

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

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November 16, 2020
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Mathieu Eugene
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mathieu Eugene
Inez D. Barron
Daniel Dromm
Brad S. Lander
Bill Perkins

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Lydia Bates

Michael Cohen

Scott Richmond

@

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS SADOWSKY: Sergeants in
3 charge of recording, if you can please start your
4 recordings.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: PC recording
6 underway.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS SADOWSKY: Cloud
8 recording has started.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS PEREZ: Backup has
10 started.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS SADOWSKY: Thank you.

12 And Sergeant Martinez, if you'd be able to start with
13 your opening. Thank you.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: Good morning,
15 and welcome to today's remote New York City hearing
16 of the Committee on Civil and Human Rights. At this
17 time would all panelists please turn on their video.
18 To minimize disruption please silence your electronic
19 devices. If you wish to submit testimony you may do
20 so via email at the following address:

21 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that's
22 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
23 cooperation. Mr. Chair, we're ready to begin.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so much.
25 Thank you very much [gavel]. My name is Mathieu

1
2 Eugene and I'm the chair of the Civil and Human
3 Rights Committee. Thank you for joining our virtual
4 hearing today and I do see [inaudible]. Before we
5 begin, ah, I, I will do that after. I was going to
6 acknowledge my colleagues in government. I don't
7 know who is here. But I see, ah, Brad Lander. Thank
8 you very much, thank you, Brad, always there. I'll
9 acknowledge the other colleagues as soon as I, I see
10 them on [inaudible]. In the matter of a few short
11 details, the internet has [inaudible] from the way
12 [inaudible]. Social media in particular has gained
13 significant popularity with over 3.48 billion users
14 in 2019, representing half of the world's population.
15 One social media platforms has greatly facilitated
16 the ability of individuals, businesses, and various
17 social groups to share and exchange information.
18 This new technology has also enabled the spread of
19 misinformation and hateful, violent ideologies. The
20 internet as a structure of social platforms and those
21 individuals in groups to reach a wide audience,
22 making it a powerful tool for promoting and
23 coordinating hate. In a survey conducted by the
24 Antidefamation League this year, 44% of Americans
25 surveyed said they experienced some form of online

1 hate or discrimination, while 35% said they were
2 targeted in relationship to their sexual orientation,
3 religion, race, ethnicity, gender identity, or
4 disability. There has also been substantial growth
5 in the number of hate groups in the United States.
6 The Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that
7 tracks hate groups, reported annual increases in the
8 number of such groups, particularly since 2016. Last
9 year the center reported a record high of the number
10 of hate groups, reported 30% increase and since
11 [inaudible]. This increase has also [inaudible] with
12 an increase in hate crimes and incidence of
13 [inaudible] terrorism. Contrastingly, prior to 2016
14 the number of hate groups had been falling for three
15 years. These findings were recently echoed by the
16 testimony of FBI director Christopher Wray before the
17 House of Online Security Committee in September. It
18 is clear that [inaudible] poses a very clear and
19 present danger to the public safety and social
20 cohesion. The ever-expanding reach of social media
21 and other like platforms brings with each increasing
22 [inaudible] and groups looking to spread their
23 ideologies, incite violence, and increasing
24 recruitment through their disturbing and dangerous
25

1
2 causes. While there have been attempts to address
3 increase [inaudible] the novelty of social media and
4 other online platforms has meant that government
5 attempt to address such issues have lagged
6 considerably. This hearing will present an
7 opportunity for this council, city agencies,
8 advocate, and social media platform alike to explore
9 and improve the ways in which society addresses and
10 respond to the proliferation of online hate
11 [inaudible]. I would like to thank the committee
12 staff, [inaudible], senior counsel to the committee,
13 [inaudible], Juan Julie, policy analyst, and
14 [inaudible] analyst, and I would like also to thank
15 my staff, Melissa Wilson. And I would be remiss if I
16 didn't take an opportunity to thank all the wonderful
17 people from the staff of the City Council who work
18 hard to make [inaudible] public hearing, the remote
19 public hearing possible. To all of you, thank you so
20 very much. And I want to acknowledge that we have
21 been joined by Council Member Dromm, Council Member
22 Barron. Thank you so very much. And with this I
23 would like, I would like to turn it over now to the
24 counsel to go over some procedural items and
25 administer the oath.

1 COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS 7
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'm
3 [inaudible], counsel to the Civil and Human Rights
4 Committee of the New York City Council. Before we
5 begin I want to remind everyone that you will be on
6 mute until you are called on to testify, when you
7 will be unmuted by the host. I'll be calling on
8 panelists to testify. Please listen for your name to
9 be called. I will also be announcing who the next
10 panelists will be in order. I will call you
11 individually when it is your turn to speak. The
12 first panelist to give testimony will be Lydia Bates,
13 representing the Southern Poverty Law Center. She
14 will be followed by Scott Richmond from the
15 Antidefamation League, then Michael Cohen from the
16 Simon Wiesenthal Center. I would like now welcome
17 Lydia Bates to begin her testimony.

18 LYDIA BATES: Thank you, and good
19 morning. My name is Lydia Bates. I use she/her
20 pronouns and I'm a senior research analyst at the
21 Southern Poverty Law Center, or SPLC. We appreciate
22 the invitation to testify before you, and I'm pleased
23 to share the views of the SPLC Action Fund with
24 regards to addressing online hate and radicalization.
25 Founded in 1971, SPLC's mission is to be a catalyst

1 for racial justice in the south and beyond, working
2 in partnerships with communities to dismantle white
3 supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and
4 advance the human rights of all people. The newly
5 founded SPLC Action Fund partners with SPLC to
6 advocate for policies and legislation that promote
7 equality and strive to eradicate white supremacy.
8 Earlier this year as life moved to online spaces to
9 help slow the spread of the coronavirus an estimated
10 70 million American children completed their school
11 year online, away from the structure and oversight
12 provided in classrooms and during extracurricular
13 activities. In late August the United States Census
14 Bureau revealed that nearly 93% of households with
15 school-age children are reporting some form of
16 distance learning from COVID-19. This unprecedented
17 increase in time spent online creates a uniquely
18 challenge environment in which to continue the years-
19 long fight against online radicalization and exposure
20 to harmful content is further compounded by
21 distracted parents and caregivers who are all working
22 from home, a lack of social engagement, and
23 interactions with diverse people, beliefs, and
24 experiences and uncertainty and loss, leading many
25

1 young people and adults alike to rely on simplistic
2 and conspiratorial answers for an ongoing pandemic
3 that has impacted almost every aspect of daily life.
4 While removing extremists from social media platforms
5 and building algorithms that redirect people away
6 from extremist content and rabbit holes can have some
7 positive impact on [inaudible] susceptibility to
8 radicalization, building awareness of and resiliency
9 to radicalizing extremist content at home and in the
10 learning environment is an important prong in the
11 successful multifaceted approach to online
12 radicalization. SPLC in partnership with the
13 Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab
14 and American University recently published a guide to
15 help parents and caregivers build that resiliency
16 against extremism by educating them to recognize the
17 signs of online radicalization in young people who
18 are oftentimes the targets of such far rights
19 propaganda and by empowering them to intervene.
20 Parenting caregivers are the most crucial front-line
21 defense against hate and radicalization. The guide
22 helps them learn to engage with young people in their
23 lives over difficult topics in the news, responsibly
24 embrace their identity so as to contextualize it in
25

1 an appreciation of diverse identities and
2 experiences, and listen to the language young people
3 are using to recognize programmatic online platforms
4 they may be, ah, using. [inaudible] piece of helping
5 to build this resiliency is improving digital
6 literacy in both adults and young people. SPLC's
7 teaching tolerance department has developed a
8 comprehensive framework through which educators,
9 parents, and young people can develop digital and
10 civic literacy skills, and most importantly it is
11 incumbent upon each of us to challenge hate in all of
12 its forms. These are only some of the most important
13 steps we can take and the committee can support
14 towards building our collective strength against
15 online radicalization. The written statement we've
16 submitted has some more in-depth details of these
17 strategies and many other approaches that can work to
18 help mitigate harm while strengthening community and
19 care in young people's lives. Thank you very much
20 for holding this hearing and for focusing your time
21 and attention on this important topic. I hope you
22 are all able to stay safe and healthy right now.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much
25 [inaudible] thank you so much. Ah, ah, in your

1 testimony you mention that, ah, your organization has
2 published a guide. Could you give us some more
3 detail? Can you share with us how, you know, you,
4 what you have done is [inaudible] information, how
5 you get the information, you know, to create this
6 guide and, ah, yes, please.

8 LYDIA BATES: Sure. So the guide was
9 recently developed, um, like in said, in partnership
10 with the Polarization, Extremism, and Research
11 Innovation Lab at American University. Um, and they,
12 ah, are kind of a new, um, organization within
13 American University that is looking for innovative
14 ways to build this resiliency and interrupt, um,
15 radicalization in its many different manifestations.
16 Um, so the guide, I mean, the information that we're,
17 we're drawing from is from years of, of research and
18 experience within our department and also, um, from
19 that, the Innovation Lab, which is headed by Cynthia
20 Miller Idris. Um, and it was published, um, back in
21 June of this year, um, to help parents really
22 understand, um, and recognize the risks that online
23 radicalization presents and has presented for years,
24 but also the increased risk, ah, that comes with
25 everything moving to online spaces and, um, less

1 oversight from parents and caregivers and, um, kind
2 of the interruption of support networks that children
3 and young people across the globe are currently
4 experiencing. So it really looks at the, the
5 different dimensions that COVID-19 presents, ah, in
6 terms of online radicalization. And, um, the guide
7 lives on the SPLC website, so that's
8 splcenter.org/peril.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But did, did you
11 conduct any outreach or any [inaudible] with people
12 who were affected by, ah, ah, online hate or
13 discrimination? [inaudible]?

14 LYDIA BATES: Yes. Um, so Peril has
15 several consultants, um, parents and caregivers, um,
16 people who were radicalized and then went through the
17 deradicalization process, um, parents of people who
18 have been the target of hate, ah, former extremists
19 who are now parents and trying to raise, um, children
20 who don't turn to hate, um, and we've had several
21 webinars with several of those speakers and, and
22 others who have expertise, um, as parents, former
23 extremists, um, researchers such as myself and
24 Cynthia and my colleagues in the, ah, ah,
25 intelligence project. So, ah, yes, reached out to,

1
2 to many, many different, um, um, people with
3 expertise in these areas.

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: From your knowledge,
5 which group or population of particular people, ah,
6 that is more affected by online, ah, hate or
7 radicalization or discrimination, is there any
8 special group like children, immigrant, you know,
9 people because of their religion, because of their
10 sex, any group, special group that you think that
11 have been more impacted or affected by this, ah,
12 crisis?

13 LYDIA BATES: Um, I, I would say that,
14 um, everyone has to be aware of online radicalization
15 and everyone has a susceptibility to being exposed to
16 that extremist content. Children in particular, um,
17 are, are susceptible, um, just because they haven't
18 built the, the skills and knowledge to kind of parse
19 through information that might be coming their way
20 that they might run into on various social media
21 platforms, um, and they, they haven't been building
22 the skills and knowledge to discern between something
23 that's false and might be extremist, and also might
24 be taking advantage of them and potentially
25 predatory, um, and, and information that's coming

1
2 from sound sources. Um, so children in particular
3 have a susceptibility to these, um, online
4 radicalization.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You know that, and
6 I, I keep saying that all the time. I know that all
7 of us we know that New York City is home to so many
8 people from far in the world, speaking several
9 languages, and some of them they, they have
10 [inaudible] challenges because [inaudible] and which
11 is not their first language. But in your guide what
12 languages did you, ah, translate, did you translate
13 or your organization translate the, the guide to
14 several languages as much as possible, or is it only
15 in English.

16 LYDIA BATES: Ah, that is a great
17 question, and as far as I'm aware it is only in
18 English, um, but I think that that's a great
19 recommendation to translate it into, into different
20 languages.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well, anyway, I want
22 to commend you and your organization for what you
23 have been doing, ah, to bring awareness to people, to
24 let them know the, the different detail of this
25 crisis, this is a social crisis, society crisis, and

1
2 to inform them [inaudible] what to do to handle this
3 situation, and I understand also translating your
4 guide in different languages may requires also
5 resources, you know, it may not be something that
6 could be easy for your organization, but, ah, ah,
7 that would be a good thing and, you know, to consider
8 also. And now we have facing a situation, you know,
9 unprecedented situation, public crisis, that changed
10 everything, everything, and what do you believe that
11 you will do to modify your approach to this, ah,
12 situation, ah, [inaudible] online by [inaudible].
13 Are you, are you going to continue to do the same
14 thing that you have been doing, and I mean your
15 organization, is going to continue doing the same
16 thing? Or will your organization do some
17 modification, make sure that you do an efficient job
18 as you have been doing to reach out to people because
19 now cannot get the [inaudible] reach out people.
20 Everything is by remote. Is there any changes that
21 you will bring to your way of addressing online crime
22 or radicalization of this commission?

23 LYDIA BATES: Absolutely. Um, I would
24 say probably the, the biggest thing that we're
25 focusing on right now is, um, community-based and

1
2 community-grounded responses, so that it's a little
3 bit more, um, localized, and we've been hosting
4 several webinars as well so that we're, you know,
5 moving this information into a virtual space where
6 people across the globe, um, can attend. Um, but
7 we're really trying to focus on, um, at-home
8 education, empowerment, resiliency, um, especially
9 since people are, you know, very much confined to
10 their homes.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yep. From, ah, let
12 me ask you the last question because, ah, can you
13 share with us if you have, I don't know if you do,
14 you know, many testimonies are, are taught from
15 people who have been victims, you know, ah, because
16 of, ah, radicalization or hate crime. In the
17 testimony that you receive from people who have been
18 affected by this situation, hate crime online or
19 radicalization or discrimination online [inaudible]
20 anything that you can share with us?

21 LYDIA BATES: Um, well, I don't have a, a
22 specific statement on hand right now, but one of the,
23 um, parents consultants for Peril, um, her son was
24 the victim of, of a hate crime, ah, um, a threat to
25 his life that was posted, I believe on, on Instagram,

1 um, so she was very much involved in creating the
2 guide and overview of, of the guide, and also has
3 been one of our speakers on several of the, um, Peril
4 webinars.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so much,
7 ah, Ms. Bates. I appreciate that and what you are
8 doing, and thank you so very much. Have a wonderful
9 day and stay safe.

10 LYDIA BATES: You too. Thank you so
11 much.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. As a
14 reminder to council members, if you have any
15 questions please use the Zoom raise hand function. I
16 will call on you in the order that your hand is
17 raised.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm
19 glad that you mentioned that [inaudible] any council
20 member got any questions for now with, ah, for Ms.
21 Bates? Seeing none.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can [inaudible] on
23 to the next witness, then. Thank you, Ms. Bates.

24 LYDIA BATES: Thank you.
25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our next witness, our
3 next witness is Scott Richmond from the
4 Antidefamation League. Scott? We will come back to
5 Scott, as I don't see him at the moment. Um, our
6 next witness is Michael Cohen from the Simon
7 Wiesenthal Center. Michael, you may begin your
8 testimony when you're ready.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right, Michael,
10 you may start any time. It seems that you are on
11 mute.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Michael, you're still
13 on mute. Give us a second to unmute you. There we
14 go. We should be ready.

15 MICHAEL COHEN: Can you hear me?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yep.

17 MICHAEL COHEN: Great. Thank you so
18 much. My name is Michael Cohen and I am the east
19 coast director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. With
20 a constituency of over 400,000 families, including
21 approximately 150,000 in the east in the Tri-State
22 area, the Wiesenthal Center stands as a global human
23 rights organization confronting anti-Semitism, hate,
24 bigotry, and terrorism, while promoting human rights
25 and dignity for all. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much

1
2 for providing the Wiesenthal Center an opportunity to
3 address the Committee on Civil and Human Rights on
4 the critical issues of online hate and
5 radicalization. Firstly, I want to thank the many
6 members of the council for using their portions of
7 their portions of their digital inclusion initiative
8 resources in this past budget cycle for exactly the
9 purpose of this oversight hearing, ensuring that our
10 next generation is aware of the online hate directly
11 targeting them and preparing them with the skills
12 necessary to be active partners in combatting online
13 hate. We are experiencing in real time how hate
14 marketed 24/7 on social media plays an outsized role
15 in increasing both radicalization and in inspiring
16 the increasing hate crimes on our streets. This
17 impact is only amplified since the outset of the
18 COVID-19 pandemic. As many of you are aware, the
19 Wiesenthal Center's Digital Terrorism and Hate
20 Project, which thanks to the foresight of the council
21 will now be conducting our nationally renowned
22 workshops in New York City public middle and high
23 schools throughout the five boroughs. The Wiesenthal
24 team will help empower our city's youth to identify
25 and reject the surge of online bigotry and instead

1
2 embrace our city's diversity and our maxims of
3 tolerance and mutual respect. Our institution's
4 senior researchers daily monitor trends of online
5 hate and the Wiesenthal Center regularly meets with
6 social media giants to demand the removal of hate and
7 haters from their powerful platforms. We have
8 prepared a booklet, which has been distributed
9 digitally to all members of the council, which
10 displays the scope of online hate and radicalization
11 targeting our children and our communities. The
12 Wiesenthal Center, once again, would like to thank
13 the members of both the council and this important
14 committee for recognizing the importance of this
15 issue and for partnering with us in an effort to
16 provide our local communities with additional
17 resources necessary to directly join with the front
18 lines in the fight against online hate. Thank you so
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
21 Michael. Thank you. I wanted to take the
22 opportunity to thank you for what you and Simon
23 Wiesenthal have been doing. I know that you are
24 doing a wonderful job in bringing people together,
25 going to the school and bringing, ah, ah, in bringing

1 the children and all, people from all [inaudible]
2 brought together and also the student and the
3 children [inaudible] of color [inaudible] respect and
4 unity. Thank you very much, and I had the
5 opportunity also to be part, ah, to attend to
6 several, ah, events from Simon Wiesenthal and I was
7 really impressed by what I have seen. Thank you so
8 very much. And I think that we have [inaudible] in
9 the Blue Room and we had several, ah, ah, rabbis and
10 member of the Jewish community and member of other
11 community also, different community coming together
12 to address this issue. Thank you for what you have
13 been doing and continue to do that because, ah, at
14 this time we are seeing a divided city, a divided
15 nation, divided, ah, ah, society and community. We
16 have to come together as people, as society, as
17 government, ah, nonprofit organization. You know,
18 people, we have to come as a society to make sure we,
19 we, we promote, ah, respect, collaboration, and unity
20 among people, and that we make New York City a
21 [inaudible] place for art. Thank you so very much.
22 And, ah, let me ask you one thing, Michael. Can you
23 share with us cases, ah, ah, example of hate crime,
24 ah, ah, hate crime [inaudible] or radicalization
25

1 that, ah, your organization has been discovered, ah,
2 ah, experiences.

3
4 MICHAEL COHEN: Sure. And, and
5 Councilman, first of all, thank you very much, you
6 know, for your kind words, um, you know, and, and,
7 you know, I'm blessed to personally know your
8 dedication to these issues. I remember when we first
9 met, ah, you were running your organization called
10 Youth for Education and Sports, which specifically
11 worked to bring people and our next generation
12 together specifically to fight the [inaudible] all of
13 the kinds of hate that we now see today, um, and it's
14 great to see that you're on the front lines here, um,
15 recognizing with the committee the importance of
16 fighting it online and the digital experiences that
17 we're seeing. So, really, thank you for all of your
18 efforts, ah, first and foremost. Um, secondly, as
19 you, as you said, we are constantly seeing a director
20 line drawn between what we're seeing online and what
21 we're seeing on the streets. Um, you know, we have
22 seen, you know, time and time again, um, people once
23 they have been, um, apprehended for a hate crime, um,
24 trying to say that they believed a certain kind of
25 thing because they saw it online, because they

1
2 believed it online. Um, you know, there, there was
3 an instance, um, that we dealt with, um, just in the
4 early parts of the pandemic where you had a City
5 Council member, um, in, in, a, just across the river
6 in New Jersey, um, who ended up saying some things
7 online, saying some things that were derogatory
8 against a number of different communities. And when
9 questioned about it, a young councilperson, he was 29
10 years old, his response was, well, this is what I saw
11 online, this is what I saw in all of these kinds of
12 instances. And once, once there was, there was an
13 opportunity to discuss that and to see what was real
14 and what was not, it was so readily apparent that
15 unfortunately everybody is susceptible to what
16 they're seeing online, particularly in the COVID-19
17 pandemic when we're so much interacting with our,
18 with our digital, ah, with [inaudible] on a day-to-
19 day basis. Um, you know, one of the other things
20 that we see constantly which is affecting our
21 children is also the dramatic increase of interactive
22 online gaming. I saw with my own children watching
23 one of my kids playing a game of pool online and
24 seeing Team Hitler with a little, with a little, ah,
25 ah, Hitler sign, um, and, and the face of that

1 individual, um, trying to say, you know, let's win
2 one and we can bet on how many Jews we can kill.
3 These are the kind of things and, and the kinds of
4 methodologies that those who hate are trying to use.
5 They're very creative and they're always a step
6 ahead. So we have to make sure to, um, to be right
7 behind them and have these kinds of hearings and have
8 the kind of programs that we have to make sure that
9 we are helping our next generation identify these
10 issues and make sure that they recognize that we're
11 here to help them and what reporting they can do to
12 help take some of those things off of the social
13 media.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
16 ah, Michael. Ah, I know that also you are a
17 legislator also. People don't know that, and you
18 have been in, ah, government for a long period of
19 time. But what policies have you seen, ah, most
20 effective in combatting online crime?

21 MICHAEL COHEN: So what we see...

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: The kind of policy
23 that you see that?

24 MICHAEL COHEN: I'm sorry.

25

1 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is there any policy
2 that you, you have seen that that is very effective
3 in coming, you know, online hate crime and, and
4 discrimination?
5

6 MICHAEL COHEN: Well, absolutely. I, I,
7 I think that the most critical piece we can do is
8 making, is two things. First of all, making sure
9 that our educators in our schools understand a, a
10 clear definition of what crosses the line and what,
11 and what is unacceptable, and what is considered
12 hateful. Um, we've seen time and again, ah, school
13 administrators or, or teachers or people in the
14 education world seeing something in their classrooms
15 and later saying they didn't know. So we need to
16 make sure that, that our educators are, are very
17 clearly, um, educated themselves into what hate is
18 and what hate crimes, and what hate speech. We also
19 need to make sure, and this is something that the
20 Wiesenthal Center, ah, with your help and the work
21 and the help of your colleagues is, is able to do, is
22 go into schools directly and make sure that as young
23 as middle school and even earlier now, unfortunately,
24 that we have the tools necessary to teach that just
25 because you see something online, just because you

1 see something on social media, doesn't mean it's
2 true. We've seen, for instance, about a year and a
3 half ago, ah, we saw when, when you had a, a white
4 supremacist group, was taking images of Taylor Swift
5 and trying to take profile pictures with her holding
6 up a Nazi salute, which would appear to be to be
7 that, which were all doctored. And then all of a
8 sudden you had people who appreciated her art and
9 then thinking well, if it's OK for her to be a white
10 supremacist then it might be OK. But we knew that
11 they were doctored. But the question is, is how do
12 you educate an 11-year-old or a 12-year-old to
13 make sure that they understand that that is something
14 that you have to question every, if it doesn't seem
15 right they need to question that. So we have put our
16 programs and our workshops into New York City public
17 schools and into schools throughout the region and
18 around the country, to make sure that kids as young
19 as middle school have workshops to learn how to
20 identify what is hate and what is things that appear
21 irregular are really irregular, and also to empower
22 them. Because one of the things you hear from
23 educators throughout is that we need to make sure
24 that our young people understand that they have a
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1
2 social responsibility to be part of the answer to
3 that problem. So we actually have also, which we
4 distribute, a, ah, an app, which allows for a student
5 if they see something like that, allows for
6 something, somebody as young as a 10- or 11-year-old
7 to anonymously put into an app I think this is
8 hateful, I think this is wrong, and for it to get
9 checked out and for us to look at it, and if it's
10 wrong for us to go to the appropriate social media
11 platform and try to fight to make sure it's taken
12 off. So it's about social, teaching social
13 empowerment to our next generation and also making
14 sure that they understand how to properly identify
15 what they see, whether it's hateful, or whether it's
16 real, or whether it's something that they need to
17 report.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Ah, Michael, I know
19 that, ah, Simon Wiesenthal [inaudible], you know, a
20 report card, you know, a very important document, but
21 can you give us a few detail, can you talk about the
22 report card, you know, issues, ah, you know, by Simon
23 [inaudible] and what has been the response to your
24 advocacy effort by government and the tech company,
25 you know, the companies like online companies. I

1 know that you have been in the forefront of advocacy
2 and make sure that those company understand that they
3 are to be part of this effort. What have
4 [inaudible], you know, by the government and by those
5 company, and also, if you want, can you tell us about
6 the report card also?
7

8 MICHAEL COHEN: Sure, so, as, as you
9 know, we, we each year have a, come out with a, ah,
10 a, a report card, which, you know, I believe it was
11 two years ago, ah, you hosted a press conference at
12 City Hall with us, um, demonstrating the report card
13 that shows specifically a letter grade for each of
14 the social media platforms and how they are doing
15 combatting hate, racism, bias, and all of the kinds
16 of things that we're talking about today. And 20
17 years ago, when we first started this, this program
18 of demonstrating, ah, via a letter grade their
19 efforts. At first they were closing their doors on
20 us. They didn't want to hear from, from these kind
21 of things. But suddenly the PR of them seeing I got
22 an F on how I deal with racism, or I got an F on how
23 I deal with, with, with online hate, and then when
24 direct lines were shown when folks were posting after
25 a hate crime all kinds of things about trying to show

1 look why they did it on their platforms, those kinds
2 of things put pressure. This is very hard with the
3 free speech arguments to put legal pressure in
4 certain ways, and yes there is a distinction between
5 hate speech and free speech, which we have to be very
6 careful of, and there are increasingly specific
7 definitions of, of different kinds of hate which can
8 be used in those regards. But a lot of it is, is the
9 commercial pressure and the public pressure. And
10 what government officials like yourself have done is
11 to make sure that those kinds of instances where,
12 let's say, when we do a report card which you
13 highlight either their lack of effort or their
14 increased effort on those matters where it gets
15 highlighted, where it gets publicity, where it gets
16 recognized, so that they feel that from even a
17 shareholder perspective that they have to listen.
18 And also doing that with elected officials show them,
19 and these kind of hearings show them, that if they
20 don't self-police that we're gonna have to help
21 police for them with other regulations, which they
22 don't want. So exactly these kinds of hearings and
23 those kinds of efforts, um, really aren't helpful.
24 What we have seen is in efforts such, such as
25

1 Facebook, where Facebook now, you know, has a team
2 that specifically deals with these kinds of matters.
3 So when people report to our team, you know, about,
4 about a hate crime or about a hate site or about
5 something of that nature, we now have relationships
6 with people who are specifically designated at some
7 of those social media platforms to be able to make
8 sure that they not just understand that they need to
9 take down hate speech, but that they understand the
10 nuances of things that are being posted and why they
11 are considered hate speech when perhaps they didn't
12 even realize themselves. So those kind of increased
13 relationships, the fact that some of those social
14 media platforms that are more responsible are
15 starting to design those kinds of, of either
16 committees or workshops or, or teams, um, has been
17 something positive. One of the things, though, that
18 we have seen is, is with each advancing, advance in
19 that regard that new platforms come up that have less
20 regulations. So it's a constant flow of making sure
21 that we're dealing with those that we find, ah, hate
22 speech on, and also having our research team, which
23 we do constantly, look up on new social media
24 platforms that pop up and make sure that we continue
25

2 to put the pressure on them and make sure that we
3 continue to advertise and show that they exist to
4 responsible folks like everybody at this hearing
5 today.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so very
7 much, Michael, and thank you for what Simon
8 Wiesenthal and your staff are doing to ensure that
9 the people can live in New York City with peace of
10 mind regarding if they are being, ah, assaulted of
11 this community and disrespected because of their race
12 and vision or other belief or sexual orientation.
13 Thank you so very much. And, ah, is any question
14 from my colleagues for Michael?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see no raised
16 hands.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So we can move on to
19 the next witness.

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so much,
21 Michael.

22 MICHAEL COHEN: Councilman, thank you so
23 much for your partnership, your help, and your
24 dedication to this critical issue.

1 COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS 32
2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
3 and stay safe. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Michael.
5 I would now like to welcome Scott Richmond from the
6 Antidefamation League. Scott, you may begin your
7 testimony [inaudible].

8 SCOTT RICHMOND: Thank you very much.
9 Ah, good morning. Um, my name is Scott Richmond.
10 I'm the regional director for ADL, the Antidefamation
11 League. Um, my offices oversees the work of this
12 international organization in New York and New
13 Jersey. Ah, thank you for the opportunity to testify
14 here today regarding the rising tide of hate and
15 extremism online and what we as New Yorkers can do
16 about it. I will start by pointing out a, ah, a
17 survey conducted by ADL just before, ah, COVID-19
18 that lays out the problem. It found that 44% of
19 American adults have experienced online harassment
20 and 28% have experienced severe online harassment.
21 This includes stalking, physical threats, swatting,
22 and doxing. Ah, further, more than one in three
23 people harassed online believe that they were
24 targeted because of their identity characteristics.
25 And since COVID things have only, ah, seemed to have

1 only gotten worse. We've seen a surge in online hate
2 targeting Asian American and Pacific Islanders, as
3 well as Jewish communities, fueled by conspiracy
4 theories, bigotry, and racism. Post after post have
5 blamed, ah, Orthodox and Haredi Jews for the
6 coronavirus, called on law enforcement to use water
7 hoses and tear gas to stop Haredi and Orthodox
8 community members from gathering, and suggested that
9 the Jewish community should be denied health care
10 entirely if they become sick. Even outside the
11 context of COVID-19 the increased, ah, national
12 polarization, divisive rhetoric, and social unrest,
13 ah, leading up to the 2020 election, really provided
14 fertile ground for extremists to spread
15 misinformation and disinformation and to sow division
16 and fear. Day after day extremist groups continue to
17 press their hateful ideology on social media, on
18 message boards, on video sharing sites, and through
19 online games. Ah, it's something we, we often
20 overlook, but the gaming community has become a very
21 oppressive place. And it's often with tangible
22 offline consequences and few social media companies
23 seem equipped or willing to address it in a
24 meaningful way. Ah, the public, ah, is really
25

1 expecting bold action, according to a 2020 online
2 hate survey across all political, ah, ideologies, the
3 vast majority of Americans make this clear. So what
4 this commission do to help? I'll lay out, ah, ah,
5 four, ah, ways that I think the commission can help.
6 One, um, the commission could, should ensure that
7 there are clear protocols and procedures in place to
8 identify and respond to actionable conduct online.
9 An online threat is as much a threat as a verbal one,
10 stoking fear, silencing voices, and causing harm to
11 people's emotional, physical, and professional
12 safety, all of which have a serious and lasting
13 effect on victims and their families. Second, the
14 commission must use its pulpit, its bully pulpit, to
15 condemn biased and bigoted online rhetoric in the
16 strongest possible terms. Silence can signal
17 acceptance, further emboldening those responsible for
18 causing harm. Third, the commission should provide
19 vocal support for ongoing efforts to strengthen and
20 improve New York City cyber hate laws pertaining to
21 swatting and doxing, particularly in cases where
22 individuals are targeted based on protected
23 characteristics. This will help send a clear and
24 unequivocal message that this conduct is both
25

1 unacceptable and unwelcome in our state. And finally
2 we urge the commission to join ADL and thousands of
3 others in urging social media platforms like Facebook
4 to meet the demands of the Stop Hate for Profit
5 Coalition, um, by adopting common-sense changes to
6 their policies that will help stem radicalization and
7 hate. The Stop Hate for Profit Coalition was, ah,
8 started by ADL, along with the NAACP, Color for
9 Change, and other organizations, and has managed to
10 make great strides in getting, ah, ah, Facebook the
11 change its policies regarding online hate. I can go
12 into more details on that if you want. Um, and
13 that's, that's really the four recommendations, and I
14 thank you for your time and attention to this
15 critical issue. We look forward to continuing to
16 serve as a resource for the commission, ah, as it
17 works to ensure that New York City is a safe,
18 welcoming, and inclusive city for all, both online
19 and off.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so very
22 much, Mr. Richmond. And thank you yourself what
23 Indiana has been doing, you know, to address the
24 issues of online hate and discrimination. Ah, you
25 mentioned in your testimony harassment and severe

1 harassment. Can you elaborate on the distinction,
2 the difference between harassment and severe
3 harassment? So what I'm trying to look, ah, for is
4 the impact of so many cases of harassment, online
5 harassment, and the behavior and the psychology of
6 people. How, you know, severe harassment can modify,
7 can affect people in the community, if you want to...

9 SCOTT RICHMOND: Look, cyber, cyber
10 [inaudible], the problem with cyber harassment is
11 that everybody sees it, ah, you know, it's not just
12 that you feel it because you feel oppressed, but that
13 that it's very, very visible, it's very public. I
14 mean, it's as if you've published that in the
15 newspaper, or much more than that. I mean, it has a
16 global audience. It could be shared. Ah, you know,
17 if a person is harassed in their workplace it could
18 be that only you and the person harassing you know
19 that. Ah, you know, it's, it's very, very limited.
20 And then other people can join in, pile on, ah, it's,
21 ah, obviously cyber harassment has many, many more
22 implications. People can make all sorts of, ah,
23 assumptions about you, and then it, it could involve
24 doxing, you know, where the person's name is given
25 out, address is given out, ah, family members, ah, we

1 saw a terrible case in, in, ah, Boston over the past
2 few weeks where a person, ah, ah, was driving past, I
3 don't know if you know about this, was driving past a
4 Trump rally and screamed out, ah, their child in the
5 back seat opened the window, screamed out, ah,
6 something at the Trump supporters. The Trump
7 supporters took a photo of, ah, of this boy, who was
8 9 years old, and then proceed to, ah, publish the
9 boy's name, the school that this boy goes to, the
10 parents' names, the parents' workplaces, and they
11 were shamed terribly online, ah, all because of the
12 actions of a 9-year-old boy, and that sort of stuff
13 lives on forever. It's not as if that can be erased
14 from, ah, from social media. It's there and, and
15 we're talking about a 9-year-old boy.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
18 Ah, you mentioned also in your testimony that, ah,
19 ah, the government should [inaudible] protocol and
20 commission and also support for local initiative.
21 Can you elaborate a little bit about that?

22 SCOTT RICHMOND: I'm sorry, say that
23 again?

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You mentioned about
25 on your, um, [inaudible] protocol, you know, using

1 protocol the government should, ah, should, ah,
2 bring, ah, protocol, to use a certain protocol...

3
4 SCOTT RICHMOND: Ah.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: A certain standard
6 protocol, and also provide support to local
7 initiative.

8 SCOTT RICHMOND: Right. So that was
9 about clear protocols and procedures to respond to,
10 ah, to, ah, actionable conduct online. Ah, so it's,
11 it's a question of, you know, what happens when there
12 is an issue of harassment, ah, you know, who is this
13 reported to? How does that, that conduct get, ah,
14 remedied? There should be very clear protocols which
15 are outlined so that people know what to do and, ah,
16 and people within government know how to, ah, to
17 procedure when they, when they get these allegations.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

19 And also can you tell us also, ah, hate groups
20 monetize their ideologies online. What effort have
21 been made to demonetize hate crime online? And
22 other, you know, the profit, you know, using the hate
23 crime online how they, you know, generate profit or
24 benefit from that?

1
2 SCOTT RICHMOND: So I, I think you may be
3 referring to the Stop Hate for Profit, ah,
4 Initiative, which, ah, which ADL started with the
5 NAACP and Color for Change. The idea is that, ah,
6 obviously the more users that, ah, social media has,
7 ah, the more successful they are. Um, therefore they
8 are, they're profiting. That, that's the basic idea.
9 And we, our, our premise is that social media is
10 profiting from the use of their platform for hate,
11 which exists on, on their platform, and just to
12 elaborate on what the Stop Hate for Profit Coalition
13 is, ah, so, so this coalition, ah, following, ah,
14 George Floyd, the murder of George Floyd, pressed
15 Facebook to remove hate speech from, ah, its
16 platform. It refused to do so and this coalition,
17 ah, pressed companies, and in the end it was 1200
18 companies, top companies, Kellogg's, Levi's, The Gap,
19 etcetera, into, um, removing their advertising from
20 Facebook, ah, in the months of July and August. It
21 was, ah, a very successful campaign. Ah, when we
22 started the Stop Hate for Profit Coalition we didn't
23 have a single corporation that had signed on to it
24 and, ah, you know, we're talking at the end of June,
25 and very quickly these companies signed on to it and

1 said, you know, we, we don't agree with this. Ah,
2 and that resulted, and, and we had outlined, ah,
3 several, several steps that Facebook needed to take
4 and they began to take those steps, but it was not
5 enough. So then in September we asked for a freeze
6 of Instagram. So Instagram is owned by Facebook and,
7 ah, Instagram is of course populated by many
8 celebrities, ah, led by Sasha Baron Cohen, um, who
9 has been, ah, very vocal on this issue. Huge A list
10 of celebrities had, ah, removed, ah, or had paused
11 their Instagram posts for one day in September. The
12 result of all of this activity over these past few
13 months is that, ah, Facebook decided to implement
14 many more of the initiatives, ah, the most important
15 one being, ah, the issue of, ah, of Holocaust denial.
16 I would say that a lot of this began when feedback
17 made the statement that they, ah, would tolerate
18 Holocaust denial as a, as a matter of free speech.
19 Now that's been reversed. Obviously the question is
20 whether or not social media is going to adhere to
21 this, whether they're actually going to remove this,
22 whether or not they're actually going to label this
23 content, ah, so that, that's been our job, ah,
24 especially our Center on Technology and Society.
25

1
2 Center for Technology and Society is an entity that
3 exists in Silicon Valley. , ah, its staff, ah, this
4 is an ADL entity. Its staff, ah, is composed of, um,
5 software engineers and people who come from that
6 world, who come from all of these different social
7 media companies, and it, they, they, ah, work with
8 social media companies when there are issues that
9 arise, ah, not only to raise the issues with them but
10 to actually help them solve the issues. These are
11 people who can code, ah, these are people who know
12 these systems inside and out, and they work in
13 partnership with the social media companies to, ah,
14 to resolve these issues, ah, in a way that perhaps
15 is, is not so, ah, vocal and visible, but, but
16 certainly helpful.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
18 Mr. Richmond. We know that online hate speech is a
19 very powerful tool also, used by people or groups
20 that are involved in online, ah, crime of hate. And
21 we know also, ah, the first, the First Amendment is
22 a, is a very important part of our Constitution,
23 cherished by many and [inaudible] sacred, you know,
24 ah, right, but, ah, what we can do to combat online
25

1 hate speech without, without ruining the [inaudible]
2 of the First Amendment? Can you comment on that?

3
4 SCOTT RICHMOND: So the First Amendment
5 says that government should not deny, ah, ah, speech.
6 It doesn't say anything about this private company
7 denying speech. Um, it also, um, doesn't mean
8 [inaudible] should support that hate speech. So
9 that's really the, the impetus behind Stop Hate for
10 Profit. Ah, the, the issue here, ah, is that you are
11 a government entity so, you know, you do have to
12 strike that more delicate balance. Ah, it wouldn't
13 be as if, um, this commission would join the Stop
14 Hate for Profit Coalition but, ah, the four points
15 that I had, ah, that I had outlined, I think are very
16 clear and do not run afoul of any First Amendment
17 rights. Ah, the protocols, ah, when there are
18 issues, um, speaking out against, um, biased or
19 bigoted online rhetoric is not a problem, ah, that,
20 that, ah, the government can take stands on those
21 issues. Um, ah, and obviously swatting and doxing
22 are, ah, a major concern, um, and I think it's, I, I
23 don't see it as an issue for the government to take a
24 stand against that, um, especially when individuals
25 are targeted based on their protected

1
2 characteristics, which, ah, you know, all of those
3 laws, ah, regarding discrimination have been, ah,
4 upheld and not considered to be a free speech
5 violation.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
7 Mr. Richmond. I want to thank you and ADL for what
8 you have been doing, you know, for the community and
9 to address, ah, these [inaudible] and I think, ah, as
10 I said before, it will take all of us to work
11 together to protect the people against any form of
12 discrimination and, ah, hate crime and, ah, this is
13 the way we're going to create a better community, a
14 better New York, and a better environment. And,
15 again, thank you very much for what you have been
16 doing and be safe. And, ah, let's continue to work
17 together. Thank you very much [inaudible].

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is there any
20 question from my colleagues for Mr. Richmond?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't see any, um,
22 raised hands.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very good, all
24 right. Thank you, Mr. Richmond. Thank you very
25 much.

1 COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS 44
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Um, at
3 this time if your name has not been called and you
4 wish to testify please raise your hand using the Zoom
5 raise hand function. As there are no raised hands,
6 I'll turn it back to the chair for closing remarks.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Before I give my
8 closing remark, so I know that, I don't know if
9 Michael Cohen would be willing to, you know, answer
10 some questions, if he has some, some information with
11 us. I know that you have been doing [inaudible] to
12 inform the children, you know, about hate crime,
13 online hate crime. Ah, can you, Michael, tell us if
14 you are willing to so, because I've been asking so
15 many questions already. Ah, what the government,
16 what government and teachers and parents can do to
17 protect the children against online hate crime,
18 especially now when the children, ah, spend more time
19 online, you know, with this health crisis, and then
20 you mentioned another thing already, is there
21 anything you want to add in terms of, you know, ah,
22 working, we working together, as in we, government,
23 parents, you know, [inaudible] to ensure that that
24 this very difficult where, where technology is the
25 key, you know, and our children and not only children

1 [inaudible] more time, you know, online, you know, in
2 a remote, you know, system and [inaudible]. Is there
3 anything that you can, you know, share with us in
4 term of working together to protect especially the
5 children?
6

7 MICHAEL COHEN: Sure, and absolutely.

8 Thank you so much. Um, you know, I'll, I'll give you
9 a, a quick story, ah, which I think is, is very
10 indicative of, of one things parents can do. Um,
11 after one of our days that we had a, a workshop in,
12 in a, in a public school in Brooklyn, um, about a
13 year, about a year, year and a half ago, um, we ended
14 up afterwards having parents around to hear from the
15 students that were in those workshops all day, and to
16 get a sense of what their children felt about those
17 workshops, and what they felt about online hate. And
18 the first question that the moderator that we had
19 there, ah, made sure to ask was to the parents who's
20 on Facebook, and so every parent raised their hand.
21 Then they asked the children, well, who are, these
22 are middle school children and high school children,
23 well who are you who are on Facebook, and one kid
24 raised their hand in the entire, ah, amount of
25 students there. The parents were very surprised that

1 none of them raised their hand except for one
2 student. So we called on that student and asked him,
3 well, why are you on Facebook, you're the only one,
4 and he goes well, I need to have a dummy account on
5 there so that my parents think that that's where I'm
6 actually using my social media presence. So part of
7 it was, was that I think parents need to be
8 increasingly diligent as to what the newest
9 technology, who are the newest social media platforms
10 are, what the newest platforms that are trending are.
11 Um, you know, today it's Tik Tok. Ah, on social
12 gaming systems, you know, you had, you know, a year
13 ago everybody, you know, under the age of, ah, 15 was
14 on Minecraft and then that shifted to other games
15 since them. Um, you know, Fortnite and everything
16 else. It's a constant, it's a constant making sure
17 of a parent that they understand the, the constant
18 evolution of what their kids are on and constantly
19 explaining to them what to watch out for and, and
20 monitoring under a certain age. Ah, one of the
21 things that we believe, and very much so, and we've
22 done throughout the city is whenever we've seen a
23 hate crime, ah, that had any, any kind of social
24 media, ah, piece to it, and unfortunately [inaudible]
25

1 a lot of them, a lot of, a lot of the folks that are
2 committing hate crimes right now, they want to, they
3 want to be able to post, ah, you know, a whole write-
4 up of, of why they did it, to try to make sure that
5 they could be martyrs at this point, that they can
6 show why they did it, and social media has allowed
7 for all of these folks who want to commit hate crimes
8 to have a venue to spread their message of hate. So
9 part of what we've done is in those situations we
10 immediately work with members of the council, such as
11 yourself and others, um, and gone into schools that
12 were immediately next to those areas. So, for
13 instance, if I remember, about a year and a half,
14 about two years ago now there was a, ah, swastikas
15 drawn on the parks in, ah, Sheepshead Bay. Um, right
16 away we worked at that point with Council Member
17 Chaim Deutsch and went into Bay Academy, ah, Bay
18 Academy Middle School in Sheepshead Bay and did
19 programs and workshops for the entire seventh grade
20 there to educate them as to, well, what are they
21 seeing, what are they identifying, what are the hate
22 crimes they're seeing? And why is what they saw in
23 their, in their own community as they walk to school
24 offensive, and what is their social responsibility to
25

1
2 do something about it. And a lot of folks that were
3 in middle school when we first asked them what do you
4 think your social responsibility was the second you
5 see these kinds of things online, and their response
6 was I just shut it off right away, to not be a part
7 of it. And we [inaudible] the responses, so you
8 realize that when you shut it off and you don't
9 report it, or you don't talk about it, or you don't
10 tell somebody about it, you're only leaving that
11 person to then attack or bully the next person, or
12 your peer, or your colleague, or your friend, or your
13 sibling. So part of it is is also educating the next
14 generation on what they can actually do as well once
15 they do identify things of that nature.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
17 Michael. Ah, Mr. Richmond, would you like to add
18 some advices in term of...

19 SCOTT RICHMOND: I mean, you know, I, I
20 think our, ah, our neighbor, ah, in New Jersey has
21 much to say on this issue. Ah, the attorney general
22 in New Jersey about a year ago, ah, was made aware of
23 the fact that there's been a, a marked increase in
24 youth bias in New Jersey, especially, ah, in the area
25 of social media. As a result, he asked his

1
2 commission on civil rights to launch a, a study of
3 the increase in youth bias and put together
4 recommendations. ADL helps, ah, a great deal with
5 putting together that study and their
6 recommendations. It was all released in the past
7 month, and they came out with 27 recommendations. I
8 think, ah, when I submit the written testimony I can
9 submit a copy of that report. It's a 100-page
10 report, ah, so I can't, ah, I can't really summarize
11 it too well here, but I think that, ah, their
12 experience with youth bias and, and countering youth
13 bias, ah, is, is very ah, ah, important here. And I
14 think probably the most important recommendation is
15 doing something about, um, ah, training in the
16 schools and making it standard curriculum in the
17 school, they have 1600 schools in the State of New
18 Jersey, which is approximately the same number of
19 schools that, that exist in New York City. Ah, and
20 making anti-bias part of the curriculum, ah, is very,
21 very important. Sensitizing students to when bias,
22 ah, exists, what is bias, how does it manifest
23 itself, and what to do when you encounter bias, I
24 think, ah, is, is a very important, ah, step for all
25 of us to be taking. ADL does quite a bit of that

1 work in the schools, not just in New York but around
2 the country. Ah, we work with the Department of
3 Education in New York City to, ah, to implement that
4 and, ah, that's, that's been a very important piece
5 of our work for decades. But it's not in every
6 school and I think it would go a long way if we found
7 a way to, um, ah, to do that kind of anti-bias work
8 and make it really standard, and anti-bullying, for
9 that matter.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
12 Mr. Richmond. Thank you, and Michael, thank you very
13 much, and, ah, I thank all of the members and the
14 staff of the Civil and Human Rights Committee. Thank
15 you. And let me [inaudible] by saying that, ah,
16 [inaudible] our society as people in the city to come
17 together to do everything that we can do to make sure
18 that that everyone can be respected regardless of
19 race and religion, affiliation, and social
20 [inaudible] situation. Everyone has the right to
21 live in New York City with respect and dignity, and
22 hate crime, online hate crime, is a reality,
23 something very powerful that affects so many people.
24 And when people are affected [inaudible] crimes are,
25 online discrimination, they can be traumatized for

1 life. I think [inaudible] their life, not only their
2 life, but also life of the members of their family.
3 That can break families [inaudible], mental issue is
4 a very, very powerful, powerful, and also they got a
5 situation and any human being and I think that that
6 is all more or less for [inaudible] responsibility,
7 we have all to come together to make sure we combat
8 it, we eliminate any time of online crime or hate,
9 any time of discrimination, online or not, and, and
10 any form of discrimination, and I commend all of you
11 for what you have been doing, and we have to continue
12 to work together. Especially to protect children
13 because we [inaudible] the children as the future of
14 the city, the future of the society. They are going
15 to be what we create on them. They are going to be,
16 you know, the positive citizen, the positive citizen,
17 if we make the effort to instill in them the
18 [inaudible] the respect of people. But if we don't
19 do that then we [inaudible] the other groups to
20 continue to create to empower, to implement, to make
21 it, online hate crime, more powerful and more
22 difficult and so to eliminate. So to all you, thank
23 you so very much. Have a wonderful day, be safe, and
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may God bless you all. Thank you so much. With
that, the meeting is adjourned. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 28, 2020