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National Fair Housing Alliance
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National Partnership for
Women & Families
National Urban League
People for the American Way
Religious Action Center of
Reform Judaism
Service Employees International Union
Sikh Coalition
UnidosUS

President and CEO

Maya Wiley

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chair
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
2142 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Protect Hate Crime Grants and the Community Relations Service

Dear Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Jordan, and Ranking Member Raskin,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and its Hate Crimes Task Force, we write to express our grave concerns regarding the Department of Justice's (DOJ) sudden termination of more than 300 ongoing grants and apparent de-prioritization of hate crimes prevention and response at a time when reported hate crimes are at an all-time high. We urge you to exercise your oversight authority to hold hearings to investigate recent changes at the DOJ that usurp congressional intent and appropriations and demand that improperly terminated grants be reinstated immediately.

The Leadership Conference is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 240 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. Our Hate Crimes Task Force focuses its coalition efforts on raising awareness of crimes or incidents based in hate, strengthening hate crime laws and reporting and data collection, and opposing executive actions and rhetoric that are polarizing and divisive.

We are especially concerned about the termination of hate crime-related grants and the proposed elimination of the DOJ's Community Relations Service.¹ These changes will leave communities and hate crime victims without the critical support needed during moments of crisis at a time when reported hate crimes are at an all-time high. Reported hate crimes

¹ "Memorandum for Heads of Department Components." *U.S. Dep't. of Justice, Office of the Deputy Attorney General*. March 25, 2025.

<https://static01.nyt.com/newsgraphics/documenttools/80043aa4cf197e0a/b99ad74a-full.pdf>.

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nearly doubled from 2013 to 2023,² and in 2023, for the second year in a row, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported the highest number of hate crimes on record.³ While these data are notoriously underreported, they provide a snapshot of what communities across the country are experiencing.

Termination of Hate Crime-Related Grants

On April 22, 2025, the DOJ sent notices of termination to recipients of grants authorized under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which included the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE Act.⁴ Congress authorized these grants, commonly referred to as “Jabara-Heyer grants,” in 2021 with overwhelming bipartisan support.⁵

The termination notices state:

“This award is being terminated because it ‘no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.’ 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). The Department has changed its priorities with respect to discretionary grant funding to focus on, among other things, more directly supporting certain law enforcement operations, combatting violent crime, protecting American children, and supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault, and better coordinating law enforcement efforts at all levels of government.”⁶

However, these grants fulfill many of the areas of concern referenced in the DOJ notice, as they support law enforcement transition to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), state hate crime reporting hotlines to connect victims and survivors to critical resources in times of need, and programs that prevent and respond to hate crimes. Shepard-Byrd grants improve the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and respond to hate crimes, and Jabara-Heyer grants enhance the coordination of law enforcement efforts at all levels, helping law enforcement agencies earn trust with victims of crime. For example, victims using hate crimes hotlines often request support in connecting with law enforcement or following up on investigations. Furthermore, as DOJ itself explains, a significant portion of hate crimes *are* violent crimes, including rape or sexual assault.⁷

The termination of these grants is harmful, shortsighted, and contrary to the DOJ’s stated priorities. DOJ should immediately reinstate these grants and restore funding.

² “Facts and Statistics: FBI Releases 2023 Hate Crime Statistics.” *U.S. Dep’t. of Justice*. Sept. 25, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>.

³ Lynch, Sarah N. “US violent crime decreased in 2023, hate crimes rose, FBI reports.” *Reuters*. Sept. 23, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-violent-crime-decreased-2023-hate-crimes-rose-fbi-reports-2024-09-23/>.

⁴ Pub. L. No. 117-13.

⁵ The Senate passed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act by a vote of 94-1, and the House by a vote of 364-62. “Roll Call Votes: S. 937-117th Congress.” *Congress.Gov*. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/937/all-actions?overview=closed&q=%7B%22roll-call-vote%22%3A%22all%22%7D>.

⁶ Emails received by grant recipients, on file with author. *See also* Stein, Perry, et al. “DOJ cancels grants for gun-violence and addiction prevention, victim advocacy.” *Washington Post*. April 23, 2025.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/22/justice-department-grants-canceled/>.

⁷ *See, e.g.,* Masucci, Madeline, & Langton, Lynn. “Hate Crime Victimization, 2004-2015.” *U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Labor Statistics*. June 2017. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/hcv0415.pdf>.

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Proposed Elimination of the Community Relations Service

The Community Relations Service (CRS) was established by Congress in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and since then it has played an essential role in helping communities respond to conflict and reduce the potential for violence.⁸ The proposed elimination of CRS would be unlawful, as it was established by statute and provides critical congressionally mandated services to communities in crisis. It is also shortsighted to eliminate a program that protects public safety and saves money. As Senator Grassley once reflected on the importance of CRS as a cost-saving alternative to litigation, “[t]he federal government is in an ideal position to serve as a beacon for the rest of our society. Its agencies should be far more active in using consensual dispute resolution.”⁹

CRS works across the country with local law enforcement, other public safety officials, local and national civil rights organizations, and religious leaders to mediate conflict and maintain peace. When communities are experiencing increased tension, CRS trains local community leaders to help keep the peace. In the aftermath of a hate crime, CRS supports law enforcement in their engagement with the communities targeted for hate. Importantly, CRS helps government officials develop sustainable mechanisms to prevent and respond more effectively to hate in the future.

Eliminating CRS or reducing its ability to carry out its mandate would endanger communities. Congress should forcefully push back on any attempt to eliminate or defund this critical component of DOJ and hold DOJ officials accountable for any attempt to usurp Congress’ power.

Conclusion

The termination of hate crime-related grants and the proposed elimination of CRS usurp congressional authority, seriously jeopardize congressionally created programs, and are contrary to the DOJ’s stated priorities. These proposals would be a step in the wrong direction at a time when so many are worried about hate crimes against marginalized communities. We urge you to utilize your authority and conduct oversight hearings into these matters. If you have any questions, please contact Nadia Aziz, senior director of the fighting hate and bias program at The Leadership Conference, at aziz@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

National (51)

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)

Advocates for Trans Equality

Arab American Institute

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

⁸ 42 U.S.C. § 2000g.

⁹ Grassley, Sen. Charles E., & Pou Jr., Charles. “Congress, the Executive Branch and the Dispute Resolution Process.” *J. Disp. Resolution*. Pgs. 1, 9. 1992.

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Committee of 100
Common Cause
Equal Justice Society
Equal Justice USA
Family Equality
Feminist Majority Foundation
Human Rights Campaign
Interfaith Alliance
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
Just Solutions
Khalid Jabara Foundation
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Matthew Shepard Foundation
Mi Familia Vota
Movement Advancement Project
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
NAACP
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Organization for Women
NBJC
National Urban League
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Not In Our Town
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
PERIL: the Polarization & Extremism Research and Innovation Lab
PFLAG National
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Sojourners
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stop AAPI Hate
The Asian American Foundation
The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
The Sikh Coalition
Transformative Justice Coalition
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism

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United Church of Christ
Western States Center

Regional/State/Local (32)

2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins III Foundation
API PA
Asian American Coalition of Ohio
Asian American Federation
Asian American Organizing Project
Asian American Pacific Islanders Coming Together (ACT) Florida
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders of New Jersey (AAPI NJ)
Asian Americans United
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
Chinese for Affirmative Action
Equality California
Georgia AAPI Hub
JACL, Chicago Chapter
JACL, DC Chapter
JACL, Greater Pasadena Chapter
JACL, Houston
JACL, Seabrook Chapter
JACL, Florin-Sacramento Valley Chapter
JACL, Twin Cities Chapter
JACL, Salt Lake Chapter
JACL, St. Louis Chapter
Jewish Community Relations Council of Broward County
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Chicago
Missouri Asian American Youth Foundation
MN8
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates Greater Cleveland Chapter
Rising Voices
Silver State Equality
South Asian Network
The 1990 Institute
Viet Voices

Cc: All members of the House Committee on Appropriations
All members of the House Committee on the Judiciary