

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 28, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

We write to you regarding our great concern at the recently published Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Uniform Crime Report Hate Crime Statistics for 2016 detailing a 5% increase in overall hate crimes from the previous year. This information is deeply troubling given the fact that the 2015 report outlined a 7% increase from the year before, marking a disturbing trend in the rise of hate related crimes in recent years.

In 2016, there were 6,121 criminal incidents and 7,321 related offenses defined by hate. More than half (58.9) of the victims were targeted because of their race, ethnicity or ancestry. Another 21.1% percent of the offenses related to religious bias, 1% of the victims were targeted because of a disability and the rest of the offenses were related to gender, gender identity or sexual orientation bias from the offender. Most of the reported hate crimes took place in public spaces away from the victims' homes, including nearly 10% of them at schools and colleges.

People of color, religious minorities and gender identifying minorities overwhelmingly make up the majority of the victims. For example, 68% of the hate crimes reported against racial minorities were committed against African Americans (50%), Latinos (11%), Asians, and Native Americans (7%). Similarly, 79% of the offenses regarding religious bias were committed against Jews (54%) and Muslims (25%). The LGBTQ community makes up overwhelmingly the majority (85%) of the victims of hate crimes related to gender and gender identity. Even more startling is the fact that, according to the Anti-Defamation League, 92 cities over 100,000 in population either did not report any hate crime data to the FBI for 2016, or affirmatively reported to the FBI that they had zero (0) hate crimes.

On April 5, 2017, you announced the creation of a Hate Crimes Subcommittee as part of the Department's Taskforce on Crime Reduction and Public Safety. The purpose of this subcommittee is "to take a hard look whether there is anything that the Department can do to improve reporting, investigation, and prosecution of hate crimes. The Hate Crime Subcommittee will both explore whether improvements can be made within the federal system and whether we can do more to assist our state and local partners. The Hate Crime Subcommittee will also examine hate crimes data collection."

To that end, please answer the following questions:

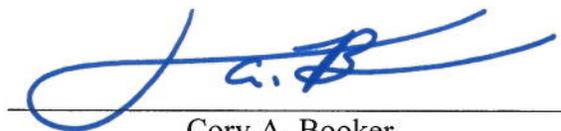
- What is the current status of the Hate Crimes Subcommittee? How often does the Subcommittee meet? Will these meetings be public?
 - Please provide any and all documentation relating to the Subcommittee's meetings.
- How many racial, religious and gender identifying minorities make up your senior team of advisers? How many make up the Taskforce on Crime Reduction and Public Safety? How many make up the Hate Crimes Subcommittee?
- On September 15, a group of more than 80 civil rights, religious, education, and professional organizations sent a letter to Acting Assistant Attorney General John Gore with a series of policy recommendations to combat hate crimes. Did the Department respond to these stakeholders series of policy recommendations? Will the Subcommittee produce a public report based on stakeholder recommendations?
- What steps will the Hate Crime Subcommittee take to ensure more comprehensive and accurate participation in the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics Act for 2017 and beyond?
- In light of the recent events surrounding white supremacist and like-minded hate groups, what steps will the Department and the Subcommittee take to protect the public from criminal activity on the part of these networks?

In a year where political divisiveness and hate rhetoric has reached a boiling point, we fear this disturbing trend will show no signs of reversing unless we take decisive action. We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



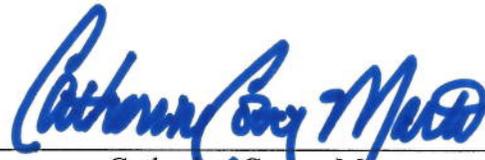
Robert Menendez



Cory A. Booker



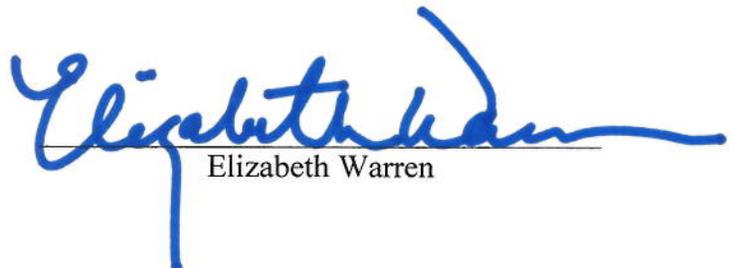
Kirsten Gillibrand



Catherine Cortez Masto



Mazie K. Hirono



Elizabeth Warren

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin