



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

September 25, 2025

Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

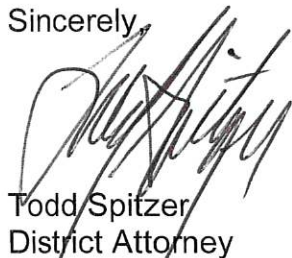
Subject: "Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?" Grand Jury Correspondence

Dear Judge Hernandez:

Attached is a letter I submitted to the Orange County Board of Supervisors regarding the Grand Jury's June 2025 report, "Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?". While no response was required from my office, the report mentioned our work, which is detailed in the attached letter.

If you have any questions, please contact Sr. Assistant District Attorney Susan Price at (714) 347-8723.

Sincerely,



Todd Spitzer
District Attorney

cc: 2024-25 Orange County Grand Jury Foreperson

REPLY TO: ORANGE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
<http://orangecountyda.org/>

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August 13, 2025

The Honorable Doug Chaffee
Chairman, Orange County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Katrina Foley
Vice Chair, Orange County Board of Supervisors
County Administration North
400 W. Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Agenda Item # - Orange County District Attorney's Response to the June 2025 Grand Jury Report: "Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?"

As the elected District Attorney of California's third largest prosecutorial office, I have made combatting hate a cornerstone of my administration. A hate crime is not just a crime committed against a single individual; it is a crime that threatens the very fabric of our society and our community as a whole. Combatting hate is not the responsibility of one entity or one agency; we must collectively work together to eradicate hate across all sectors of our society and send a united and unrelenting message that hate will not be tolerated here in Orange County – or anywhere. I am grateful for the Board's support in this collective effort.

In June 2025, the Orange County Grand Jury released a report titled "Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?" Throughout the report the Grand Jury referenced the ongoing efforts of the Orange County District Attorney's Office (OCDA) to combat hate crimes through outreach, education, and prosecution. ***While the Grand Jury did not directly request a response from the District Attorney's Office, several recommendations were directed toward collaborative partners whose work intersects with the District Attorney's initiatives.***

This correspondence provides an overview of the OCDA's initiatives as a Department of Justice (DOJ) hate crimes grantee and outlines how these efforts align with the Grand Jury's recommendations.

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District Attorney's Hate Crimes Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice

In 2023, the OCDA received a \$1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program. This grant supports the investigation, prosecution, and prevention of hate crimes, as well as community outreach and education. Originally intended as a two-year initiative, the grant was expanded to four years through 2027 after DOJ reviewers determined the proposed work had regional significance, citing more than 30 letters of support from community partners along with the grant's broad scope. The grant also allows for a one-year, unfunded extension.

The three core components of the grant include:

- **Law Enforcement Training:** OCDA developed a POST-certified, multi-day hate crimes training course for law enforcement, which will fully launch in Fall 2025.
- **Prosecution:** An additional specialized hate crimes prosecutor is assigned to investigate, and charge hate crimes in coordination with local law enforcement agencies.
- **Community Outreach:** The OCDA has engaged schools, universities, community-based organizations, and all five Orange County Supervisors in outreach and planning efforts. Additional meetings with the Board of Supervisors are scheduled in the coming months.

Alignment with Grand Jury Recommendations

Recommendation R5: Formation of a Countywide Hate Prevention and Response Coalition
Deadline: September 30, 2025 (F1, F2, F4)

The OCDA is well-positioned to lead this effort. Per our grant application:

"Community education will be a key function of this project... The hate crimes prosecutor will increase public awareness through community meetings and presentations across Orange County. These efforts aim to empower marginalized individuals to report hate crimes and provide upstream prevention through education."

The OCDA plans to take a leadership role in this initiative, using DOJ grant resources and technical assistance to host community education and listening sessions. Community education will focus on empowering marginalized individuals to report hate crimes. A professional facilitator will be hired to guide these meetings, and the OCDA will collaborate with the Board of Supervisors and HRC to select a neutral moderator.

Quarterly coalition meetings will be open to community-based organizations, law enforcement, County representatives, and the HRC and interpreters will be on-site to ensure that language

access is not a barrier to engagement. Victim advocates will be present to provide trauma-informed support and resource referrals.

Recommendations R9 & R10: Anonymous Reporting and Centralized Portal
Deadline: December 31, 2025 (F4, F7, F9, F10)

The District Attorney's Office is collaborating with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and municipal police agencies to create a countywide hate crime and hate incident reporting portal which will be maintained by the District Attorney's Office. It is crucial that this reporting portal be maintained by the District Attorney's Office because only prosecutors can make the determination whether submissions should be classified as a hate crime or a hate incident based on the Judicial Council of California Criminal Jury Instructions.

Key features will include:

- Online reporting for individuals and community-based organizations
- Full language access to eliminate reporting barriers
- QR codes to lead to reporting portal for educational materials
- Designation of a specialized hate crimes prosecutor to classify submissions as hate incidents vs. hate crime based on existing state law and the Judicial Council of California's Criminal Jury Instructions
- Assignment of a victim advocate for follow-up and service referrals
- Annual data sharing with the County CEO's office and the HRC

In addition, this streamlined portal will also support anonymous submissions with separate tracking and analysis for those reports.

Recommendation R12: Expand Tolerance Curriculum in K-5 Schools
Deadline: December 31, 2025 (F12)

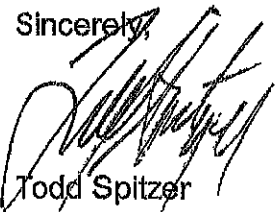
The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) and the District Attorney's Office are collaborating to provide comprehensive training to school administrators, educators, counselors, and mental health professionals across Orange County. The training will offer practical tools and a legal framework for preventing, identifying, and responding to hate incidents and crimes in school environments. Grounded in California Education Code 220, the program will emphasize schools' obligations to protect student safety and comply with anti-discrimination laws.

The curriculum will cover legal definitions and procedures related to hate crimes, local data and trends, and the academic and emotional impacts of hate-driven and bullying behavior. It will introduce law enforcement protocols, restorative justice approaches, and tiered interventions aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Participants will also learn trauma-

informed strategies and be connected to community-based resources throughout Orange County. Real-world examples from local schools will be shared to highlight successful models. This partnership is designed to foster inclusive, safe, and informed learning environments throughout Orange County.

The District Attorney's Office remains committed to leading regional efforts to combat hate crimes through education, prosecution, and collaboration. Our federally funded initiatives provide the infrastructure and resources necessary to implement many of the Grand Jury's recommendations. We look forward to our continued partnerships with County agencies, community groups, law enforcement, and our educational institutions to effectively and collectively combat hate across all sectors of our community.

Sincerely,



Todd Spitzer
District Attorney

cc: The Honorable Vicente Sarmiento, Orange County Board of Supervisors, Second District Supervisor
The Honorable Donald P. Wagner, Orange County Board of Supervisors, Third District Supervisor
The Honorable Janet Nguyen, Orange County Board of Supervisors, First District Supervisor
County Executive Officer Michelle Aguirre, County of Orange
County Counsel, Leon Page, County of Orange