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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0509

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February 29, 2024

The Honorable President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to urge you to elevate combatting hate crimes and bigotry as a major focus within your Administration and prioritize funding aimed at ensuring the safety and protection of civil rights for all Americans as Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget priorities are being developed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations' (FBI) annual crime report released on October 2023 revealed that over 11,634 hate crime incidents were reported in 2022, compared to 10,840 in 2021. The report also showed that a majority of hate crime victims (51.9%) were targeted due to "anti-Black or African American bias." The 2022 data also showed a sharp increase in anti-Hispanic, anti-Asian, and anti-LGBTQIA+ biases. Separately, according to President Joe Biden: "Antisemitic hate crimes rose 25% from 2021 to 2022, and antisemitism accounted for over half of all reported religion-based hate crimes. Anti-LGBTQI+ hate crimes rose 16%, and Muslim Americans and African Americans continue to be overrepresented among victims."

In line with nationwide trends, there has been an increase in vile antisemitism and islamophobia – and hate crimes more broadly – in my Easy Bay community. In recent weeks, I hosted a series of listening sessions with community leaders aimed at learning how the rise in hate crimes is impacting the East Bay. Common themes throughout these sessions were the need for increased security and safety measures to address the *symptoms* of the issue, and increased community relations and cultural and religious understanding to address the *root causes* of hate.

I am urging your Administration to send Congress a full funding request for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to help protect vulnerable communities from hate crimes and

domestic terrorism. The NSGP is funded through the Department of Homeland Security and provides support for security enhancements and target hardening for nonprofits and places of worship, among other locations that are at increased risk of hate crimes.

I am also urging your Administration to send Congress and full funding request for the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS) and Civil Rights Division (CRD) programs. The CRS provides professional mediators to help bridge communities in conflict and help optimize their ability to effectively resolve conflicts. The CRD leads efforts to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans, and enforce federal civil rights and crime laws. In tandem, the CRS and CRD are critical to addressing bias-motivated hate crimes.

In the face of increasing instances of hate crimes across America, we must come together and wisely leverage resources to protect all Americans and send a strong message that hatred based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual, or gender orientation will not be tolerated.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Lee".

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress