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March 4, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin, Chair  
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
*Via email: [Durbin\\_Testimony@judiciary-dem.senate.gov](mailto:Durbin_Testimony@judiciary-dem.senate.gov)*

**RE: Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing “Combating the Rise in Hate Crimes”**

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am honored to submit the following testimony in support of the effort to address hate crimes, ahead of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing entitled “Combating the Rise in Hate Crimes.” My name is Rabbi Jack Moline and I serve as president of Interfaith Alliance Foundation, a national nonpartisan organization that takes as our motto “protecting faith and freedom.” Since our inception in 1995, we have been devoted to championing true religious freedom for people of all faiths and none. We also work to secure the equal protection of all people from efforts to supersede civil rights under the guise of religious freedom.

We all deserve to feel safe in our communities – no matter who we are, where we live or what we believe. But with frightening regularity, the lives of our friends and neighbors are forever changed by hate-based violence. I was ordained as a Rabbi in 1982, and I served for more than thirty years in a congregation. I have an experiential perspective of the devastating effects of hate crimes. When a hate crime occurs, a whole community is impacted. Whether they occur globally or locally, the effects are felt certainly by the adults of a community, but especially by the children. The ability of a hate crime to leave an entire community traumatized is particularly insidious. That ripple effect, from the original hate incident to communities feeling unsafe states or countries away, must be addressed to ensure we are living up to our promise of religious freedom.

At Interfaith Alliance, our foundational mission is to unite communities of religious and secular belief to ensure all of us enjoy the freedom to believe as we choose. When I transitioned into this work, I witnessed the chilling effect public expressions of hate had on my friends in the Muslim and Sikh communities. When a hate crime occurs, the people impacted are robbed of their sense of safety. The Justice Department has a mandate to promote the general welfare of the people in this nation, and that must apply to these damaging acts of hate. The mandate to protect people must extend to those most vulnerable in society.

The alarming increase in hate crimes related to the COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored the urgent need for action. While we cannot reverse these events, public officials must put in place solutions to ensure the safety of vulnerable groups. Perhaps the



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most important step towards solutions is providing targeted communities with the information and resources they need to equip themselves for the future.

It is essential that solutions to this issue are influenced by the affected communities, allowing those communities to lead and actors like law enforcement to follow. Law enforcement officials do not provide the same sense of security for some communities as it does for others. Many people rightly feel a distrust of the police which makes it necessary for the committee to consider this when creating policy around reporting hate crimes.

The passing and signing of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which included the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, was a much-needed step towards providing stakeholders with the resources and information they need to keep their communities safe. The data improvement programs authorized by the NO HATE Act will help paint an accurate and comprehensive picture of hate crimes in this country. But to properly implement these programs, the committee must ensure that these programs have the appropriate funding. In doing so, we can ensure that law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders can more effectively meet the needs of communities affected by hate-based violence.

Any crime committed by one human being against another is a tragedy. But hate crimes are uniquely damaging, impacting those targeted, their loved ones, and the larger group they represent. I call on the esteemed members of this committee to be guided by those most affected by the fear and instability these acts cause and to ensure stakeholders have the data and resources they need. In doing so, this committee can live up to the promise this government made to protect each person, regardless of their identity. I urge the committee to take an active role in mitigating the impact of hate crimes and show up for our neighbors who wait in fear of the next crime against their community.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Jack Moline  
President, Interfaith Alliance  
Rabbi Emeritus, Agudas Achim Congregation  
Alexandria, VA