, it kind of brought

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2 me in more closer, thank heavenly, it
3 landed in my lap because I'm very
4 connected to the law, and I'm very
5 connected to the system in Nassau
6 County.

7 I actually go to the Massapequa
8 Police Academy and teach religious
9 differences on what Sikhism is, why we
10 wear a turban, what do you expect of
11 the new cadets when they go in the
12 temple.

13 So I was thanking God but thank
14 you for giving me the opportunity to
15 step up to the plate. So rightfully so
16 I think we do need more education.
17 Commissioner Ryder had said it right in
18 the beginning of this meeting. Us, as
19 a community needs to step up our game,
20 because that's so much they can do as a
21 police for us.

22 We need to educate our people, we
23 need to educate our system in our
24 communities to come up and really work
25 with law enforcement and the

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2 legislators and everyone that is
3 advocating on this hate crime to come
4 together and work together.

5 I'm very pleased that
6 Commissioner Ryder and the Community of
7 Conscience and Eric Post has been our
8 backbone in getting us all together and
9 literally giving us the support.
10 Anti-Semitism has been there for a long
11 time and he has done the ground work in
12 giving us a platform that we could
13 speak and without him I wouldn't be
14 standing here.

15 So, Commissioner Ryder, I look
16 forward to working with you and with
17 the Community of Conscience.

18 Yes, if you need to hire more
19 people -- one of the problems is that
20 we can get volunteers to do this, but
21 how many people will leave their jobs
22 to go around doing this?

23 So one of the better ways would
24 be to maybe employ certain people in
25 certain communities and say, look, I

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2 get it you're giving that much time and
3 effort. I'm a successful man but what
4 happens to the person who is literally
5 working day and night to put bread on
6 the table, and they want to do this but
7 they can't. They want to go around
8 advocating and educating.

9 I want to come back to my son for
10 just a minute and then I will hand it
11 over to the next person.

12 So it does leave a detrimental
13 effect on the mind. My son is taller
14 than me now, he's 14. The other day he
15 came home and he goes, I said what
16 happened, you look upset. Nothing, and
17 he started fighting with me and arguing
18 with me. I said, oh, it's the teenage
19 years. I said, I understand, son, I'll
20 step back. He said, no, I'm really
21 upset. I said, "what happened?" In
22 gym somebody tried to take off my
23 turban. I said, did you go to the
24 principal or did you report it? He's
25 like, no, I haven't. I told him next

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2 time he does it I'm going to punch him
3 out. I said, listen, this is not the
4 way. There is a system in place. Go
5 back. I was very upset. I said, you
6 know what? Tomorrow morning I'm going
7 to go to your school and talk to your
8 principal, blah blah, blah.

9 Now here is his comeback. He
10 goes, no, I'm going to go and I'll talk
11 to the principal first. So at lunch
12 time he texts me and I text him back
13 and I said, did you speak to your
14 principal? He said, no, that kid came
15 to me and said I'm sorry for what I
16 did. Now I know in my heart that son
17 is lying. Absolutely. Because of the
18 fact that, again, how many times are
19 you going to cry, cry, cry, and then
20 all these kids are going to push you
21 back and say, let's not even hang out
22 with this kid. So my son is scared.

23 Anyway we are there. We are
24 working with you, go to the schools,
25 make this thing right, and, as a

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2 father, I'll tell you, I remember being
3 attacked when I was younger but I'm at
4 a much better place than I was where my
5 parents were when they brought us to
6 this country, so God bless America, and
7 God bless this system and I love you
8 all for doing what you're doing. Thank
9 you.

10 RABBI SHALHEVETZ: Good
11 afternoon. My name is Rabbi Jaimee
12 Shalhevetz. I'm a senior rabbi at
13 North Shore Synagogue in Syosset.

14 I want to thank every one who is
15 here, the police Commissioner, ADA's
16 office, the whole committee. Thank
17 you.

18 My son is nine, almost taller
19 than me already, just to let you know,
20 but I kind of got to stand on a box
21 anyway.

22 I come to you today to speak of
23 four things. I speak as a rabbi
24 speaking for my community of all ages
25 and demographics. I speak as a Jew who

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2 has experienced anti Semitism
3 personally and indirectly as well. I
4 speak as a mother, a woman and a
5 mother, and I speak as a gay woman who
6 has faced discrimination and has been
7 too reticent to report on it.

8 As I listened to these amazing
9 stories from all of my brothers and
10 sisters here today, I went through what
11 I was going to share with you today, I
12 in my own stories have five unreported
13 events that happened to me or my
14 family.

15 I can tell you why they're
16 unreported and they're all for mostly
17 different reasons. As I go through
18 them, I will let you know, I am not
19 actually reporting them unless I am by
20 just speaking in front of you and then
21 you let me know afterwards.

22 As a rabbi with a nursery school
23 in my synagogue, I find people coming
24 to me recently in the past few years to
25 say, I want to send my child to your

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2 nursery school but I'm afraid to
3 because people go into synagogues and
4 shoot people. I can't send my two year
5 old to a place where there needs to be
6 body guards and police and people
7 checking in all the time.

8 So I'm going to send my child to
9 a secular school not because I don't
10 want them to learn about their religion
11 and be proud of who they are, because I
12 am afraid for their lives.

13 So it affects our entire
14 community. As we begin teaching who
15 they are, the first thing these
16 children learn is to be afraid of what
17 other people will think of them because
18 of who they are.

19 I have children who come to me
20 that are afraid to speak up just as
21 Mr. Singh's son and they come to their
22 rabbi and they say, this happened to me
23 and I don't want to tell my parents
24 because my parents will go to the
25 school and then I won't have any

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2 friends, or they'll beat me up even
3 more or knock my lunch off the table or
4 whatever it is that they will do.

5 They come to me not that I will
6 do something about it either but just
7 because they know I will be
8 confidential. They come to me because
9 I won't report it unless they're in
10 physical harm and then they know I am
11 required to report it.

12 As a Jew I have experienced anti
13 Semitism in my life. I grew up in
14 Suffolk County. I'm happy to be in
15 Nassau County although Suffolk was a
16 lovely place to grow up.

17 I was one of two Jews in my
18 school, my brother being the other one,
19 so once he graduated it was just me. I
20 remember my house being egged at
21 Halloween, the only house on the block
22 to be egged. I remember having money
23 thrown at me while I was in school, all
24 through middle school, all through
25 sixth grade and up, not high school,

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2 but through middle school having money
3 thrown at me saying you money grubbing
4 Jew, don't you want this?

5 And I remember my father and his
6 friend Jack Lorenzo, who everyone
7 thought was Jewish because he hung out
8 with my father but with any Lorenzo as
9 his last name he was not, but he's
10 honorary. They would menorahs,
11 Chanukah menorahs because at almost
12 every train station where there was a
13 community menorah, every Chanukah,
14 someone would vandalize one or two of
15 them. They would go around and rebuild
16 them.

17 They would get letters from the
18 local government thanking them for
19 doing this and yet it happened again
20 and again and again every single year.

21 We would go out and fix the
22 broken lights or fix the branches and I
23 remember doing this with my father and
24 his friend.

25 I hear anti Zionism saying - - I

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2 hear it at the UN, we all hear it from
3 members of our government in the
4 federal government and I hear -- well
5 anti Zionism is not anti-Semitism,
6 except that many people disagree with
7 that. So, when you say a country
8 founded by Jews is this and that and
9 the other thing, then anti Zionism does
10 become anti-Semitism.

11 When you blame Jews for other
12 people's persecution and say it's only
13 Jews, it's anti-Semitism and it affects
14 my son who is nine and hears about it
15 and says, "why does the world hate us
16 mom?

17 As a woman and a mother, my
18 children of whom now I have four, the
19 nine year old is the oldest, my
20 children who are old enough to
21 understand what happened in a Texas
22 synagogue, what happened in Pittsburgh,
23 and what continues to happen, are
24 fearful when their mother goes to work,
25 they are fearful I won't come here.

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2 That was not something I imagined in
3 rabbinical school. I did not imagine
4 that my children would say good-bye,
5 Ima, which is Hebrew for mother, what
6 they call me, I hope you're okay today
7 at work and I hope you come home.

8 My son was told by a student in
9 school two years ago that God doesn't
10 love him or his family and he goes to
11 public school because he has two moms.
12 To which he then replied to his
13 strength, my moms are both rabbis. I
14 think God loves them just fine. But he
15 did indeed come home and say why would
16 anyone say that?

17 My daughter came home crying one
18 day and she's in first grade saying
19 that one of the students in her class
20 told her her family wasn't real because
21 she has two moms so she doesn't really
22 exist. She is a bit over dramatic so
23 she asked for proof of her existence
24 which I worked out. But the incident
25 is still the same.

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2 Facing discrimination as a gay
3 woman myself, I will share one
4 particularly recent incident, although
5 I have shared many, or experienced
6 many, I will share one particular
7 recent incident which happened at a
8 post office.

9 My wife and I took our children,
10 we had three at the time, to get new
11 passports. We weren't traveling
12 anywhere particularly because of the
13 pandemic but for when we were able to
14 we wanted to get new passports. We
15 went to the post office, we had our
16 pictures, we had everything in order.
17 We had their birth certificates, driver
18 licenses, everything that everyone said
19 we needed on line, everything that we
20 looked up, we called the post office,
21 we had all of that.

22 The man at the post office
23 demanded to see our marriage license to
24 find out if I was the other parent
25 because I'm not the mother on the birth

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2 certificate. We do have mother mother
3 birth certificates thanks to Northwell
4 Health actually, and thanks to some
5 legislation in our government, so I am
6 a mother on the birth certificate and a
7 parent but that wasn't good enough for
8 him. I didn't bring my wedding
9 license, my marriage license with us
10 because it's not required for a
11 passport for a child and not required
12 for a passport for me.

13 When we didn't have it then he
14 said, well, I can't give you these
15 passports. And we said, well, you've
16 already taken all our information. You
17 have our pictures. You have the
18 applications, which he then refused to
19 give back.

20 He also had one of the checks for
21 it and not the other one. He started
22 to say let me think about filling it
23 out and he insisted on filling out my
24 name as father to which my wife said,
25 that will invalidate this passport

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2 application and it will be rejected and
3 you know that because this is what you
4 do.

5 He said, don't tell me what to
6 do. You can't have two moms.

7 At that point while my children
8 were listening to this, he then started
9 to say that this whole situation was
10 absurd, that he had stayed late at work
11 to help this family get their
12 passports, but now that he sees it was
13 us he realizes he wasted his time and
14 he told us to leave the post office.

15 We went home without our passport
16 information because he had kept it and
17 with only paying one check. We had
18 asked him to at least pay for the other
19 one. He said he didn't want our money
20 and to get out.

21 Not only did we lose our passport
22 information at that time, when we got
23 home about an hour later, I received a
24 phone call from the post office telling
25 me that I owed them money for the check

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2 that he didn't take.

3 I was then forced to drive back
4 to the same post office and hand them
5 over a check and three weeks later our
6 passports were denied because I was
7 listed as father and that is not my sex
8 or gender.

9 So, luckily, being a rabbi, I
10 happen to know a judge who was able to
11 get us into his clerk's office and get
12 us passports.

13 Did I report this? I did not. I
14 did not report when a child told my son
15 that God didn't love his mom. I don't
16 even know if that's a crime.

17 I understand now that perhaps it
18 could lead to a crime later probably
19 not from a seven year old but when that
20 child is older or, more importantly,
21 that child learned it somewhere from a
22 parent, from an adult in their life,
23 who may be then doing a crime.

24 I did not report when my daughter
25 was in tears. I don't report when

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2 people are afraid to attend my nursery
3 school because how can we report that?
4 And I did not report the post office
5 incident.

6 My children are very effected,
7 possibly more than I am, from what
8 happened at the post office from
9 watching their mothers be berated in
10 that way and told publically that their
11 family doesn't exist.

12 Nobody else in the post office of
13 which there was a long line which added
14 to my lack of wanting to report it. It
15 seemed as though no one else cared.

16 In addition, the person who was
17 saying this hateful information about
18 my family was a minority and I did not
19 want to be seen as racist accusing this
20 person of something.

21 At the same time I didn't want to
22 get anyone fired. I didn't want to get
23 anyone in trouble, I just wanted to put
24 it behind me.

25 It turns out, you can't put it

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2 behind you, it is with you every day.
3 As a white Jew, I have the privilege of
4 being able to pass most of the time. I
5 can choose when to hold hands with my
6 wife, when to share with my family.
7 Not every one is as lucky. Not every
8 one can pass in the way that I can.

9 So I've made the decision to not
10 pass because it's my privilege and no
11 one else's then it's not rightfully
12 anyone's.

13 So, what do we need to do about
14 all of these things? How do I speak to
15 my people? I agree, Commissioner, we
16 need to step up our game absolutely.
17 We need to educate. Schools need to
18 bring us in as well. We need to expand
19 what counts as a crime or at least what
20 can be reported and then educated about
21 and we need to make it known what is
22 something that is reportable. What is
23 something that we can speak about.
24 Then we need to change the consequences
25 I think, not just of punishment, but of

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2 education, and not just the person
3 committing that offense, but where that
4 child where that teenager learned it
5 from. Let's go up and find the source
6 and let's help each other to be able to
7 figure out where it starts.

8 Let's not just band aid the
9 symptom and the problem but let's go to
10 the source and really eradicate it.

11 I want to thank all of you for
12 giving us the time today, for taking
13 the time out of your busy and very
14 rigorous schedules to hear us and hear
15 our stories and share with us your
16 stories and for your passion and for
17 your drive.

18 Thank you and I hope we can work
19 together in the future.

20 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I thank all the
21 speakers that shared their personal
22 occurrences in regard with this topic.
23 It is very enlightening and sobering
24 and sad to a certain degree.

25 Thank you very much. I think

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2 that gives us all the more reason to
3 continue with these types of hearings
4 and constantly do this outreach.

5 And, I guess, Commissioner Ryder,
6 it does fall to a certain degree to
7 your police officers because you are
8 actually the first people that the
9 officers in our communities, pop
10 officers, those that are patrolling the
11 streets, the cars, the bicycles,
12 they're walking, they are the ones that
13 people see right away.

14 So I guess it is important for
15 the officers to be trained and work
16 with the communities and I just have to
17 say that it is very difficult to
18 interrupt a fellow legislator. I do
19 apologize about that, but I really did
20 want to hear from the speakers that
21 were invited.

22 So, Legislator Bynoe, I don't
23 know if you would like to resume your
24 questioning or whatever you want to do
25 and follow up with Legislator Mazi

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2 Pilip.

3 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
4 Chairwoman, but you really don't need
5 to apologize to me. We definitely
6 wanted to turn the floor over and hear
7 those personal stories and I thank
8 everyone for sharing.

9 I just feel they're
10 interdependent, diversifying the force,
11 and the like, and I drove the point
12 home that I wanted to with the
13 Commissioner and I appreciate you
14 turning the floor back over to me.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: We'll have the
17 dialogue on all of this anyway and I
18 know even working with the police
19 department we will have a hearing and
20 we will definitely work with you,
21 Commissioner Ryder, because we like
22 working with you and the sergeant.

23 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I love
24 coming here.

25 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Come on. Say

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2 it with more enthusiasm, please.

3 Legislator Pilip, did you have a
4 question or a comment?

5 LEGISLATOR PILIP: I just want to
6 say thank you so much for this. This
7 is very important that we as a
8 community come together to discuss, to
9 open up and to talk. I think we should
10 have a lot of -- maybe we should work
11 how we, as leaders, we can really talk
12 about how to respect and love each
13 other regardless of our differences.
14 We can include the pastors, rabbis,
15 religious leaders, and let's compare.
16 Let's compare love. That's really what
17 is needed in our community and, by
18 doing so, I think we can overcome a lot
19 of issues we are having.

20 My question is to Commissioner
21 regarding how to include more minority
22 to police.

23 You said about 3,000 register out
24 of that about 1,100 taking the test and
25 I was wondering how many of them

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2 passing the test from the 1,100?

3 COMMISSIONER RYDER: So, if I use
4 round numbers, 16,000 signed up to take
5 the test. 3,000 African-American,
6 3,000 Hispanic, 10,000 White, 96
7 percent White showed up, 95 percent
8 Hispanic showed up, 40 percent
9 African-American showed up.

10 Of those, all three races across
11 the board all failed by 50 percent. So
12 the test obviously was balanced. My
13 job is to increase the volume of our
14 minorities that take the test. But
15 that should answer your question, and
16 I'm turning my head looking at the
17 screen.

18 LEGISLATOR PILIP: Commissioner,
19 you say 50 percent of them pass the
20 test?

21 COMMISSIONER RYDER: 50 percent
22 White, 50 percent Black, 50 percent
23 Hispanic pass the test of those that
24 took the test. The job was getting
25 them to take the test.

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2 LEGISLATOR PILIP: I see. It's
3 clearly something is not working well
4 with this. We can do better. For me
5 it doesn't make sense. I think it's
6 time for question ourselves. I don't
7 know. Something has to be done. We
8 have to have more of them joining the
9 police department and I always say, if
10 something not working well, I think
11 it's time to change the issue and see
12 or come up with ways how to improve it
13 for the future, but thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
15 much. Now we have two slips. Meta
16 Mereday.

17 MS. MEREDAY: Meta J. Mereday,
18 thank you very much. First, this
19 hearing is vital that we can all agree
20 to that but, sadly, I only found out
21 about it myself about 12:30 this
22 afternoon when I was trying to get
23 information, actually the contact
24 information for two legislators to
25 pursue and issue that many of you are

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2 very aware that I am focused on, and I
3 was happy that we were led by the
4 Pledge by a veteran because my concern
5 and my initial reason for coming to
6 this body those years ago had to do
7 with a veteran who had been living in a
8 train station in West Hempstead and was
9 unceremoniously just dumped at the
10 Northport VA and I came to this body to
11 address that concern and that issue
12 with the number of veterans that we
13 have here.

14 I just find it amazing that
15 public comment gets limited when it's
16 still tied to a hearing. I figure that
17 if I was listed as somebody to speak as
18 it pertains to the hearing and the
19 issue I would be given more time, but
20 now the time is on so I just kind of
21 resent that somewhat.

22 In any case, when I presented to
23 this body I received a letter that was
24 not pretty. It was grammatically
25 inaccurate but it was threatening to my

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2 life, and as someone said earlier, they
3 had wished that Commissioner Ryder was
4 the Commissioner at that time because I
5 brought the letter in a plastic bag to
6 the then commissioner, I don't want to
7 say his name, but I presented it to him
8 and I felt it was a threat to myself
9 and family and he basically looked at
10 me and said, did anything happen to you
11 and I said not yet. But the threat is
12 clear and I'm looking to you as my
13 leading official for the police
14 department to do something about it and
15 he basically blew it off.

16 I presented to this body because
17 basically my life was threatened for
18 presenting to this body about an issue
19 that had to do with our veterans. So
20 our veterans are also being threatened.
21 We haven't discussed that. We haven't
22 discussed that the Department of
23 Justice says that 55 percent of the
24 perpetrators of hate incidents are
25 Whites, predominantly male. So what

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2 are we doing about that?

3 If we are not addressing that in
4 this body just about a week ago, had a
5 debate about a discussion on a term
6 about good racism. Racism is never
7 good at all, ever. So it should never
8 even be connected in that genre in this
9 body.

10 We don't realize that the things
11 that we say here that's speaking to, we
12 need to do something, we need to
13 address something, we need to stand up
14 and then you may be the one in front of
15 a press conference in front of a
16 picture that generally, nine times out
17 of 10, has a Black woman under the
18 guise that's a welfare mother, that
19 she's trying to take resources, you
20 don't realize what you are doing to
21 perpetuate these same stereotypes that
22 create the same types of situations.

23 I, again, came before this body
24 when there was an issue that pertained
25 to the designation of the Officers of

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2 Minority Affairs and the other truly
3 valid reasons to have an Office of
4 Hispanic Affairs, and Office of Asian
5 Affairs, and this room was packed.

6 There was a large ethnic
7 community that was in this room and
8 when I spoke I was hissed at. What is
9 that considered?

10 That is not a Kumbaya, let's have
11 a good moment and let's all work
12 together type of statement. I felt
13 threatened and intimidated. I wasn't
14 scared, but, again, these are the types
15 of things we have to work out within
16 the ethnic community but in the
17 majority community.

18 So if you are saying 55 percent
19 of perpetrators of hateful incidents
20 are White males and we are still are in
21 a country that's dominated by White
22 male leadership, we have to address
23 that. We have to address the fact that
24 you do have communities of color across
25 the board, whether it's a language

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2 issue, a cultural difference, or just
3 the fact that we don't feel we are
4 heard, valued, or appreciated to come
5 to the table.

6 If we, in a county, where we have
7 close to 80,000 veterans and we have
8 yet to provide a resource and support
9 center for our veterans with laws that
10 are on the books, how are we going to
11 effectively address the challenges that
12 are impacting racial discourse.

13 People of color, particularly
14 African Americans are the largest
15 percentage of those who have racial
16 incidents against them.
17 African-Americans lead. It's in the
18 Bureau of Statistics. Those are their
19 facts as of 2020.

20 It's close to 3,000 reported
21 incidents and we can all agree that the
22 majority are not reported, but 2,800
23 incidents are reported just within the
24 African community. That encompasses
25 every other group. That is something

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2 that we have to address.

3 It starts with the education. We
4 can't keep saying we need more police
5 officers. This Commissioner here is
6 passionate, he is committed, he is
7 engaged, he is involved.

8 The pop officers, and, again, I
9 stood in front of this body when this
10 body was trying to cut the resource for
11 the pop officers, fought against that.
12 We have to do what we need to do
13 collectively but we also have to do
14 what we need to do when you leave from
15 here and go to your respective
16 communities, and I've been with this
17 Commissioner in communities where we
18 had large incidents of drugs and the
19 families were asked, how many people in
20 this community have a drug problem?
21 Four people raised their hands and
22 these were communities that were hot
23 beds of the drug crisis.

24 So we have the ignorance, we have
25 the complacency, and we have those that

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2 don't want to own up to what they don't
3 know, don't say, and don't do when it
4 comes to their own children.

5 So when are we going to rise up
6 all of that and bring about what we
7 need to have in this county?

8 And, first and foremost, you have
9 to start somewhere. We have a
10 facility. Nassau University Medical
11 Center, new health facility - -

12 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Meta, that's
13 something. And I know with the
14 veterans that - -

15 MS. MEREDAY: That's something,
16 and what I'm saying, legislator, that
17 could be a facility that could start to
18 initiate change, that we can get state
19 funding to address that issue, federal
20 funding to bring that together. Those
21 are the types of areas that we can - -
22 you are talking about, let's do
23 something. You can't keep having the
24 Kumbaya, the parade, and a sensitivity
25 workshop and think that's going to do

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2 it.

3 We need to step outside of the
4 box, as someone said earlier with
5 children and youth, there is money in
6 the state coffers that this county
7 could get access to that will take the
8 strain off the taxpayers.

9 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: We will work on
10 that. Your time is up. Thank you for
11 coming down.

12 MS. MEREDAY: We need to come
13 together. This room should have been
14 filled.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: We did that as
16 a result of a meeting that we had and
17 we wanted to start the process. So
18 rather than waiting till after all the
19 holidays were over, Ramadan, and
20 Easter, we felt that it would be better
21 to start now, to open this discussion
22 now. Let's start so we know at this
23 point where do we go from here, to
24 start working on it.

25 I didn't want to delay it because

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2 I was afraid that things would happen
3 and we would never have this hearing.
4 It was more important to hear from the
5 presenters, from those that are
6 organizing and to hear from our county
7 agencies that deal with this. That's
8 why we did this.

9 MS. MEREDAY: Black churches have
10 been organizing through the 1619
11 project so I'm just saying again, if
12 you are going to be divisive even in
13 this, you are not going to be
14 successful. That's the point I needed
15 to make. Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you.
17 Wendy Levitt.

18 MS. LEVITT: Wow. This has been
19 a great session and thank you to
20 everybody who's taken the time to be
21 here. I have learned a lot. I just
22 wanted to add my own experience with
23 hate crime, hate experience to the
24 pile.

25 My kids are a little bit older

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2 now and I'm no longer with the PTA but
3 back in the day I was very active with
4 the PTA and I was when Syosset High
5 School was graffitied and a lot of the
6 graffiti was anti Semitic in nature.

7 I think what Commissioner Ryder
8 did was standing forward with working
9 through a very complicated process and
10 seeing it to a good conclusion was
11 fantastic.

12 What I want to talk about was
13 also happening on the community side
14 because as a PTA representative I got
15 to hear a lot about that.

16 So as Commissioner Ryder knew
17 firsthand, when it first happened,
18 everybody was up -- the entire Jewish
19 community was up in arms and our voices
20 were heard and we felt validated and
21 that was great.

22 But it wasn't a week later that
23 we started hearing from our neighbors
24 in the community. It was just kids
25 being kids. What is the big deal? A

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2 swastika doesn't really mean anything.

3 The process for a lot of reasons
4 took a long time for it to come to its
5 conclusion.

6 By the time it did, those
7 families that had take the "what's the
8 big deal attitude" had become so
9 entrenched in their position that when
10 things finally closed out, I had
11 already been forward talking about not
12 only what was happening with the
13 graffiti but other instances around
14 anti Semitic behaviors within the
15 Syosset School District that were
16 coming up and was talking about, hey,
17 it's not about these kids, it's we have
18 a problem that we need to address.

19 When these kids were ultimately
20 charged, one of these parents was so
21 enraged, so angry, that she went as far
22 as to forge a screen shot, put it out
23 on social media, said Wendy Levitt's
24 son is responsible let's all call the
25 school and have him expelled.

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2 Good news for me, for my son, is
3 I had the original documents. So it
4 took about five minutes with the
5 principal, here's what she forged,
6 here's the original, here's where she
7 got it from, okay, fine, didn't mean
8 that he didn't have pressure from his
9 peers, didn't mean that it didn't cost
10 him friendships, didn't cost me sleep
11 and tears and ulcers and everything
12 else.

13 I did at that point go to the
14 police and I went to a private attorney
15 and I said, listen, she was trying to
16 do damage to my kid. There was no law
17 on the books that let anybody move
18 forward to demonstrate to one of the
19 ring leaders in this community that
20 perpetuating this kind of hate was not
21 acceptable.

22 So there were two things that
23 happened here; one was, and this isn't
24 anybody's fault, it's the system, it is
25 the way it is, but the amount of time

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2 that it took to work through the system
3 was so long and there was not an
4 environment within the community for
5 discussion so people became entrenched
6 in polarizing views, and once we did
7 come back together, there was no
8 consequence for any of the
9 inappropriate behaviors that were the
10 followed ones to the initial act.

11 So I just wanted to share that.
12 I don't know if it gives anybody a new
13 idea of where we can go. I think the
14 discussion is about building
15 relationships with the community,
16 houses of worship, with schools, is
17 fantastic. Just a little insight of
18 what was happening behind my curtain.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: It's amazing.
21 Thoughtfully you stayed with the PTA
22 for a while but what a nightmare for a
23 child to go through.

24 Thank you, Commissioner Ryder,
25 for addressing that in the way that you

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2 did. Legislator Rhoads.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate
4 it, Madam Chairwoman, no other
5 questions for me just a comment and a
6 thank you to all of our speakers and
7 our presenters today for sharing your
8 stories.

9 I know Mr. Singh had made
10 reference to some of his experience
11 after 9-11 and I'm struck by the words
12 of President Bush in his speech in the
13 joint session of Congress in the
14 immediate aftermath. He said we are in
15 a fight for our principles and our
16 first responsibility is to live by
17 them, and no one should be singled out
18 for unfair treatment or unkind words
19 because of their ethnic background or
20 religious faith, and that's not just
21 true in the aftermath of 9-11, that's
22 true every single day.

23 We as a community have to be
24 unafraid to call evil by name to
25 recognize hate for what it is and be

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2 willing to speak out against it.

3 I want to thank all of our
4 speakers today for doing that and
5 trying to be a part of the solution.

6 I think eventually by all of us
7 working together we're going to get
8 there, but I want to thank each of you
9 for helping us take an important, not a
10 first step, but an important step
11 towards that and so I appreciate your
12 participation.

13 Thank you so much.

14 LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Thank you,
15 Chairwoman. I'm not actually as
16 eloquent and my colleagues here and I'm
17 not actually on this committee, but I
18 am a legislator and a new legislator at
19 that so I want to thank everybody who
20 spoke so compellingly about your
21 experiences. It's not easy.

22 I do try cases and I know when
23 people testify they relive the
24 experience including the pain that you
25 experienced through the bias and

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2 criminal activities based on race and
3 hatred.

4 My experience as a legislator in
5 only the last couple of months have
6 been eye-opening. Within 45 days of
7 taking office, I received a contact
8 form from a constituent at a synagogue
9 in my district who asked me to help
10 with reaching out to both the police
11 and to the District Attorney's Office.
12 Mr. Meany from your office,
13 Commissioner Ryder from your office,
14 and the response from both the DA's
15 office and the police department was
16 outstanding.

17 But they had to communicate the
18 problem. You can't do anything about a
19 problem that you don't know about.

20 Then another very simple very
21 short story. I will be mercifully
22 brief. I got a request from another
23 constituent. Also, it came from a
24 synagogue in my district concerning a
25 crosswalk. It had nothing to do with

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2 bias.

3 I went on a Saturday morning to
4 the crosswalk just so I could see what
5 it looked like and what needed to be
6 done traffic wise. While there was a
7 woman standing outside the synagogue
8 and I said, do you know so and so? The
9 man who called me about crosswalk. She
10 said no, but he may be inside with my
11 husband, my husband is always the last
12 to leave. I said, I know, my wife
13 complains I'm the last to leave.

14 I said, can I go in and speak to
15 him? She said, you can, but I don't
16 know the code. There was a keypad on
17 the outside of the door that it was, I
18 got chills down my spine when she said
19 that. I've been going to the same
20 church for 53 years and you just walk
21 in on a Sunday morning.

22 So it's been eye opening and
23 thank you for sharing. I did want to
24 be here. I did volunteer, push my way
25 on to the anti-Semitism task force and

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2 I think this is so necessary and I want
3 to thank our Chairwoman and all of our
4 legislators who spoke today for this.
5 I hope we continue this and we continue
6 to process to root out this type of
7 evil. So thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you all
9 for coming and I thank you,
10 Commissioner Ryder, and sergeant for
11 testifying today, Jeanine Diehl, thank
12 you very much, and, chief, thank you so
13 much for all of this.

14 We will be reaching out to the DA
15 hopefully we can all continue working
16 together because I think we now
17 understand that there is a task that we
18 need to start working on and hopefully
19 coming to a conclusion on it so we can
20 get the message out to everybody that
21 Nassau County should not be a county
22 where we tolerate hate, especially
23 these crimes that are committed against
24 many of the minorities. We are a
25 blended community now and we have to

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2 act like that.

3 I always believe love a fellow
4 man and we really have to send that
5 message out so everybody knows.

6 Eric, I thank you very much for
7 your outreach and for all of you, I'm
8 not sure I'm saying your names right,
9 and I do apologize, because your
10 testimony was very, very moving.

11 It really has to instill in us
12 that it's time that we can't standby
13 silently and allowing a lot of this
14 stuff to go on and we have to stop it
15 and it has to stop with each and every
16 single one of us.

17 Thank you all and have a good
18 afternoon.

19 (Whereupon, the Public Safety
20 Committee on Hate Crimes adjourned at
21 3:45 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, FRANK GRAY, a Shorthand Reporter and
Notary Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby stated:

THAT I attended at the time and place
above mentioned and took stenographic record
of the proceedings in the above-entitled
matter;

THAT the foregoing transcript is a true
and accurate transcript of the same and the
whole thereof, according to the best of my
ability and belief.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand this 20th day of April, 2022.

FRANK GRAY