

August 21, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Request for Hearing on Hate Crimes and Hate Groups in the United States

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

We, the undersigned organizations, representing millions of diverse constituents around the nation, respectfully request that the Senate Judiciary Committee urgently conduct a hearing next month on the need to address hate crimes and the proliferation of hate groups in the United States.

This is not a theoretical concern: According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of hate groups in our country (currently numbering over a thousand) has grown by almost 60% since 2000. In 2010, more than 47% of hate crimes were racially motivated; 20% were motivated by the religion of the victim; 19% were based on sexual orientation and almost 13% of all hate crimes were based on ethnicity or national origin.

During the last month alone, six worshipers at a Sikh *Gurdwara* in Wisconsin were massacred by an attacker with known ties to hate groups, and approximately ten Islamic institutions and Muslim communities in seven states have experienced attacks including vandalism, a suspicious burning, shootings, and the desecration of religious sanctuaries. The Jewish community continues to experience persistent bias attacks, accounting for 65% of all religiously motivated hate crimes documented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2010. Hate crimes based on anti-Hispanic bias accounted for nearly 67% of ethnically motivated crimes in 2010. Although African Americans made up only 12.4% of the U.S. population in 2010, they accounted for 70% of all racially motivated hate crimes that year. Thousands of other individuals in our nation continue to be affected by hate violence due to their race, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, or immigration status.

According to hate crime statistics published by the FBI, there were at least 6,628 hate crimes reported in the United States in 2010. These incidents understate the problem of hate crimes in the United States, partly because of underreporting by victims, and partly because hate crime reporting by law enforcement agencies is voluntary. A 2005 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics suggested that the true number of hate crimes in the United States may be 15 times higher than that which is currently reported. Underreporting may be compounded by policies and political rhetoric (in support of broadscale racial profiling, for example) that could make hate crime victims apprehensive about immigration and law enforcement authorities.

Given the persistence of hate crimes and the proliferation of hate groups, we believe that a hearing is both timely and necessary. We are especially interested in examining the status of the implementation of the Matthew Shepard Act; improvements to hate crime reporting and data collection; and the need for more robust hate crime prevention measures, consistent with protections for First Amendment rights and civil liberties. For additional information, please contact Mr. Rajdeep Singh, Director of Law and Policy at the Sikh Coalition, at rajdeep@sikhcoalition.org or by phone at (202) 747-4944. We look forward to partnering with you to address these important issues and offer gratitude for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

80-20 National Asian American PAC - Central Ohio Chapter
80-20 National Asian American PAC - Southwest Ohio Chapter
ACUDIR (Alameda County United in Defense of Immigrant Rights)
Adhikaar
Afghan American Bar Association
African American Ministers Leadership Council
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
American Association of University Women
American Ethical Union
American Jewish Committee
American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA)
Anti-Defamation League
API Chaya, Seattle
API Equality – LA
Arab American Action Network (AAAN)-Chicago
Arab American Association of New York
Arab American Institute
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
Arab Muslim American Federation
Asian American Council – Dayton, Ohio
Asian American Federation
Asian American Institute
Asian American Justice Center, a member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Asian Americans for Community Involvement
Asian Immigrant Women Advocates
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Law Caucus, a member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
Asian Pacific Community in Action
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Services In Action, Inc. (ASIA)
Association of Muslim American Lawyers (AMAL)
Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA)
Bazon Center for Mental Health Law
Blacks in Law Enforcement of America
The Center for APA Women
Center for Social Inclusion
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Church Women United
Club of Indian Women
Community to Community Development
Cordoba Initiative
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC)
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Council on American Islamic Relations – California (CAIR-CA)
Council on American-Islamic Relations – New York Chapter (CAIR-NY)
Council on American Islamic Relations – Texas, Dallas Fort Worth Chapter (CAIR-DFW)
Council on American-Islamic Relations – Washington (CAIR-WA)
Counselors Helping (South) Asians/Indians, Inc. (CHAI)
Dignity Campaign
DRUM – Desis Rising Up & Moving

The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Equal Rights Center
Family Equality Council
Fellowship of Reconciliation
FICA (Federation of India Community Associations of NE Ohio, Cleveland)
Filipino Advocates for Justice (FAJ)
Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
Gays and Lesbians Opposing Violence (GLOV)
Groundswell – Auburn Theological Seminary
Hindu American Foundation
Hmong National Development
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic, University of Minnesota Law School
Immigration Equality
Interfaith Alliance
Interfaith Center of New York
International Human Rights Clinic, NYU School of Law*
Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)
Islamic Networks Group (ING)
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jews Against Islamophobia (JAI)
Jews For Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ)
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights
MAI Family Services
Manavi
MIRA! Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance
Mujeres Unidas y Activas
Muslim Advocates
Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC)
Muslim Bar Association of Chicago
Muslim Bar Association of New York (MuBANY)
Muslim Consultative Network
Muslim Public Affairs Council
Muslim Public Affairs Council – New York Chapter
NAACP
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Jewish Women

* Affiliation provided for identification purposes only.

National Council of La Raza
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Immigration Law Center
National Minority AIDS Council
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
National Organization for Women
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)
Network of Arab American Professionals (NAAP)
OneAmerica
Open Society Foundations
Organization of Chinese Americans, Silicon Valley Chapter
The Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee
People For the American Way Foundation
PFLAG National (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
Priority Africa Network
Raksha
Rights Working Group
Sakhi for South Asian Women
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium
Secular Coalition for America
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
The Sikh Coalition
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team
Social Justice Guild of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta
South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
South Asian Bar Association of New York (SABANY)
South Asian Bar Association of Northern California (SABA-NC)
South Asian Bar Association of Philadelphia
South Asian Bar Association of Southern California
South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C. (SABA-DC)
South Asian Network
South Asian Progressive Action Collective
South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center
Trikone-Chicago
Turning Point for Women and Families
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
The United Church of Christ/Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
UNITED SIKHS
The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
USPAK Foundation
Women in Islam Inc.
Young People For
YWCA USA

cc: Committee on the Judiciary – United States Senate