



## Orange County Human Relations Commission

1300 S. Grand Ave., Bldg. B, Santa Ana, CA 92705  
(714) 480-6570

*Serving Orange County since 1971.*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CONTACT:

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- **2015 Commission Hate Crime Report Release and Panel Presentation**
- **10:00 am, Thursday, August 5**
- **OC Human Relations Commission** conference room, 1300 S. Grand, Bldg. B, Santa Ana

## Hate Crime is up, LGBT Community Most Frequent Target

(Orange County, CA)— The 2015 Orange County Hate Crime Report, published by the Orange County Human Relations Commission, shows “hate crimes” increased in 2015. The most frequently targets were from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community, with African American and Jewish individuals making up the top three groups. Additionally we saw a spate of reported “hate incidents” (protected speech, not crimes) motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment in the days following the terrorist attack in San Bernardino.

“We must work together to face issues of prejudice and hate in our county, and continue to hold ourselves accountable for creating communities where all people are safe, respected and included,” expressed OC Human Relations Commission Chair, Becky Esparza.

The 25th annual OC Human Relations Commission Hate Crime Report is based on the Commission’s collaboration with Orange County law enforcement agencies, local schools and community organizations. The focus of the report is on bias-related crime, or “Hate Crime” defined as a criminal act committed based on the victim’s real or perceived disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or association with a person or group with one or more of these identities. Under California law there are enhanced penalties for hate crimes. Perpetrators of “Hate Incidents” have the same motivation, but their hate speech and writings are not crimes, they are protected speech.

Attorney General Kamala Harris shared in the Commission’s report, “This report sheds light on hate crimes and incidents that erode the trust, respect, and safety that unite a community. It is an invaluable tool that helps us understand—and combat—these insidious acts, and sends a clear message that they will not be tolerated...There is no place in our communities for hate.”

The increase of hate crimes documented in 2015 does not negate a downward trend of these crimes seen over the past decade, falling to less than half of what the Commission documented in 2005. Nevertheless, the Commission continues to be concerned about every hate crime and also believes there is significant underreporting. While it is unknown how many hate crimes are not reported, the Commission encourages those who work in communities and neighborhoods – law enforcement, places of worship, schools, and community organizations – to encourage reporting of these crimes.

### About the Orange County Human Relations Commission

The Commission was founded in 1971 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors in collaboration with the OC League of Cities. Over the last 25 years the Commission has documented, reported, and responded to hate crimes in Orange County. The Commission provides support for victims of hate crimes and trainings for the community, educators, students and law enforcement to increase the accuracy of reporting and decrease the number of hate-related crimes and incidents. To report a hate crime that occurred in Orange County, or learn more, contact James Armendaris at [james@ochumanrelations.org](mailto:james@ochumanrelations.org) or 714-480-6579 or visit [www.ochumanrelations.org/hatecrime](http://www.ochumanrelations.org/hatecrime). Archived OC Hate Crime Reports can be downloaded at [www.ochumanrelations.org/hatecrime/hate-crime-reports](http://www.ochumanrelations.org/hatecrime/hate-crime-reports).

**Our Mission:** *Seek out the causes of tension and conflict, discrimination and intolerance, and eliminate those causes.*

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