

June 26, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Support the Improving Reporting to Prevent Hate Act of 2024**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the SPLC Action Fund, we write to urge you to cosponsor and support H.R.7648, the Improving Reporting to Prevent Hate Act of 2024. This bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Reps. Don Beyer (D-VA) and Don Bacon (R-NE), would condition federal funding for large law enforcement agencies (those serving jurisdictions over 100,000 in population) on credible hate crime reporting to the FBI or meaningful hate crime prevention, outreach, and awareness initiatives by such agencies.

Established in 1971, the SPLC has been tireless in identifying and rooting out hate and extremist groups to create a fair, inclusive, and unified nation. Related, the SPLC Action Fund advocates for the implementation of policies and laws to eliminate structural racism and inequalities, alongside impacted communities in pursuit of equity and opportunity for all. We work primarily in the Southeast United States where we have offices in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C.

SPLC has deep expertise in monitoring the activities of domestic hate groups and other extremists – including the Ku Klux Klan, the neo-Nazi movement, racist skinheads, antigovernment militias, and others. We currently track hundreds of extremist groups operating across the country and publish investigative reports, share key intelligence, and offer expert analysis to the media and public.

The FBI has been collecting hate crime data from the nation's 18,000 federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies under the Hate Crime Statistics Act (HCSA)<sup>1</sup> since 1991. The FBI HCSA report is the most important and comprehensive national snapshot of hate violence in the U.S. Unfortunately, all crime reporting to FBI is voluntary and hate crime reporting – because of lack of will or training, insufficient community trust of police, and language access challenges – has always been especially inconsistent and incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

The FBI's 2022 HCSA report,<sup>3</sup> its most recent, dramatically demonstrates both the lack of comprehensive data – and the need to provide more significant incentives to encourage comprehensive police hate crime reporting. The FBI reported 11,643 hate crime incidents – the *highest* number of hate crimes ever – from the *smallest* number of reporting law enforcement agencies (14,660) in the past decade. 2022 also marked the fifth straight year of declining police participation.

The 2022 FBI HCSA report also documented:

- The highest number of reported race-based crimes ever (6,570), including the highest number of crimes directed against Black people (3,424) since 2000.
- The highest number of anti-Hispanic crimes (738).

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<sup>1</sup> Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990, 34 U.S.C. 41305, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title34-section41305&num=0&edition=prelim> (last visited June 24 24, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Schwenke, Ken, *There Have Been Huge Gaps in FBI Hate Crime Data for Years. A New Law Aims to Fix That*. ProPublica, <https://www.propublica.org/article/there-have-been-huge-gaps-in-fbi-hate-crime-data-for-years-a-new-law-aims-to-fix-that> (last visited June 24, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> FBI, 2022 Hate Crime Statistics Act report, <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#!/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime> (last visited, June 24, 2024).

- The second-highest number of anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander crimes (525).
- The highest number of crimes targeting people and institutions because of their sexual orientation (1,947), gender identity (469), and religion (2,014). This includes the highest number of antisemitic crimes since 1993 (1,124) and a growing number of anti-Muslim crimes (158).

Yet, in a year of record-breaking hate crime reports, thousands of police agencies across the country *did not report any hate crime data to the FBI* – and almost 80% of the rest reported to the FBI that they had zero (0) hate crimes. That is a stunning statistic, especially when you consider it includes about 60 police departments that serve cities with more than 100,000 people.

We cannot address our nation’s hate crime problem without accurate information about the nature and magnitude of the problem. That is why the Improving Reporting to Prevent Hate Act is so critical. Improving data collection requires both targeted people reporting crimes and well-trained police knowing how to identify, report, and respond to hate violence. Research has shown that better hate crime data would assist in proper allocation of police resources and personnel – preventing crimes, reassuring hate crime survivors, and building trust and relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.<sup>4</sup>

Behind every hate crime statistic is a person or institution targeted for no other reason than their identity. World events, political polarization, misinformation, and heightened racial, ethnic, and religious tensions have contributed to the recent surge in hate crimes across the United States. At this time of increased concerns about hate crimes, enactment of this legislation would certainly improve hate crime reporting nationwide, providing better data to understand – and combat – hate crime directed against every targeted community.

We urge you to cosponsor and support the Improving Reporting to Prevent Hate Act. Please contact Senior Policy Counsel Michael Lieberman, [Michael.Lieberman@splcenter.org](mailto:Michael.Lieberman@splcenter.org), if you have questions or if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Sakira Cook  
Federal Policy Director  
Southern Poverty Law Center and  
SPLC Action Fund

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<sup>4</sup> Sill, Kaitlyn, Ph.D. and Haskins, Paul A. J.D., *Using Research to Improve Hate Crime Reporting and Identification*. National Institute of Justice. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/using-research-improve-hate-crime-reporting-and-identification> (last visited June 24, 2024).