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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jeremy Shaver, Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region
jshaver@adl.org, 720-799-9673

REPORTED HATE CRIMES REACH RECORD HIGH IN COLORADO IN 2022

Despite increased reports, advocates believe most hate crimes go unreported in Colorado, according to a statewide survey on bias-motivated crimes and incidents conducted in 2022 by Hate Free Colorado

DENVER, CO, October 18, 2023 ... The number of reported hate crimes in Colorado in 2022 is the highest number ever recorded in a single year for the state and is a 14 percent increase over the number of reported incidents in 2021, according to the [FBI's annual hate crime report](#) released on Oct. 16.

In Colorado, there were 317 reported hate crimes in 2022 compared to 277 reported incidents in 2021. **NOTE**; The FBI originally reported 285 incidents for Colorado in 2021 but a [supplemental report issued in March 2023](#) lowered the number to 277 incidents. The number of reported hate crimes in Colorado in 2022 is the highest in the 32 years the FBI has tracked this data.

Hate crimes reported in the bias categories of race/ethnicity/ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, and gender identity all increased in Colorado from 2021 to 2022, according to the report. The FBI documented 183 reported incidents based on race/ethnicity/ancestry, 68 based on sexual orientation, 38 based on religion, 20 based on gender-identity, 5 based on multiple biases, and 4 based on disability.

While the annual FBI hate crime report provides a helpful snapshot, it does not provide the full picture of what is happening on the ground in Colorado, argues Hate Free Colorado. The coalition, which includes 18 diverse advocacy and civil rights organizations and 12 law enforcement partners, conducted [a statewide hate crime survey](#) last year.

[The 2022 Hate Free Colorado survey](#) found that nearly 3 in 10 survey participants ages 18+, or an estimated 1.25 million Coloradans, said they were targeted with verbal harassment, property damage, and/or physical injury within the last five years. The survey also found that, of those who experienced a hate crime or bias-motivated incident within the last five years, only 18 percent reported the incident to police.

Hate Free Colorado believes more must be done to address the number of hate crimes and incidents in

Colorado, as well as persistent underreporting. The coalition makes the following recommended actions:

1. **Hate Crime Hotlines** – Establish non-emergency numbers at the local and/or state level for individuals to report a suspected hate crime.
2. **Law Enforcement Training** – Expand training opportunities for law enforcement officers who are most likely to interact with individuals targeted with a hate crime or bias-motivated incident. Training should specifically address recognizing indicators of a hate crime, conducting effective victim interviews and filing reports with the proper notes and categorizations.
3. **Outreach to Impacted Groups** – Create special units or teams within law enforcement agencies to develop relationships with communities that are most frequently targeted with hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents. Share information on agency policies and procedures, as well as victim resources.
4. **Education for Impacted Groups** – Conduct information and education sessions for community organizations, service providers and non-profit organizations that serve those who are most frequently targeted with hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents. Share information on victim resources and help agencies develop effective processes for handling incident reports from impacted community members.

Additionally, Hate Free Colorado partners believe it critical to consider the impact of hate crimes on an individual's or community's wellbeing. Experiencing hate crimes can lead to a wide range of physical, mental health, and social problems. These can include increased stress, hypertension, poor sleep, depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, anger, shame, suicidal behaviors, social isolation, and relationship issues. Entire communities that share identities with individuals who are targeted in hate crimes may also experience similar impacts.

It is essential to recognize everyone may respond differently after experiencing a hate crime. For many, mental health and psychosocial care may be helpful. Individuals who may be in need of mental health or psychosocial support can contact [University of Denver's MHPSS Network](#).

The University of Denver's community facing clinic, the Trauma Disaster Recovery Clinic (TDRC), also offers psychotherapy services to individuals and communities affected by trauma and adversity, including hate crimes. For assistance, contact gsppinfo@du.edu or 303-871-3736.

Coalition Partner Statements:

Scott Levin, Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region:

"While Jews make up around two percent of Colorado's population, it is especially disturbing that more than 50 percent of reported anti-religion hate crimes in Colorado in 2022 were anti-Jewish. At a time when the Jewish community is reeling in the wake of a terrorist attack and antisemitic incidents are on

the rise in Colorado, this report is sobering. We will continue to work alongside our coalition partners to push back against antisemitism and all forms of hate.”

Rex Fuller, CEO, The Center on Colfax:

“We are alarmed by the continued rise in hate crimes aimed at the LGBTQ community. The cultural climate in the United States continues to cause us great concern as hate crimes targeted at our communities increase, driven by anti-trans and anti-queer rhetoric being fueled by far-right extremists. Trans individuals, especially transgender women of color, are disproportionately targeted by these types of attacks. Violence targeted at individuals has deep impact on all LGBTQ community members as we see increased levels of fear, anxiety, and mental health strain. We need to promote understanding and acceptance for all members of affected communities to bring an end to this type of targeted violence.”

Dilpreet Jammu, Executive Director, Colorado Sikhs:

“It is a sad fact that 2022 saw a double-digit growth in hate crimes in Colorado. We are now at a 32 year high. A hate crime is insidious, in that, beyond the initial violence, it impacts the quality of life for the victim, as well as for their friends and families. Ultimately, Colorado suffers as every citizen does not realize their full potential when recovering from the aftermath of the targeted crime. This is a quality-of-life issue and as our 2022 Hate Free Colorado Survey has shown, the numbers are significantly under reported. I look forward to the day when our energy is spent on building a better Colorado for all citizens.”

Julie Reiskin, Co-Executive Director, Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition:

“Now more than ever we need to stand firmly against hate. Whether words or deeds, hate has no place in our state or country. As an organization focused on inclusion and social justice, CCDC stands with all Hate Free Colorado coalition partners to fight hate in any form.”

Shara Smith, CEO, The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado:

“The rise in hate crimes in Colorado is a devastating reminder that the proliferation of hateful ideologies has real-life consequences. As people of faith, we have the obligation to stand up for the lives of not just those within our faith communities, but all faith traditions. The rise of both antisemitism and Islamophobia in Colorado should inspire all of us to double down on our efforts to stand up for true religious freedom and to condemn oppression masked as faith.”

Law Enforcement Partner Statements:

Cole Finegan, United States Attorney for the District of Colorado:

“Hate crimes are crimes against who we are as Americans and the promise of our Constitution that every American should be able to pursue happiness regardless of race, gender identity, national origin, disability status, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. We will work with all of our partners, federal, state, and local to stand united against hate in Colorado.”

Mark Michalek, FBI Denver Special Agent in Charge:

“No one should ever be targeted or threatened because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender, or immigration status. Hate crimes are not only an attack on the victim, but they also instill fear and threaten and intimidate an entire community. We urge members of our community to report incidents like this to us because hate-based violence has no place in our society and will not be tolerated.”

Phil Weiser, Colorado Attorney General:

“Hate against any of us is hate against all of us. The rise in hate crimes is a red flag that we have important work to do to raise awareness about these crimes and improve reporting and enforcement. In Colorado, we can, and we must, all stand united against hate.”

Beth McCann, District Attorney, Second Judicial District:

“I am deeply disturbed by the increase in reported hate crimes last year. My office will continue to aggressively prosecute people who commit these crimes in hopes of providing a measure of justice to the victims.”

Michael Dougherty, District Attorney, Twentieth Judicial District:

“As Coloradans, we must continue to stand united against hate crimes. These crimes cut against the very fabric of who we are as a people and as a country. So, I want to acknowledge the victims who have come forward to seek help and justice. Our office will continue to work closely with our partners in Hate Free Colorado in doing everything we can to prevent, and respond to, hate crimes in our communities.”

Alexis King, District Attorney, First Judicial District:

“As hate crimes continue to rise, it’s more important than ever to take these cases seriously and investigate them thoroughly. In our jurisdiction, our office has taken the lead in developing a dedicated law enforcement network to combat hate-driven violence and ensure that justice is served.”

Joel R. Zink, Deputy District Attorney, Eighteenth Judicial District:

“Our office will not tolerate any type of hate crime in our judicial district. We have a dedicated team that will investigate, charge, and aggressively prosecute offenders who commit crimes involving prejudice. Our family, friends, and neighbors deserve to feel safe in our community.”

Hate Free Colorado Partner Organizations:

American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado
Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region
Asian Pacific Development Center

The Center on Colfax
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization
Colorado Sikhs
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
Matthew Shepard Foundation
Meet the Middle East
Multicultural Mosaic Foundation
NAACP – Aurora Branch
NAACP CO-MT-Wyoming State Conference
One Colorado
Out Boulder County
Partnership for Community Action
University of Denver MHPSS Network

Law Enforcement Partners:

Aurora Police Department
Boulder Police Department
Colorado Attorney General's Office
Colorado State University Police Department
Denver Police Department
Eighteenth Judicial District Attorney's Office (Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, Lincoln)
Federal Bureau of Investigation – Denver Field Office
First Judicial District Attorney's Office (Gilpin/Jefferson)
Second Judicial District Attorney's Office (Denver)
Twentieth Judicial District Attorney's Office (Boulder)
U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado
University of Colorado Boulder Police Department

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