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Maya Wiley

July 9, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins and Vice Chair Murray,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and its Hate Crimes Task Force, we write to urge you to prioritize funding in your Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations legislation for hate crime prevention. At a time when hate crimes are on the rise,¹ it is critical that Congress provide robust funding for hate crime prevention programs so that they can effectively prevent and track and hate crimes.

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. Its 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.

Specifically, we request you to provide the following funding levels for critical hate crime prevention programs:

- \$20 million for the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE program. The Jabara-Heyer Act, passed as part of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, aims to improve hate crime reporting through grants to state and local governments. This funding is needed to enhance hate crime statistics and promote better responses to hate crimes in our communities.
- \$40 million for the Community Relations Service (CRS). CRS was established by Congress in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and since then, has played an essential role in helping communities respond to conflict and reduce the potential for violence.² CRS works across the country with local law enforcement, other public safety officials, local

¹ 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/>.

² 42 U.S.C. § 2000g.

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and national civil rights organizations, and religious leaders to mediate conflict and maintain peace. The Department of Justice FY2026 request has proposed eliminating CRS.³ We ask that you instead preserve CRS and ensure it is robustly funded to support communities in the wake of hate crimes.

- \$30 million for Community Approaches to Advancing Justice grants. This program supports communities in addressing hate crimes, promoting awareness and preparedness and helping victims. Funding for these grants is essential to ensuring communities have the resources they need to prevent hate crimes.
- \$25 million for the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This program provides vital funding and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to help them investigate and prosecute hate crimes. Funding for this program is key to helping communities coordinate efforts to prevent, identify, and prosecute hate crimes.
- \$13.5 million for the Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations and Prosecution Program. This program provides support to state, local, and tribal law enforcement and prosecutors for investigation and prosecution of cold case murders associated with civil rights violations. This funding is crucial to ensuring accountability for hate crimes and bringing closure to communities affected by these murders.

We urge you to fund these important programs in order to prevent hate crimes, improve response to hate crimes, and support strong communities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chloé White, senior policy counsel, justice, at white@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
2nd Lieutenant Richard W. Collins III Foundation
ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
Advancing Justice | AAJC
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Arab American Institute
Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
California Association of Human Relations Organizations
Human Rights Campaign
Impact Fund
Interfaith Alliance
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

³ "Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and Performance Summary." *U.S. Dep't of Justice*. June 13, 2025. P. 113.
<https://www.justice.gov/media/1403736/dl>.

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Movement Advancement Project

Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)

NAACP

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)

National Council of Jewish Women

National Organization for Women

National Urban League

PERIL: The Polarization & Extremism Research and Innovation Lab

The Sikh Coalition

Southern Poverty Law Center

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Union for Reform Judaism

Western States Center