

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

TASKFORCE TO COMBAT
ANTISEMITISM

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April 22, 2026
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Eric Dinowitz
Chairperson

Inna Vernikov
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Harvey D. Epstein
Kamillah Hanks
Virginia Maloney
Mercedes Narcisse

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

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NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters

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Avroham Malachowski
Auschwitz Jewish Center

Moshe Sporn

Leo Ferguson
Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

Karen Feldman
NYC Public School Alliance

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Stand With Us

Jack Lester

Moshe Davis
Former Executive Director of Mayor's Office to
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Abraham Soussan

Carin Bail

Ira Chazan

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Combat Antisemitism Movement

Natasha Severin

Ross Glick

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

Alyza Lewin
Combat Antisemitism Movement

Arlene Schlesinger

Darina Prokopetz [sp?]

Dora Finns

Irene Segal

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3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Please find your
4 seats. We're ready to begin. Good afternoon. Good
5 afternoon. Welcome to the New York City Council
6 hearing on the Taskforce to Combat Antisemitism. At
7 this time, please find your seats and please do not
8 approach the dais. If you are testifying today, fill
9 out a slip with the Sergeants at the back. And also,
10 silence your electronics. Thank you for your
11 cooperations. Chairs, you may begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, good
13 afternoon, everyone. I'm Council Member Inna
14 Vernikov, Co-Chair of the Taskforce to Combat
15 Antisemitism. First, I would like to thank our
16 Co-Chair, Council Member Eric Dinowitz for joining me
17 in heading up the first-ever hearing of this newly
18 established taskforce entitled Reporting on
19 Antisemitism Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in New
20 York City. I also want to thank the Council's Jewish
21 Caucus and the members of this taskforce for
recognizing the urgency of this moment and for
meeting that urgency with concrete action. I want to
begin by sharing something personal and talk about
why this taskforce is so important to me. I was born

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2 in the Ukraine which was part of the former Soviet
3 Union. My family, like thousands of families I am
4 privileged to represent came to this country as
5 refugees, many escaping institutionalized
6 antisemitism. We know what it looks like when hatred
7 of the Jewish people is tolerated, normalized, and
8 allowed to fester. Jews were forced to hide their
9 identities, conduct weather ceremonies, and Jewish
10 rituals in basements, and change their last names.
11 Unfortunately, this virus of Jew hatred is not new to
12 us. Every generation, there is someone who comes for
13 the Jewish people, and every generation the Jewish
14 people persevere. This country and this city gave us
15 what no other place on earth did. It gave us
16 freedom, freedom to worship and practice as we wish,
17 and freedom to be proud of who we are, freedom from
18 harassment, intimidation, and persecution for simply
19 being born a Jew. And yet, here we are in New York
20 City at a critical moment. With hate crimes and bias
21 incidents against the Jewish community making up over
half of all suspected hate crimes in New York City.
That means the Jewish community experiences more hate
crimes than all other communities combined, even as
Jews make up only 10 percent- around 10 percent of

1 the city's population. In 2025, a suspected
2 anti-Jewish incident was occurring every 26 hours.
3 The average number of anti-Jewish hate crimes per
4 month in New York City has risen steadily from 17
5 incidents per month in 2021 to nearly 29 per month in
6 2024. Antisemitic assaults have increased by a
7 staggering 583 percent over the past five years. So,
8 I ask, how long are we going to allow this to
9 continue? And where do we think this will all lead?
10 I want to be clear, antisemitism is not just a
11 problem for the Jews. It is a rot that spreads
12 through the fabric of a society. I will not allow
13 that same rot to take hold here in this city that I
14 love which has the largest diaspora Jewish community
15 in the world. And that is why I'm committed to
16 calling it out and tackling it no matter where it
17 comes from, the right or the left, from near or far.
18 It's often easy to condemn antisemitism of your
19 opponent or from the other side of the political, and
20 we all do that plenty. But I know that it takes more
21 courage to also stand up and denounce it when it
comes from your own party. We must do so anyway
because it is the right thing to do. There are
hundreds if not thousands of recent incidents we can

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2 list, but just two nights ago there was an incident
3 in my district where a group of masked protestors
4 decided to march outside a day school and a house of
5 worship, intimidate children and their parents trying
6 to pick them up from daycare. Two-year-olds were
7 crying while grown adults with their faces covered
8 shouted at them. Police were present, but
9 unfortunately, no safe distance between the protest
10 activity and synagogue and daycare was created.
11 There was no political activity occurring inside the
12 school. It was mid-day on a Monday when children
13 should feel safe and carefree in their schools. A
14 rabbi was inside the synagogue preparing a boy for
15 his bar mitzvah. Protestors were too cowardly to even
16 show their faces, shouted in a clear attempt to
17 intimidate worshipers and children. Is this
18 acceptable? Do we think this should be normalized.
19 The world once looked away and saw the annihilation
20 of millions of innocent people. This taskforce was
21 created, because we refuse to look away. Our job is
to understand what is happening with hate crimes and
bias incidents in the city, what is being reported,
what is not being reported, why, and what we intend
to do about it. I am proud to chair this taskforce

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2 and proud that this taskforce is comprised of a
3 diverse group of Council Members who may disagree on
4 many things, but who agree that we cannot and will
5 not ignore the virus of Jew hatred. I'm thankful to
6 the city agencies and offices- to the District
7 Attorney's Office who have joined us here to discuss
8 this incredibly critical issue. And I'm committed to
9 making sure that when we leave this room today, we're
10 closer to real answers and real action. Thank you
11 very much, and I would now like to turn over to my
12 Chair, Council Member Dinowitz for his opening
13 remarks.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Chair
15 Vernikov, and thank you for sharing, you know, such
16 personal stories about life in the former Soviet
17 Union. It reminds me of my father-in-law who in the
18 80s took trips to the former Soviet Union to secretly
19 conduct weddings and perform Jewish rituals, and
20 every time he would tell me these stories, I think-
21 you know, you would think that can only happen in a
foreign country. In fact, it was happening in a
foreign country, but during my time as a teacher,
particularly in my last four and a half years of
Chair of the Jewish Caucus I've witnessed not only an

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2 increase in antisemitism and anti-Jewish incidents
3 around New York City, but quite disturbingly I've
4 witnessed too many people in positions of power
5 become increasingly comfortable with staying silent
6 on this issue, comfortable looking the other way,
7 comfortable with providing context or justification
8 to what is blatant hate. That in part, is why I'm so
9 grateful for Speaker Menin's leadership on the issue
10 for the Jewish Caucus, for the creation of this
11 taskforce, and for my co-chair. I'm grateful that we
12 are sitting here raising our voices on an issue that
13 has been ignored by too many people for far too long.
14 It's time for us to confront the scourge of
15 antisemitism and stop it dead in its tracks, and in
16 order to do that, we need to be clear-eyed about the
17 problem we are confronting, and we need to understand
18 just how ubiquitous anti-Jewish hate crimes are just
19 how ubiquitous anti-Jewish bias incidents are. My
20 co-chair shared some alarming statistics about the
21 rise and prevalence of anti-Jewish hate crimes, but
it's important not just to talk about these crimes in
the context of statistics, but what these crimes
mean, because in hate crime, a crime against a Jewish
person for their beliefs, for their shared ancestry

1 is not just an attack on that person, but it's an
2 attack on that people. It harms the entire
3 community. Now, many of these are missed in the
4 news. They become so normalized that they don't even
5 get reported on. But just a few examples: In Brooklyn
6 a man drove his vehicles onto the front lawn of a
7 Jewish institution, attempted to run over yeshiva
8 students and teachers while shouting, "I'm going to
9 kill the Jews." A Jewish woman was sexually harassed
10 with her skirt lifted up and lewd comments made by a
11 perpetrator who stated, "I want to see her ass.
12 She's Jewish." In June of last year, an elderly man
13 was punched in face while hanging posters for Israeli
14 hostages while his attacker yelled, "Free Palestine."
15 That same month, a Jewish man walking home on Shabbat
16 was repeatedly kicked by an assailant who yelled and
17 blamed him for Gaza, and left the man unconscious in
18 the street. In February of this year, a man showed up
19 at a Manhattan synagogue on Shabbat, claiming to be a
20 reincarnation of Adolph Hitler and threatening to
21 kill the worshipers. A child riding a public bus in
the Bronx had a driver turn and say to them, "You
best not be a f-ing Jew." Most disturbingly,
according to the Antidefamation League, 23 percent of

1 anti-Jewish incidents that occurred in Brooklyn,
2 which has the largest number of incidents, have
3 involved children, or places frequented by children,
4 including schools and playgrounds. Close to a
5 quarter of incidents in Brooklyn have been targeting
6 our youth, our kids. How can we remain silent? As a
7 former teacher, I know how crucial it is to confront
8 issues directing children directly and to take
9 decisive action to ensure a better future for them.
10 At today's hearing, we are doing just that. We are
11 here to listen to city agencies and offices
12 responsible for tracking and responding to
13 anti-Jewish incidents and ultimately to the community
14 members who are living this reality. I intend to use
15 taskforce to make sure that my voice as a Council
16 Member, the voice of this City Council leads
17 somewhere meaningful, because throughout our history
18 as people we have seen time and time again the
19 inaction of governments leading to the persecution or
20 eviction of Jewish people and Jewish communities from
21 their homes. And throughout history, they've been
driven away, but today we will not be the government
that sits silently by. We will not be a government
of inaction that allows Jews to be persecuted because

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2 we are looking the other way. I want to thank you
3 all for coming today, to the administration, to
4 everyone here who plans to testify and offer
5 testimony, and I want to turn it back to my co-chair,
6 Chair Vernikov.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Chair
8 Dinowitz, and I would now like to acknowledge my
9 colleagues on the taskforce who are present with us
10 today, Council Member Hanks, Council Member Maloney,
11 Council Member Epstein, and Council Member Gale
12 Brewer. And in addition to thanking members of the
13 administration and other interested stakeholders, the
14 witnesses who are testifying today, I'd like to thank
15 the Speaker's Office and also last but not least we
16 would like to thank our respective staff members,
17 Executive Director of Minority Delegation, Peter
18 Spencer, my Legislative Director, Troy Olson [sp?],
19 my Communications Liaison, Karen Kurson [sp?], my
20 Operations Director, Izzy Weiss [sp?], and Chair
21 Dinowitz's Chief of Staff, Jenna Klaus [sp?], and
Legislative Director, Theo Solter [sp?], as well as,
Sara Liss [sp?], Special Counsel to the Speaker, and
Kristy Dwyer [sp?], Senior Legislative Policy Analyst
for the Office of the Special Counsel who helped make

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2 today's hearing possible. I have to say this is my
3 first time chairing a hearing, and you two are
4 absolutely incredible. Thank you. Before we
5 continue, I would like to remind everyone who wishes
6 to testify in-person today that you must fill out an
7 appearance card which is located on the desk of the
8 Sergeant at Arms near the entrance of this room.
9 Please fill it out even if you've already registered
10 to testify in advance. To allow as many people as
11 possible to testify, public testimony will be limited
12 to two minutes per person. I'm also going to ask my
13 colleagues to limit their questions and comments to
14 five minutes each. Please note that witnesses who
15 are here in person will testify before those who are
16 on Zoom. I also want to acknowledge Council Member
17 Felder who is here with us today. And now we are
18 ready to begin. In accordance with the rules of the
19 Council, I will call on the Committee Counsel to
20 administer the affirmation to the witnesses from the
21 administration who are going to give testimony.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
19 right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
20 whole truth and nothing but the truth, and to respond
21 honestly to Council Member questions?

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UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You can begin when you're ready.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Good afternoon, Chair Vernikov, Chair Dinowitz, and members of the Council's Taskforce to Combat Antisemitism. My name is Michael Gerber and I'm the Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters for the NYPD. I'm joined here today by Assistant Chief Andrew Arias, Commanding Officer of the Detective Bureau's Specialty Enforcement Division. On behalf of Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, we thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding hate crime reporting. Every day, the NYPD investigates a wide range of crimes across New York City. Among the most infuriating and heart-breaking are hate crimes, offenses in which the victim is targeted because of one or more protected characteristics. These crimes tear at the fabric of society, both through the acts themselves and the underlying hatred that seeks to divide us. We must hold the perpetrators accountable and give our support to the victims, both the individuals targeted and the communities of which they are a part of. As part of this critical shared

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2 work, members of the public need clear, accurate, and
3 timely data about hate crime activity. That data
4 shows that while jews make up roughly 10 percent of
5 New Yorkers, more than 50 percent of the hate crimes
6 in the city in the first quarter of 2026 were
7 classified as anti-Jewish. This was true in 2024 and
8 2025 as well. Antisemitism has been a source of
9 violence and destruction for a millennia. It is on
10 the rise globally and it is a reality in our city
11 today. That said, our procedures regarding hate
12 crime reporting are the same across all types of hate
13 crime, and so I'm going to speak about those
14 procedures more broadly. When it comes to hate
15 crimes, there are two data sets that are important.
16 One is the set of confirmed hate crimes. After an
17 incident is reported as a possible hate crime, the
18 NYPD Hate Crimes Taskforce, an elite group of
19 detectives, determines whether the incident is
20 properly categorized as a hate crime under governing
21 law and devotes tremendous resources and expertise to
bringing those responsible to justice. The number of
such confirmed hate crimes cases, where they
occurred, the nature of the crimes, and their
breakdown by the type of bias at issue is all crucial

1 information. This confirmed hate crime information
2 is a data of record for the NYPD when it comes to
3 hate crime activity in the city. It is carefully
4 measured and rigorously maintained within department
5 systems and used for crime analysis. It is provided
6 to the state and the FBI for crime reporting purposes
7 and it is shared with the public through the Hate
8 Crimes Dashboard, NYC Open Data, and the Hate Crimes
9 Summary Reports. In particular, the Hate Crimes
10 Dashboard provides this information in a
11 user-friendly manner and enables anyone to review and
12 visualize hate crime data in different ways. The
13 dashboard includes incident level data regarding
14 every confirmed hate crime in New York City and
15 whether arrests have been made in connection with
16 those hate crimes. I want to emphasize that nothing
17 about how we calculate and track confirmed hate
18 crimes has changed at all. There is a second
19 important data set when it comes to hate crimes, and
20 that is reported hate crimes. That is incidents
21 flagged as possible hate crimes for investigation by
the taskforce, whether because of information
provided by a complainant or witness, observations by
control, incidents that have been flagged by communal

1 organizations or civic leaders or any other reason to
2 refer a case to the taskforce. To be clear, not all
3 of these incidents will be confirmed as hate crimes
4 by the taskforce. As our detectives investigate,
5 they may determine that on the evidence before them
6 and under the requirements of state law, some of
7 these reports cannot be classified as hate crimes.
8 There can be various reasons for this. Sometimes the
9 crime in question is not a specified offense under
10 the New York State Hate Crimes Act, and therefore,
11 even if the crime is bias-based, it cannot be
12 categorized as a hate crime under New York law.
13 Sometimes, our investigation reveals that the victim
14 was not targeted because of a protective
15 characteristic, but for some other reason entirely.
16 And sometimes, it may in fact be a hate crime, but
17 the evidence is not there to support the charge.
18 Indeed, under New York Law, the fact that a victim is
19 a member of a protected class is not legally
20 sufficient without more to charge a hate crime. An
21 individual may perceive that they were the victim of
a hate crime, and they may be right, but the law
requires more before we can bring that charge. Until
this month, the NYPD had not systematically tracked

1 and had never released to the public the universe of
2 reported hate crimes referred to the taskforce for
3 investigation. This set of possible hate crimes is
4 not the data that we rely on for crime analysis or
5 for state and federal reporting purposes. It is
6 distinct from the confirmed hate crime data that
7 reflects the investigative work of the taskforce. But
8 the data regarding reported hate crimes reflects
9 something else. It captures what victims perceive to
10 be hate crimes. That understanding by the individual
11 victim and by the individual's community matters. It
12 can result in pain and trauma that is separate and
13 distinct from whether something qualifies as a hate
14 crime. Tracking and sharing data regarding reported
15 hate crimes expresses the significance of this
16 experience by victims and communities. And trends in
17 reported hate crimes are a way of gauging over time
18 how victims in their communities perceive criminal
19 activity. That is, why as the Police Commissioner
20 announced several weeks ago, we are now reporting
21 monthly on both confirmed hate crimes and reported
hate crimes. This will enhance- this will enhance
transparency and foster public discourse, giving data
not only what constitutes hate crimes under the law,

1 but also on what victims experience as hate crimes.
2 The Department has long prioritized hate crime
3 investigations and the work of the taskforce. But
4 Commissioner Tisch identified a deficiency in our
5 reporting and ordered the Department to correct it.
6 We are proud to take this step which we believe
7 places the NYPD at the forefront of hate crime
8 reporting in the country. I also want to address a
9 change that we made in the beginning of March when we
10 stopped using a data set that we had previously
11 appended to our monthly crime reports. That data did
12 not reflect confirmed hate crimes. It did not reflect
13 reported hate crimes. It as numbers pulled from an
14 informal tracker that had a mix of reported hate
15 crimes that had not been classified by the taskforce
16 and confirmed hate crimes. These were hodge-podge
17 numbers resulting in clarity about nothing. When the
18 Police Commissioner learned how this data was being
19 generated. She directed the Department to stop
20 reporting in this way. That step, like the decision
21 to start sharing reported hate crime numbers as well
as confirmed hate crimes was taken at the direction
of Commissioner Tisch. As is typical of hate crime-
of crime data reporting more generally, these changes

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2 in hate crime reporting were not the initiative or
3 direction of anyone at City Hall. We firmly believe
4 these were the right decisions and we stand by them.
5 That said, we should have done a better job
6 explaining what we were doing and why we were doing
7 it. And on reflection, we should have made the
8 changes at one time rather than in two steps.
9 Anti-Jewish hate crimes are a scourge on our city.
10 The NYPD is proud of its daily relentless efforts to
11 solve these crimes, achieve justice for victims, and
12 keep New Yorkers safe. Thank you for the opportunity
13 to speak with you today, and we look forward to
14 answering any questions that you may have.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: We're calling on
16 the DA's Office to testify. Thank you.

17 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Alright,
18 good afternoon. I want to thank Council Member Inna
19 Vernikov, the Chair, and Co-chair Eric Dinowitz, for
20 the invitation to speak at this inaugural testimony.
21 I am Eric Gonzalez. I'm the District Attorney of
Brooklyn, and I am proud to stand with each of you
confronting antisemitism in our city. As all of you
know, Brooklyn is home to the largest Jewish
population of any county in the United States. More

1 Jewish people live in Brooklyn than anywhere else in
2 the world outside of the state of Israel. That's a
3 source of pride and it carries significant and
4 serious responsibility. Jewish life in our city and
5 in Brooklyn should be lived openly, proudly and
6 safely. No one should feel afraid riding the subway,
7 wearing their kippah, sending a child to yeshiva,
8 going to shul, visiting friends, opening a
9 Jewish-owned business or celebrating and gathering
10 with friends and neighbors. When that fear takes
11 hold, it harms far more than the immediate victim, as
12 Council Member Dinowitz said, sends a message to an
13 entire community that they are being targeted in the
14 very place they call home. The numbers show how
15 urgent this remains. In 2025, Brooklyn recorded 239
16 hate crime incidents. Of those, 148, nearly 62
17 percent, were anti-Semitic. Antisemitism was by far
18 the largest category of hate crimes we confronted in
19 Brooklyn. In the first quarter of 2026, anti-semitic
20 incidents made up more than half of all the hate
21 crimes reported in Brooklyn. Behind those numbers
are real people and real fear, parents explaining to
children why a swastika was painted near their park,
families wondering whether it's safe to walk to the

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2 synagogue, students and seniors feeling singled out
3 or afraid to wear the Star of David, and community
4 members unsure whether what happened to them should
5 even be reported. My message to the Brooklyn Jewish
6 community is simple and direct, please report all of
7 these incidents. Let the police determine whether
8 this incident is in fact a crime and make the legal
9 determination. Even when a case cannot be
10 prosecuted, reporting helps us identify patterns,
11 deploy resources, support victims and sends the
12 message that this hate will not be ignored. That is
13 why one of the first decision I made as District
14 Attorney was to create New York City's first
15 standalone Hate Crime Bureau. We staffed it with
16 experienced prosecutors who work with the NYPD Hate
17 Crime Taskforce from the earliest stages of an
18 investigation, because hate crimes require careful
19 evidence gathering. They also require earning trust
20 with the communities we serve and a full
21 understanding of the harms that these incidents
cause. And I should also add that hate crimes unlike
any other crime, the District Attorney must prove in
court the motive behind the crime. In every other
crime, it's significantly- all you have to do is

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2 establish the identity of your offender and the fact
3 that that crime was committed. In the practice of
4 the enhancement of a hate crime, the people have to
5 show beyond a reasonable doubt that the motive was
6 bias of a protected class in whole or in substantial
7 part. I understand that prosecution alone cannot
8 solve this problem. Our office works with community
9 leaders, schools, yashivas, the shomrin [sic],
10 hatzolah [sic], and many others including the ADL.
11 Our partners help us try to educate young people and
12 pursue accountability in these cases that prevent
13 future harm. I should say that this Office of Hate
14 Crimes in my- in the DA's Office in Brooklyn, was
15 created before the City Council and the Mayor's
16 Office provided funding to the other District
17 Attorneys to have dedicated Hate Crime Bureaus. I've
18 asked the Speaker and I've testified during funding
19 that Brooklyn should also have dedicated funding for
20 a Hate Crimes Bureau. We do not receive any
21 dedicated funding. That money would go directly to
fight hate crimes. But I want to make it clear to
the Jewish community, whether or not the funding is
given, I am committed to taking these threats against
this community very seriously. We will continue

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2 using every appropriate tool to protect the Jewish
3 New Yorkers and really every community from the
4 scourge of hate crimes. Thank you for the
5 invitation, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, DA
7 Gonzalez. I'm not going to ask some questions.
8 After that, I'll pass it over to my co-chair, and
9 then I think we'll pass it over to some of our
10 colleagues because have to leave by one. DA Gonzalez,
11 I just want to say that you were invited here today.
12 You did not have to be here, and we invited all five
13 District Attorneys. You are the only one who showed
14 up. We really appreciate it. I think it goes to show
15 to the type of a public servant that you are, that
16 you prioritize transparency and that you take these
17 issues that we're here today to discuss very
18 seriously, and we very much appreciate it.

19 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Could you talk to
21 us a little bit about the process of how the District
22 Attorney's Office handles hate crimes from the moment
23 they're referred from the NYPD?

24 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Sure. It's
25 an important piece of how we handle hate crimes, very

1 specifically, and you know, we try to work as closely
2 with the New York City Police Department as possible,
3 from the very inception of when a suspected hate
4 crime happens. Part of the effort is, is when an
5 incident takes place in a precinct, we would ask to
6 be notified of a suspected hate crime that has taken
7 place so that we can make sure that the dedicated
8 hate crime prosecutors and our social workers are
9 immediately made aware. The police will conduct
10 their investigation. We will serve as a sounding
11 board for them when needed in terms of what type of
12 evidence we're seeking to enhance the case. But
13 also, very specifically, we want to make sure that
14 we're reaching out to the victim at the earliest
15 possible stage to say the services that we provide in
16 our office, including much of the social work that
17 victims of these horrific crimes require. And then
18 when the case comes in, we work very specifically
19 with the detective that's assigned the case to make
20 sure that the witnesses are needed for grand jury and
21 all the other evidence is made available, often
video. Every single hate crime that's elevated to a
felony is presented to a grand jury in the county as

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2 long as we believe we have the right person in
3 custody.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Can
5 you tell us if the Brooklyn DA's Office has ADAs and
6 other staff who understand sensitivity of Jewish
7 culture and customs, and how many would you say?

8 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Yeah. So,
9 my office, you know, we have over 560 attorneys.
10 There's a large segment of both attorneys and staff
11 who are Jewish. There's an affinity group in the
12 office for Jewish staff who are often involved in
13 Jewish life in this city and in my office. But in
14 terms of very specifically dealing with victims of
15 crime, you know, the office makes sure that we have
16 people who speak Hebrew, speak Yiddish. It's on our
17 website. There's information, public information
18 made available in, you know, many different
19 languages, and we have people who are very
20 specifically involved- social workers who deal with,
21 you know, Jewish culture and our understanding of the
different traditions, customs that are necessary to
make people feel comfortable, set of cultural
competency. We also have a chaplain, Rabbi Joel
Friedman [sp?] who comes into our office very

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2 specifically to talk about holiday traditions, when
3 witnesses are available, when they can't answer the
4 phone, when they can't sign a piece of paper because
5 it would be in violation of religious traditions or
6 customs. We try to do the best that we can to make
7 sure that the prosecutors and staff understand, you
8 know, the needs of our community, for example the
9 Sabbath, so that they know when a witness would be
10 able to be spoken to, when they'd be able to be
11 brought downtown. And just like everything else, we
12 have people who are just Jewish who really care to
13 make sure they're a welcoming face in the office when
14 the victims come in and have that trauma and want to
15 feel like they can talk to someone in their own
16 language or who understands their traditions.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Could you talk to
15 us a little bit about the challenges of prosecuting
16 hate crimes, and specifically antisemitic hate
17 crimes?

17 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Yeah. I
18 think- I started to mention some of the challenges.
19 You know, as some people don't understand, there is
20 no crime of a hate crime. That's not a penal law
21 charge. It's a sentence enhancement. And so what we

1 do is we look at the incident that took place. Is it
2 eligible to be enhanced as a hate crime, and what we
3 are looking for- so, you know, if someone is being
4 selected or the crime is being committed because of
5 bias, we have to be able to show beyond a reasonable
6 doubt that the motivation in whole or substantial
7 part was created because of the bias, right? So,
8 people being selected and targeted, because they meet
9 protected status or is this a crime that the
10 motivation was simply a dispute that had nothing to
11 do with their protected status. And we work very
12 closely with the detectives. We have analysts in our
13 office that often will look at an accused person's
14 social media to see what they're doing on social
15 media, if they're espousing antisemitic rhetoric to
16 see whether or not that's a motivating factor. As I
17 testified earlier, hate crimes requires
18 specialization in the prosecutors because it is the
19 only crime where the District Attorney must prove
20 beyond a reasonable doubt that the reason that the
21 reason that crime was committed was because of this
bias. In every other crime, you just have to
establish a crime was committed and the identity of
the perpetrator beyond a reasonable doubt. Here, we

1
2 have the additional burden of trying to understand
3 what motivated the these attackers for doing what
4 they did.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. I will
6 now pass it over to my co-chair, Council Member
7 Dinowitz, and we'll come back to you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Co-chair
9 Vernikov. Deputy Commissioner Gerber, how are you? I
10 want to talk a little bit about what you spoke about
11 in your testimony. You know, someone reports
12 something to the NYPD, and then you say it's
13 investigated by the Hate Crimes Taskforce. But
14 there's a step in between that I want to talk a
15 little bit about, and that's the reporting officer.
16 If someone goes to a precinct to report a crime, or a
17 patrol officer comes to the scene of a crime or an
18 alleged crime- correct me if I'm wrong- it is the
19 reporting officer that then on the spot would
20 determine whether it should be referred to the NYPD
21 Hate Crimes Taskforce.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, not
exactly. So, someone's making a criminal complaint
or patrol's responding to a scene. There's some-
they're being told about criminal activity, potential

1
2 criminal activity, right? If they perceive it's
3 maybe a bias incident, maybe bias-related- yeah,
4 they're not making a determination at this point. Is
5 this a- you know, is it a hate crime? We're not
6 close to that yet. Then you go up the chain. So, the
7 key is getting a supervisor on scene, then the duty
8 captain is getting called, right? So, the duty
9 captain plays a crucial role in this. It's an
10 executive, right? A captain who- so they're coming
11 to the scene, possible bias. Okay. Now, they're
12 making all sorts of notifications. They're notifying
13 up their chain, CO, borough commander. They're
14 notifying Community Affairs. They're notifying the
15 Hate Crimes Taskforce, and that's going to set in
16 motion several things, right? So, now Hate Crimes
17 Taskforce is going to investigate. Separate and
18 apart from that investigation, you also have
19 Department executives and Community Affairs are aware
20 that this happened and in a position to respond.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I want to pause.
18 Because you're talking about, you know, a few steps
19 down the line. I'm talking about the moment someone
20 feels they're a victim of an active bias. At that
21 moment, it is up to the responding officer to

1
2 determine whether to bring it up the chain of command
3 or not, and- I just- you know, I just want to read
4 from the website, and if it's wrong or we need
5 clarity, this is why this hearing is important. It
6 says the responding officers will provide whatever
7 immediate assistance is needed and begin the
8 reporting process. If the situation is deemed to be
9 a possible bias-motivated incident, the NYPD Hate
10 Crime Taskforce will be notified. So, by reading
11 that, I would assume it's the responding officer or-
12 or if someone goes to a precinct, the person whom
13 they're reporting, that would deem whether it is a
14 possible bias-motivated incident. Is that accurate?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, what I
16 would say is, obviously, it has to get flagged as a
17 possible bias incident by somebody.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right? So,
20 that determination, whether it goes over to Hate
21 Crimes Taskforce and it being- you know,
22 notifications are being made, it has to be made by
23 the Duty Captain, but you are right. You are right
24 that initially somebody in some context has to flag

1
2 this. Oh, this is a possible bias incident that's
3 going to require notifications.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. So, and I
5 want to pause there, because that's an important
6 point of, you know, the reporting timeline, the
7 reporting process. Some of the reports we've gotten
8 to our office is that people have reported things to
9 various precincts, and the person said, oh, that's
10 not really- you know, I'll take it down. It's not
11 really a hate crime, though. It's not really a bias
12 incident. And they will fill out the report as such.
13 And the Division of Criminal Justice Services which-
14 from the state, also says if the investigating
15 officer does not identify a bias motivation or does
16 not reflect a bias motivation in the official
17 incident report, the incident will not be reported to
18 DCJS as a hate crime. And so what I'm concerned
19 about- I'm concerned about a lot of things. But right
20 now with these questions is sort of that first step,
21 that responding officer or the responding- or the
officer who's taking in the report, that if we've
received news to our office or complaints to our
office that the officer at that point determined it
wasn't an active bias, it's not going up the chain.

1
2 It's not going to the taskforce at all for them to
3 determine it.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Alright, so
5 to the extent you have someone, a desk officer, an
6 officer on patrol who is discouraging someone from
7 reporting a hate crime, is being dismissive, is- you
8 know, the person's saying, hey, I believe this was
9 bias and is ignoring that- I mean, what you're
10 describing frankly is misconduct, right? Like,
11 that's not what's supposed to happen. You know, and
12 what I would say if there are reports like that that
13 come to your office, they should be referred to us,
14 to the Internal Affairs Bureau for investigation,
15 because- I mean, it's not even- these are not
16 particular the hate crimes, right? To the extent a
17 member of patrol, a member of the department is in
18 any way discouraging hate crime reporting or not
19 taking hate crime report accurately, like- again,
20 like we would investigate that internally, and if
21 that was substantiated, the person would be subject
to discipline. So, I mean, to the extent what you're
describing is someone who- you know, when a person
comes forward and says- describing a possible bias
incident, saying they were the victim of a bias

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2 incident, and then somehow being dismissive of that,
3 that is totally unacceptable and is not what they're
4 supposed to be doing. It's not what we stand for.
5 And again, I think if there are complaints of that,
6 they should be referred to us so that IB can
7 investigate.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But there's also
9 the reality that perhaps the responding officer or
10 the person at the precinct may not be able to
11 identify, and this- just to let you know, this is my
12 last question for now. We're going to turn it over
13 some committee member questions, and we'll come back.
14 So there will be more on this. Don't worry. I can see
15 you were very worried in your face. But to what- it
16 may be the case that that responding officer or the
17 person at the precinct just frankly doesn't know,
18 can't identify- doesn't have the cultural competency
19 to be able to have that same conversation that the
20 victim is having. To what extent is the NYPD
21 training all of its officers to properly identify and
to have the cultural competency specific to
antisemitism which as we've all noted make the vast
majority of hate crimes more than any other group
combined- to what extent is every single officer

1
2 receiving that culturally competent training and
3 identifying acts of antisemitism?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Great
5 question. I'm going to turn it over to Chief Arias
6 to-

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Thank you very
8 much, Chair. When it comes to the training of
9 uniformed members of the service in regard to
10 identifying a possible bias incident, the procedure
11 as dictated by our NYPD Patrol Guide is talk to them
12 in the police academy as recruit officers. It is
13 reinforced to them upon promotion to Sergeant,
14 Lieutenant and/or Captain to explain the specific
15 roles from initial uniformed member of the service
16 being contacted by a complainant all the way up to
17 reporting to a supervisor and then the Duty Captain.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You said talk-
19 during their training, talk to them. What does that
20 look like? Is that a 30-second conversation? Is it
21 a Zoom? It is a in-person-

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: [interposing] No,
23 it is a-

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] What
25 does that training look like?

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: It is a specific
3 block as part of the curriculum as outlined by the
4 New York Police Department in its recruit training
5 process, in its supervisory leadership development
6 courses to Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain, and also
7 there is- there are outlines provided by the Hate
8 Crimes Taskforce to members of the Detective Bureau
9 whether in the Hate Crime Taskforce or not and simply
10 in detective squads and other investigative units
11 through the criminal investigator.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And is it part of-
13 is antisemitism specifically part of it, or is it
14 general, you know, hate's bad reported?

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: It is all
16 protected classes that could be part of a bias
17 incident.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I'm
19 going to turn it over-

20 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ:
21 [interposing] Chair Dinowitz- I just also want to
say, you know, I've supervised the entire office, the
dedicated Hate Crimes Office. I have an Executive
Assistant District Attorney, David Kletsick [sp?],
who also helps supervise these cases, and we also

1
2 learn of incidents, and sometimes during an arrest
3 that come that we don't think are flagged and when,
4 you know, Chief Arias was the- in charge of hate
5 crimes, we very clearly speak to him and say, hey,
6 you know, we see this pattern or this case looks like
7 it could be further investigated, and they've always
8 been very willing to take a closer look. So, I think
9 just to respond to if an officer misses it, if it's
10 at least- if there's an arrest made, the District
11 Attorney's Early Intake Bureau will look at it, and
12 sometimes we'll make a referral back to the Hate
13 Crimes Taskforce and say hey, did you guys see this
14 case? Did you know about it? And they'll assign a
15 detective. And I think that also is one of the key
16 reasons why it's important for the District Attorney
17 to learn about all these incidents as quickly as they
18 take place.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for
16 that. Thank you. I'm going to turn it over to
17 Council Member Hanks for questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you, Chairs.
19 First, I want to take a moment to thank Chair Inna
20 Vernikov and Chair Dinowitz for putting together this
21 hearing and putting together this taskforce which I'm

1
2 a proud member to be a part of. So, my question is-
3 so I've been listening, and you know, as a woman of
4 color living in Staten Island, I mean, I know what it
5 means to be discriminated against. I know what it
6 means if someone is being biased towards me. But I
7 think one of the biggest challenges that we're seeing
8 here is like how do I identify what a hate crime is?
9 And then the second challenge is reporting the hate
10 crime. Then law enforcement determining if it even
11 rises to be a hate crime. And then we haven't even
12 gotten to the point of actually prosecuting them or,
13 you know, settling when it is a hate crime, right?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure. So,
15 when we're talking about a hate crime, right?
16 Really, we're applying New York State Penal Law,
17 right? So, that's a- it's a question under state
18 law. There's obviously the evidentiary piece, right,
19 the investigative work of the detectives, and then,
20 you know, applying the law to the evidence that we
21 have. You know, the DA was speaking in terms of
proof beyond a reasonable doubt. You know, for us,

1 the question for an arrest is probable cause, right?
2 And as the District Attorney said, you know, the
3 difference for hate crimes as opposed to other crimes
4 is it's not just probable cause that a crime was
5 committed and probable cause this person committed
6 it, the probable cause that it was a hate crime,
7 right? So, it's a whole other layer. And in making
8 that determination, there are a few pieces. So, one
9 piece is that only certain crimes can qualify, can be
10 the basis for a hate crime arrest or prosecution.
11 There's actually a list of offenses under New York
12 State Law. It's a long list. Dozens and dozens of
13 what's called specified offenses, but it is not all
14 crimes. So, one question is, is the criminal conduct
15 in question a specified offense under New York State
16 Penal Law? And if it's not, then just as a matter of
17 law, it can't be a hate crime, it's not possible. I
18 should add, there are a few special statutes that
19 have- in addition to the hate crime statute, there's
20 a few statutes that have specific references also for
21 bias. But if none of that's applicable, you can't
charge a hate crime. You can't arrest for a hate
crime. Then assuming that it could be a hate crime,
the question is whether the person was victimized in

1 whole or in substantial part because of one or more
2 protective characteristics, or the perception of that
3 characteristic, right? So, someone attacks someone
4 because they believe they're Jewish- even if the
5 person's not Jewish, it doesn't matter. They- that
6 was their perception. That's enough. I think what
7 is important, though- I mentioned this in the
8 testimony before, and this is a really important
9 point, that as a matter of New York State Law- and
10 it's not case law, it's actually- it's in the
11 statute. The identity of the perpetrator and the
12 victim alone cannot be the basis for a hate crimes
13 arrest. So, if someone's attacked let's say on the
14 street, even if the person is visibly Jewish, that
15 without more, with nothing more, cannot be the basis
16 for a hate crimes arrest. And that person, of
17 course, may perceive it that they were attacked
18 because they're Jewish. They may be right, but as a
19 matter of law, there has to be some additional
20 quantum of evidence showing that their Jewishness or
21 perceived Jewishness was the reason why they were
attacked. I mean, in terms of the investigation,
again, building off what the DA said, you know, the
detectives are doing really fantastic work looking,

1
2 turning over every stone, both with regard to this
3 incident itself like talking to the complainant,
4 talking to witnesses, pulling video, and then more
5 broadly because of this motive pieces, learning
6 everything they can about the suspect. Sometimes you
7 have evidence on- you know, in the incident itself
8 that shows you bias, right? The person used
9 antisemitic slur. That's incredibly powerful
10 evidence, obviously. Sometimes, you don't have that
11 in the particular incident, but you have, for
12 example, you have social media. You have statements
13 the person made to an unrelated individual, something
14 else, some other thing that says, oh, this is someone
15 who is acting because of their anti-Jewish views.
16 So, that's a sort of overview of how they're going
17 about this.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you so much.
19 That was- you know, we're still trying to get to that
20 point where not only does law enforcement understand
21 what a hate crime is, what a bias incident, also what
is the public- what is the public's understanding.
Everybody here is on social media, so you see it. I
mean, it's palpable. It's- again. So, that leads me
to like, so how do you balance like free speech and

1
2 concerns when it comes to hate crimes. I mean, we
3 just passed a package of bills, and there was a bit
4 of contention there because, you know, we're not
5 talking about minimizing or going against free
6 speech. However, when you're screaming in front of a
7 church, there's no space for that. So, you know, how
8 do we engage with law enforcement? It's a
9 multi-question. How do we engage with law
10 enforcement, but more importantly, how are we really
11 identifying what a hate crime is, what is a bias
12 crime is? How are we educating the public and also
13 educating the folks who- I may report something
14 because I feel it was a hate crime. It's happened.
15 And the officer that I was reporting it to doesn't
16 feel it was. So, you even have that piece. So, if
17 you can just talk a little bit about that.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah, sure.
19 Sure. There are a few different pieces to that. So,
20 one, these are- the question whether something is-
21 whether something is a hate crime, the question
whether something is a crime at all, as opposed being
protected speech, right- these are legal questions.
The Legal Bureau works very, very closely with the
Hate Crimes Taskforce, and actually soemthign we did

1
2 a few years ago, which I'm very proud of, is that we
3 actually have an attorney essentially like embedded
4 with the Hate Crimes Taskforce. So, obviously, the
5 entire Legal Bureau is available to field questions,
6 right, all day and night, but we actually have an
7 attorney full-time. Her job is just this, to work
8 directly with the detectives on their cases, to
9 answer questions. That's incredibly valuable, right?
10 Just in terms of having that- knowing detectives,
11 being much more in the weeds of the cases, that's a
12 very valuable thing, and again, we- obviously, the
13 Legal Bureau, we're happy to answer questions more
14 generally, but having that system in place, really it
15 points to the centrality of the legal analysis here
16 and the sensitivity around it, and also how close the
17 link is between Hate Crimes Taskforce and their work-
18 and the work of the Legal Bureau.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Council
16 Member Hanks. Council Member Maloney?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: Thank you to our
18 Chairs. Thank you, Chair Dinowitz and Inna Vernikov.
19 I really appreciate this taskforce. As was
20 demonstrated in your testimony, there is clearly a
21 rise in antisemitism and disproportionate hate crimes

1
2 affecting the Jewish population. But I was wondering
3 if you could speak a bit to the trends in 2025 and
4 2026.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure. So,
6 let me start with some data, then we'll see wherever
7 you want to go. If you look in let's say the first
8 quarter of 2026- right. So, you have total hate
9 crimes in the first quarter of 2026- the total number
10 of hate crimes, 143. The number of anti-Jewish
11 crimes 78. So again, we're talking- we're talking
12 over half. You know, we have seen that sort of north
13 of 50 percent number for several years now. You
14 certainly- one thing you see in the data, you know,
15 you see a spike in 2023, and that is- I think part of
16 that clearly is post October 7th. There's no doubt
17 about that. You see a spike. Bias incidents,
18 confirmed anti-Jewish hate crimes post October 7th,
19 and then you see that- so it goes up in 2023. Really
20 I would say, you know, roughly constant in 2024.
21 We're a little bit up in 2024, and a little bit down
in 2025. So, I think we had that spike. I think it
has sort of leveled off in a way, but leveled off
with anti-Jewish hate crimes being more than 50
percent of the hate crimes in the city. So, leveling

1
2 off is a good thing. It is, but then you have a
3 status quo that is deeply troubling.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: And we said- as
5 you pointed out in your testimony, 10 percent of the
6 population-

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
8 Right, exactly.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: making more than
10 50 percent of the hate crimes. And between January
11 2025 and January 2026, is it true that we're seeing a
12 big increase in antisemitism hate crimes, and if so,
13 what do you attribute that to?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, yeah, I
15 want to speak about that. So, I'm going to use- and
16 we've talked about how they're- I want to use the
17 confirmed hate crime numbers, because again, that's
18 the data of record. You do see in January of 26,
19 relative to January 2025, a very significant spike.
20 Here's the thing I- here's the thing I want to flag.
21 In January of 2025, for whatever reason, the number
of anti-Jewish crimes, confirmed anti-Jewish hate
crimes, was unusually low. So, just to give you some
sense of this. In 2025, looking at the confirmed
hate crime data, your average number of anti-Jewish

1
2 hate crimes was 27 per month. In January of 2025,
3 that number was 16. So, the average was 27. The
4 number was 16 in January, 24 in February, 36 in
5 March, 43 in April, and then it goes back down again.
6 Now, you know, these fluctuations month-to-month, I'm
7 not sure they- they don't necessarily tell you very
8 much. Obviously, you can have something happening in
9 the world or in the city that causes a spike. Some
10 of this is just fluctuations in crime data over time.
11 They see this in so many crimes. Here also, because
12 the numbers are- they're not huge. You're going to
13 have huge percentage swings with small shifts. So,
14 what you sort of see in the first quarter of 2026-
15 the first quarter of 2026 relative to the first
16 quarter of 2025, anti-Jewish hate crimes flat. If
17 you look at January you see this huge spike. But
18 again, part of that is because for whatever reason
19 January 2025 was an unusual one.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: Thank you for
explaining that. I wanted to also dig into the shift
in reporting.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: And curious, if
3 this is something you're doing for all hate crimes or
4 just anti-Jewish hate crimes?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: All hate
6 crimes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: All hate crimes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: And it is- I
9 think this is important, our procedures in terms of
10 how we respond to hate crimes, how we track data, how
11 we report data, that's the same for all protected
12 characteristics. We're not distinguishing under
13 procedures or how we report data. We're not
14 distinguishing between different protected classes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: And of the
16 reported hate crimes, the percentage that are later
17 confirmed, I'm curious for that number and if there's
18 a difference across different types of hate crimes?
19 And then I'll yield back to the Chairs.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure. so, I
21 think we have that. I'll give that to Chief Arias. I
22 don't know if it's- go ahead.

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: So, when we look
24 at the 2025 calendar year data, we can see that

1
2 approximately 78 percent of that reported universe
3 resulted in confirmed hate crimes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: And that's
5 across all hate crimes, or just-

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: [interposing]
7 Affirmative.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: for anti-Jewish?

9 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Across all hate
10 crimes.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council
12 Member Maloney. Council Member Epstein?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you,
14 Co-chairs. Thank you for holding this hearing today.
15 It seems like the city strategy right now in
16 preventing violence seem to not be working. We've
17 seen an increase in anti-Jewish hate crimes. Really
18 interested in figuring out what we're all doing to
19 reduce the amount of hate incidents. Really figuring
20 out what evidence-based programs are in place, what's
21 being funded and what's not, to make sure that we're
spending the appropriate amount of fund to do that.
I'm wondering from the NYPD what prevention
strategies do you have in place to education to

1
2 prevent these anti-Jewish hate crimes and the
3 increase?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, I guess-
5 I mean, part of the answer to your question. It may
6 not be the full answer, but part of the answer is I
7 think it's important, right, when I was saying before
8 about how even if you have a potential bias incident,
9 whatever happens with the Hate Crimes Taskforce-

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: [interposing] You
11 know I only have a few minutes, so if you could get
12 to- yeah.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Council
14 Member, real quick, yes. It goes to Community
15 Affairs, and that's really important, right? So,
16 Community Affairs has a role in this separate and
17 apart from the Hate Crimes Taskforce, right, reaching
18 out to communities to understand what's going on, to
19 understand the needs, to see what's happening, to see
20 how we can help separate and apart from the
21 investigatory and-

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, Community
23 Affairs you're saying has resources to do prevention
24 work right now?

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: They conduct
3 outreach in areas where hate crimes have occurred, at
4 the institutions in and around those locations with
5 the victims based on policy and procedure, and it's
6 centralized to the Commanding Officer of the precinct
7 of occurrence and those hate crime officers.
8 Furthermore, we also liaison and share the incidents
9 of hate with the Office to Prevent Hate Crimes, and
10 you- they act as a resource, as a partner agency to
11 the work that we do.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, I'm going to
13 turn to the District Attorney. Like, what resources
14 does your office put into doing some of this
15 prevention and community building that we're talking
16 about here?

17 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Yeah, it's a
18 great question. Our Hate Crimes Unit in my office,
19 again, it's led by a woman, a senior prosecuting
20 named Kelly Muse [sp?]. Chief Muse will attend
21 schools or do presentaiotns. We talked a lot about
such an increase of hate crimes committed among
children. We see that population of young people
engaging in acts of bias have been growing. There
needs to be way more done in the schools. We work

1
2 with organizations like the ADL that does training,
3 but the- one of the biggest drivers of this violence
4 are juveniles. There's been an increase in that, and
5 of course, people with significant mental illness.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Okay, so more
7 resources. You're saying you're not able currently
8 to get into all the schools in the borough, but with
9 additional resources you could expand your prevention
10 work.

11 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: I think
12 there's a big key is dealing with our young offenders
13 in this area.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: I'm going to
15 turn to the Mayor's Office, and what resources do the
16 Mayor's Office put into place to kind of get in front
17 of this? Obviously, this growth is a concern for all
18 of us, and we want to figure out what we could be
19 doing to do more prevention. What resources do you
20 currently have? What resources do you need to get in
21 front of this and prevent some of these hate crimes
from happening?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you,
Council Member, and thank you, Chairs Vernikov and
Dinowitz, for having me here Phylisa Wisdom, the

1
2 Executive Director of the Mayor's Office to Combat
3 Antisemitism. I'm available here for Q&A. So, the
4 Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism is just under a
5 year old. When it was first launched it was with a
6 staff of one. This mayor has committed to increasing
7 the capacity of this office to be a staff of three to
8 four, depending where we land in the Executive
9 Budget, and our role by Executive Order is to
10 identify and develop efforts to eliminate
11 antisemitism and anti-Jewish hate crimes, coordinate
12 non-law enforcement responses to antisemitic
13 incidents, and liaise with the Jewish community and
14 law enforcement and other agencies to improve
15 reporting and victim services. So, our role here is
16 really as a convener, to identify policy and
17 programming for antisemitism prevention as well as
18 coordinating sort of agency-wide response and
19 liaising with the community.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And has that
17 changed from the prior administration's role on this?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes. As of
19 now, I mean we're talking very small numbers here,
20 but it's a 200 percent increase in staff capacity,
21 and we aim to grow again by another staff member or

1
2 two, and some things are the same. So, we have an
3 interagency taskforce that will continue to convene,
4 but as far as policy and programming that we aim to
5 build, that we hope will be evident to everyone here
6 and continue to share with this taskforce what that
7 work will look like.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: What work would
9 this taskforce do to support the work to do more
10 prevention? Are there things you're looking for now
11 that we could be doing to help you prevent the rise
12 in antisemitism?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We're not yet
14 ready to say specifics of what we need. We're right
15 now kicking off a listening tour where we'll be
16 talking to Jewish communities and leaders and
17 advocates from across the five boroughs, representing
18 the full diversity of the Jewish community and at the
19 conclusion of that listening tour, we will have a
20 framework in mind of how we want to use this office
21 for the rest of the term, and as well as asking for
investments in programming.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And I would
encourage you to reach out to some Jewish elected
officials here who would-

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: [interposing]

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Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: We'd love to engage with your office to hear directly from us about what we're seeing in our communities to respond to some of the rise in antisemitism.

6

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Absolutely, and we will be doing that very soon.

7

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COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Okay, thank you.

9

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Looking forward.

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CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Council Member Brewer?

11

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you to the Chairs and to everyone here. Just picking up on Council Member Epstein, I know that to the credit of the Speaker, she got funding to have eighth graders go to the Holocaust Museum which is a wonderful museum. So, I said okay, let me find out who has gone. So, I have 12 middle schools in my district and only four have attended. So, again, that's not the only way to prevent, it's certainly a good start. It's more of a one-off. But I think what I'm saying is, I've been across the city. People are not taking

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1 advantage of programs that could be supportive.
2 Here's one that's free. I obviously will badger the
3 other eighth graders, and they will go. But the
4 issue is in general I want to pick up on that we're
5 not doing enough. So, my question is do we know- I
6 know to the credit of the District Attorney, you said
7 young people, people who are mentally ill, obviously
8 anti-semites. Is that the general rule? Do we have
9 a listing kind of who has been committing? In my
10 district, it's young people. That's what I see. So,
11 I'm just wondering, do we kind of know who the- I
12 guess I would the knuckleheads, antisemites and
13 mentally-ill who are doing this, and is that the kind
14 of realm that we're trying to educate and work with?
15 Because prevention is what we have to focus on. Who
16 are the knuckleheads? Who's doing this? And the
17 antisemites, who's doing it?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: While we don't
19 specifically the data of who are perpetrators are by
20 suspect classification, we are able to see anecdotal
21 as we review the universe of those arrested that they
are precisely who you've described. There are youth.
There are mentally-ill, and there are people who

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2 perpetrate this crime for the worst possible motives
3 of antisemitism.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: And when we
6 examine that universe, we rely upon the criminal
7 justice system to see the prosecution through, which
8 the gentleman to my right's credit is too tenacious.
9 We relay that information certainly and utilize the
10 criminal justice system so that there is greater
11 education from indictment to prosecution, prosecution
12 to sentencing, and we rely upon the programs as you
13 described to augment and educate those perpetrators,
14 and maybe the greatest fear of their universe as
15 well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And the
17 other question- it's also global. Do we think that
18 there are national issues, be it the war, whatever's
19 going on in the Middle East, or has this number even
20 before the wars been as high as it is now? In other
21 words, are there global events that are increasing,
or has it just- a continuation of hate?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I mean,
it's- I'll start it. It's a hard question to answer
in a sense.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All my questions
are hard, Michael Gerber.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right,
4 right. That's true. It's a fair point. I could say
5 a few things. One, and some people have already said
6 this, right? Antisemitism is as old as time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Correct.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [inaudible]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Correct.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I think the
data certainly shows, clearly shows, you know, a
11 shift post October 7th. You see that in the years
from-

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
13 Correct.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: You see that
15 jump and that effect. I guess to the extent other
16 things going on in the world or in the country, you
17 know, affect antisemitism, antisemitic hate crimes,
18 you know, anecdotally that makes sense, right? Like,
19 you would think that what's happening in the world,
20 happening around people is going to affect behavior,
but it is very hard to measure, right? It's hard to
isolate these things in a statistical way.

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2 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: I would just
3 jump in. I would also say that Brooklyn has a gem of
4 an institution, the Brooklyn Jewish Children's
5 Museum, that I also think would be a great place to
6 take our students. My experience as a prosecutor
7 was- you know, I saw the numbers increasing in 2018.
8 We created the dedicated Hate Crimes Unit. During
9 COVID we saw a tremendous rise in anti-Asian hate
10 fueled by, you know, things that were said in public
11 about the origins of that, and we saw a tremendous
12 rise. After October 7th, we've seen the rise, and of
13 course, national issues definitely impact the
14 commission of these crimes in part because so many of
15 them are being committed by people who are vulnerable
16 with mental illness and our children. And I think
17 that we will continue to see that as a growing
18 problem as, you know, these issues are in the paper
19 or in the media every day. But the focus has to be
20 not just on the prosecution which we all agree must
21 happen. We have to have much more resources put into
prevention.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Council Member
Felder?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you very
3 much. First, I just want to apologize that there's a
4 hearing next door and many of us are trying to juggle
5 as usual. A few things, first of all, you know,
6 there are a lot of people that should be- that aren't
7 here today. You know, we're honored to have you and
8 come [inaudible] the people who are here that may,
9 you know, be testifying later. One of the-
10 [inaudible] a constituent of mine and many of my
11 colleagues know is the- if you start a project with
12 this many years ago, Ruthy Lipenstein [sp?] who's a
13 publisher as well as the hamo dia [sp?] publication,
14 and has been fighting for years. There's a state law
15 that mandated education, Holocaust education in the
16 public schools, and anyone- you don't need to know.
17 That's not happening. This is not a condemnation or a
18 [inaudible] at you. I'm just mentioning because we
19 talked about- we talk about prevention and other
20 things that still the facts, that the schools, public
21 schools and schools throughout New York State are in
violation of state law. They may be in violation of
many state laws, but that's one in particular that
would be very helpful if young children at a young
age would get the education, that that would be

1
2 helpful. That's number one. Number two, I wanted to
3 ask the Mayor's representative whether she ever-
4 whether she ever experienced personally antisemitism
5 in some way.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you,
7 Council Member, for the question. Yes, I have. I
8 think that it is- I mean, first of all, I guess I'll
9 say I'm here in my capacity as the Executive Director
10 of the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism. So, I
11 think what's most important is my committed to my
12 safety and belonging-

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: [interposing] I'm
14 not- I have five minutes.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Sure, yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I asked you a
17 simple question, and I'm not here to, again, to
18 condemn or anything. But it's very important I think
19 to understand if you can just- if you want to say
20 that's your role and you don't want to answer, that's
21 fine as well.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: No, I would
love to answer. I was just about to.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Yeah, yeah.

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2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, as a
3 Jewish New Yorker I experience antisemitism in ways
4 that are somewhat different than more visibly Jewish
5 New Yorkers who obviously experience the lionshare of
6 person-to-person antisemitism, but of course, walking
7 through the subway- I'll give you an example.
8 Yesterday, there was something at 42nd Street at NQR
9 line that said death to all Jews. so, as a Jewish
10 person, of course, I experience that as threatening
11 and scary and troubling. And in my capacity, I have
12 someone I can email when I see that and try to get it
13 taken care of. But yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Okay. Okay. I
15 don't- you know, it's not something that I like to
16 claim, but it's clear, I don't- I think as one of you
17 mentioned earlier, it's obviously clear that the
18 reason the rise in Brooklyn is so significant is that
19 the- is that in Brooklyn particularly people look
20 like me. It's not hard. You know, other than the
21 old unfortunate joke about somebody thinking that I'm
Amish and not Jewish. But that's the fact. That's
the fact. And particularly, women are- you know, if
they're walking around do not, you know, clearly-
even Orthodox Jewish women many are- it's not clear.

1
2 The last thing I want to mention is that there is a
3 new trend, and this has been going on recently, and I
4 think it's very, very unhelpful and contributes to
5 the increase in hate. Many elected officials
6 throughout the city when they talk about hate against
7 Jews, the next thing they say is Islamophobia,
8 although there's no competition, again, about hate.
9 This is not something. But the numbers don't make
10 sense. For example, years ago if somebody had said
11 that hate against Jews and Islamophobia, the gay
12 community rightfully would be up in arms, rightfully,
13 to say are you kidding me? The numbers that the
14 Police Department has, there are greater numbers of
15 hate against members of the gay community than issues
16 of Islamophobia, and automatically-

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Thank
15 you, Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: that is a
17 contribution unfortunately to some who can't control
18 themselves that contributes. All I would say is that
19 when people talk about it, when elected officials
20 discuss hate, if they- even the Commissioner who's
21 doing a great job, it's been a new trend.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Council
3 Member.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Yeah. You're not
5 going to shut me up, but you know, you can- all I'm
6 suggesting-

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing]
8 Never.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: but I'll shut-
10 you allowed somebody else to finish their thought.
11 So, all I'm suggesting again it's not a competition
12 and it's not towards the Mayor's person either, but
13 when elected officials talk about hate- if they want
14 to talk about it in order of number, that's fine. If
15 they want to talk about it in some order, other
16 order, that's also fine. But putting those two
17 together, especially since October 7th, does not help
18 at all.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. You can
20 answer.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I actually
22 didn't hear a question, but I appreciate that
23 feedback. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That's fine. Let's
25 move on to- back to DA Gonzalez. DA Gonzalez, what

1
2 do you think regarding the changes in the way that
3 NYPD is reporting hate crimes?

4 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Well, to-
5 Council Member, I'm actually being informed of the
6 practice today more clearly. I have no issues with
7 the Police Department making sure that their numbers
8 are accurate. I think it makes sense for the public
9 to know accuracy of incidents. You know, it's also
10 important, and I think Commissioner Gerber said this,
11 that you know there are things that get reported that
12 may not meet the penal law definition of a hate
13 crime, but these bias incidents have to exist
14 somewhere, and as long as the Police Department is
15 also, you know, publishing the number of reported
16 incidents that they've looked at, I think that it
17 satisfies us. My only concern as District Attorney
18 is that obviously we're the people who are given the
19 authority under the law to charge that these
20 incidents also be given to my office so that my
21 attorneys can look at it. Because there have been
times where we've upgraded the charge where the
police did not find a hate crime, but we presented to
a grand jury and a grand jury did find a hate crime.
And so we want to make sure that we're part of that

1
2 decision making process. But accuracy is a good
3 thing for the City of New York.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. And if
5 you know, how many hate crimes did you prosecute say
6 in the last five years, and how many of them were
7 antisemitic hate crimes?

8 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: I would have
9 to look at the numbers, but of all the incidents that
10 I described and think this sometimes is a shocking
11 thing when I have to, you know, say it out loud.
12 There were 35 arrests last year of all the hate
13 crimes that were committed in Brooklyn that were
14 antisemitic. So, you know, there were 35 arrests and
15 then 10 juvenile arrests which my office no longer
16 sees. I would have to go back and do the math, and
17 I'm happy to report it back to you, Council Member.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That's fine. If
19 you could provide that information to us, we would
20 appreciate it.

21 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: sure.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And I know you
touched on this earlier, but what do you think is
fueling this disproportionate hate crimes, these

1
2 disproportionate hate crimes against the Jewish New
3 Yorkers?

4 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ:

5 Unfortunately, I think there's a lot of bias and a
6 lot of hate, and you know, it's quite honestly I
7 think people are emboldened to act out, and you know,
8 it requires the combination of education, prevention
9 and enforcement, and all three are important, but
10 when we deal with the young people- we saw that
11 terrible incident where I know that the Speaker Julie
12 Menin went into Brooklyn with the swastikas all over
13 the playground. Those are 15-year-old children
14 painting, you know, dozens and dozens of swastikas.
15 And so there has to be more done on the prevention.
16 I've seen it as District Attorney on some of these
17 cases. When I confront young people that have been
18 arrested, they don't understand the history. They're
19 unaware of the meaning of a lot of these incidents,
20 and quite frankly I think social media fuels a lot of
21 the hate.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: You mentioned you
19 believe they're emboldened to act out. Is there a
20 reason you think that they're emboldened to act out
21 more now than before?

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2
3 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: I think it's
4 social media. I think that people try to get a
5 reaction, and hearing the coverage of the war and
6 after October 7th, there's been a lot of information
7 put on social media that is inaccurate and causes
8 people to want to speak out, and sometimes that
9 causes them to act out as well. And we just want to
10 make sure that we hold folks accountable for what
11 they actually do, but we want to make sure that we're
12 not ignoring young people and making sure that they
13 get accurate information. And I think you heard
14 Council Member Felder say, like the education piece
15 that's not happening is a critical piece of why I
16 think antisemitic violence is on the increase,
17 because young people actually don't the know the
18 history.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you.
20 And you mentioned you have a Hate Crimes Bureau at
21 Brooklyn DA's office, correct?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: I have an
unfunded bureau which I'm hoping that the City
Council will help-

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2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Let's
talk about that.

3 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: The City
4 Council will help fund.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: What- can you tell
6 us exactly what this bureau does?

7 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Our bureau
was created when I first was elected, because I
8 started to see an increase in hate crimes in the
9 country. In most offices- so we had the first
10 dedicated Hate Crimes Bureau in New York City. in
11 most offices, ADAs prosecute hate crimes and they may
12 prosecute other types of cases. I thought we needed
13 people who specialized understanding the evidentiary
14 challenges that we've already discussed in these
15 cases, but also because these folks need to be in the
16 community whether it be the LGBTQ community, the
Jewish community, whatever community has to- you
17 know, has to feel protected. They need to be in the
18 community doing the work with the community, earning
cultural competence and quite honestly, that bureau
19 needs to speak the different languages and represent
20 people so they feel comfortable reporting. And our
bureau has been charged with not just prosecuting
21

1
2 cases, but trying to prevent cases. So, we've been
3 in schools. We do community functions. We're out
4 presenting with the Police Department and community
5 organizations, and you know, the fact that every
6 other DA's office has now been funded to do this, I
7 think the people of Brooklyn deserve to be funded
8 with a dedicated unit, and I'll add, more resources.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: How many staff
10 members does the bureau currently have?

11 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Currently,
12 there are six dedicated prosecutors, and four, you
13 know, analysts and clerks. So, 10 in right now, and
14 we need more.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And can you talk a
16 little more about the funding? How much funding are
17 you currently getting? Who are you getting it from,
18 and how much funding you think you need and
19 requested?

20 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: When I
21 testified at the City Council Public Safety
Committee, I asked for \$1.5 million to create a
dedicated Hate Crimes Unit that would be funded like
some of the other- like the Manhattan DAs office or
the Queens DA office. We should have similar

1
2 funding. We receive \$50,000 from the City Council
3 to fight all hate crimes, \$50,000. And other offices
4 receive, you know, in excess of a million.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And we can just a
6 little bit about what the DA's office you'll be doing
7 with that funding within the bureau.

8 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Yeah, so we
9 would be doing a lot of the prevention work, working
10 alongside with our partners in the community. We
11 would be hiring more senior investigators. You know,
12 a lot of this work in a successful prosecution really
13 does take deep dives into who the accused are. We
14 would have analysts and we would have paralegals and
15 clerks, and we would be able to hire more senior
16 prosecutors to do this work. Right now, hate crimes
17 as they're growing in our city, as we see it was
18 eight percent down this year so far, but that
19 increase has not seen more funding for additional
20 staff to handle the surge in hate.

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
much. Those are all my question. DA Gonzalez, thank
you again, for-

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: [interposing]
Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: being here today.
3 I'll pass it over to Chair Dinowitz.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much,
5 Chair Vernikov. We've heard mention from in various
6 ways youth, a lot about youth. Does the NYPD or the
7 DA's Office or the Mayor's Office to Combat
8 Antisemitism in any way disaggregate hate crime data
9 based on age?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah, I
11 don't- we surely don't have it here, and I don't
12 think that we track it that way. We obviously track
13 many things with hate crime data, but I don't think
14 we track it in terms of age of the perpetrator.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. Well, I
16 don't believe it's published on your hate crimes
17 dashboard.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Definitely
19 not.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Nor in the Open
21 Data.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Is there any
reason why we couldn't disaggregate that data by age
range, especially if you're here testifying saying

1
2 that there are differences between youth and
3 education and school youth who are perpetrating hate
4 crimes, and adults, people who are out of school.
5 NYPD, DA's Office, Mayor's Office oppose
6 disaggregating that data by age range?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I think we
8 could. I would obviously want to check with our data
9 people to make sure we're not missing something, but
10 yes. I don't see why we could not going forward track
11 the data that way. I understand your point. I take
12 the point. And again, I would want to confirm it to
13 make sure we're not missing something in terms of how
14 data comes in, how we do it, but point is well-taken.

15 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: And I would
16 support it completely to do that, because part of the
17 conversations I have as District Attorney is when
18 we're dealing with the community and crime victims,
19 having to explain to them when a case comes to the
20 DA's office versus when it's sent to Family Court.
21 There's a lot of confusion around who the prosecuting
agency is, and so if it's aggregated by age, the
community could understand what percentage of cases
actually go to the DA's Office versus family court or
handled in those kinds of adjudications.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah. And as we
3 have all mentioned multiple times, a hate crime feels
4 more of a community- an attack on a community. And
5 so there- I believe communities often feel different
6 about kids than they may about adults. And so that
7 is an important data point in us addressing hate
8 crimes and knowing how to attack it. But I do also
9 want to talk about, you know, that information that's
10 shared with the communities. Right? Right now, on
11 the hate crimes dashboard they list out type of hate
12 crime whether it's Jewish, anti-gay, anti-Black, all
13 of that. It indicates whether an arrest was made.
14 What it does not indicate is the disposition of a
15 case once an arrest is made. And that's, to my
16 knowledge, public information, but it is not publicly
17 available on the dashboard. What steps need to be
18 taken to include that really critical information
19 about what happens to the person after they're
20 arrested on the dashboard so entire communities can
21 have peace of mind or know what next steps they have
to take as a community?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Totally
20 understood about the importance of that piece. No
21 debate there. The slight challenge I guess I would

1
2 say is, what you have on the NYPD hate crimes
3 dashboard is NYPD data. That is data that we
4 maintain and we track and all that. When it comes to
5 court dispositions, that's not our data, right? So,
6 that's going to be- we look at different ways.
7 Obviously, different prosecutor's offices will track
8 what they're doing and then OCA will obviously have
9 their data. I want to be clear, of course, on a
10 one-off basis, you know, detectives should know
11 what's happening in their cases. I'm not suggesting
12 we don't know what happens in individual cases. In
13 terms of the rigorous tracking of data, right, those
14 dispositions is not- that's not NYPD data. That's
15 going to be court data.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But is the data
17 easy enough to get? You may not own it on your
18 website, but is it publicly available, or is it
19 difficult to get from a DA's office?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. So-

21 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: [interposing]
I'll jump in just because sometimes it's not as
gratifying data because cases take so long, right?
So, an arrest from 2025, there will be recorded
disposition that- at the end of that year, because

1
2 the case kicks in to 2026. Sometimes the person is in
3 mental health, but it may last to 2027. So, reported
4 dispositions often run a year, a year and a half
5 after the commission of that crime. What we try to
6 do in our office is publicly report out. There's
7 dashboards, and I think the- during the public
8 reporting part at the end of the fiscal year- I'm
9 sorry, at the end of the calendar year, every March,
10 the DA's offices report data including disposition
11 data. So, we could try to- what I can- what I'll
12 commit to doing is making that data more easily
13 accessible to the City Council. But all that
14 information is available on the computer except for
15 juveniles. And I think when juveniles become really
16 frustrating to our community members- they're not
17 allowed to know the perpetrator's names or the
18 outcomes of the adjudications that happened in those
19 cases, and I think that is a real black hole in the
20 reporting structure.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Sure. I mean, that
18 speaks to the importance of disaggregating by age
19 range, but it sounds like we have two agencies here
20 who aren't opposed to sharing the information. So,
21 you hold the data. You report on other data. But if

1
2 the data were, you know, were available in an easily
3 digestible form which it seems like the Brooklyn DA's
4 already providing but is willing to do the work to
5 provide more. Is the NYPD willing to include it on
6 their dashboard and in their-

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
7 Certainly open to exploring. Certainly open to
8 exploring it. I do want to emphasize, it is a little
9 more complicated. First of all, when you have- I'm
10 not the data expert. But when you have other
11 entities, different DAs offices, they're- would not
12 shock me. It is not necessarily tracking the same
13 systems in the same way. Connecting that in, like
14 linking between each of the DA's offices, right-
15 linking that data and their- may be differences, I
16 don't even know. In their various systems-

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing]
16 Sorry, it seems very complicated. How many hate
17 crimes were there in 2025?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: 2025, 566.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay 556?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: 166
20 confirmed hate crimes.
21

1

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I can't hear you.

2

I'm sorry.

3

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: In 2025,

4

there were 566 confirmed-

5

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: 566.

6

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah.

7

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You know, we're

not talking about large data sets here. 566- we're

8

talking about only five District Attorney's offices.

9

I mean, you may be talking about a little manual

10

labor, but you know, the numbers, we're not talking

11

about number of 311 calls. We're not talking about

12

number of calls. We're talking about 566. And so,

it just seems like a number that is very, very doable

13

if the data is published once per year.

14

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: If I may,

though?

15

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah.

16

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: And again,

17

I'm not saying no. I'm just saying, I think, it may

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be a little more complicated than you're describing,

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and I think one of the issues here, and the DA

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referred to this, it's the five DAs, but also

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juvenile stuff which is not- it's not insignificant.

1
2 That's different. Like, that's going to be through
3 Corporation Counsel, and that data is going to be,
4 again, because it's juveniles, that is going to be
5 more complicated. So, again, I'm not- I'm not saying
6 no. It's not my place to say no. I understand where
7 you're coming from, Council Member.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: If the data were
9 available and- is the NYPD willing to publish this
10 data alongside the arrest, the arrest information
11 that is already existing on the dashboard so
12 communities can easily see and identify and digest
13 the information?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I will
15 certainly take it back.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I will
18 certainly take it back.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: This looks like a
20 real place where we can enhance reporting. We have an
21 NYPD and a DAs office that seems very willing and
able to do this. I think we have to do the work to
get it done. But I'm pleased to hear that the data's
collected and that the NYPD's willing to do it. We'll
work out the details.

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I will take
3 it back to the Police Commissioner. We will
4 certainly explore it.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Just jump in for a
7 second. Is that 566 reported or confirmed?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, that's
9 confirmed. Over 2025, there were 566 total confirmed
10 hate crimes in New York City.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And do you know
12 how many of them were anti-semitic?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Anti-Jewish
14 or anti-semitic, 327.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, it's 58
17 percent.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Director Wisdom,
19 how are you? She has a mic. I want to talk a little
20 bit about the office that you now head.

21 Congratulations on this really important office
that's addressing antisemitism, the hate crime that
makes up more than any other hate crime combined.

And again, as I mentioned in my opening, all the
other things that aren't hate crimes, but force a

1
2 Jewish person to hide their Star of David or take off
3 their yamika, or not participate in school and
4 activities, your work is really important. And I'm
5 interested to hear a little about the work that
6 you're going to do. So, can you talk a little bit
7 about what stakeholders you've already engaged with
8 in your listening tour and how many listening
9 sessions you've done?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Sure. Thank
9 you for the question. I agree it's very important and
10 I'm honored to be heading this office. So, I started
11 this role on March 4th, so we're really kicking into
12 gear right now. The first group that we engage in
13 our office was the Interagency Taskforce to Combat
14 Antisemitism. So, that's representatives from across
15 agencies who've been deemed the appropriate person to
16 think about that agency's response to antisemitism
17 and prevention. Those have been one-on-one meetings
18 as well as a poll [sic] group meeting that will
19 continue to engage and think through thought
20 partnership and best practice sharing and talking to
21 each other about trainings and what works and also
learning from each other what's happening. For
example, Parks, how they deal with antisemitism is

1
2 very different than the Office of the Medical
3 Examiner or New York City schools.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, you've met
5 once, and what's your schedule? Is it quarterly,
6 annually? What's the schedule?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We're
8 identifying that now, what's the best- what's the
9 best thing to do. I mean, each of these agencies deal
10 with this in such different ways that it might make
11 sense to have smaller groups that sort of have more
12 robust antisemitism programming more frequently than
13 those, for example, like the Office of the Chief
14 Medical Examiner or Department of Finance who don't.
15 So, we're in conversation with them about what makes
16 the most sense right now, and happy to report that
17 back when we have that information. We've also- the
18 listening tour just kicked off last week, so we're
19 just getting that underway and still scheduling with
20 stakeholders across the city. The plan is to have
21 those in sort of small groups. I don't think we're-
we're sort of following the process of the Whitehouse
National Strategy to combat antisemitism where they
met with a thousand people from across the country,
again, in sort of groups to get feedback and ask some

1
2 specific questions related to the expertise of those
3 people and some general questions about antisemitism.
4 So, some of those have been scheduled. Many of them
5 are yet to be scheduled. We're still having
6 conversations across communities about who should be
7 in those and making sure we're not leaving any stone
8 unturned. That will go on over the next couple of
9 months, and the plan is then to release sort of a
10 public document to- with like a focus group report,
11 essentially, although it's not a formal focus group.
12 Just to talk about takeaways and what we've learned
13 and what that- how that's going to influence the
14 programming and policy that we plan to implement over
15 the next four years.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And when is that
14 report due?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: When is it
16 due?

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Or when is the
18 goal for releasing that report?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We have said
20 before the High Holy Days, so I think it depends kind
21 of how many conversations-

1

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing]

2

Depends on the moon?

3

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: It could be, you know, late summer I think is the goal.

4

5

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay.

6

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: But we haven't committed to a specific day, but obviously, you will all be the first to receive it.

7

8

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. You know,

9

one of the things important to this council, but

10

particularly me, as a former teacher, and even in

11

some of the testimony- a quarter of antisemitic

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activity are against children. A quarter of the

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Anti-Jewish hate incidents have target children or

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places where children frequent, including our

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schools. So, what is your plan to address inside and

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outside the school to address a quarter of Jewish

17

hate incidents?

18

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, for the

19

six weeks that we've been operational, the beginning

20

of this has really been trying to understand just as

you are what this means, who this is affecting, what

this looks like specifically. We are really devoted

to addressing this serious problem with a scalpel and

1
2 not a sledge hammer. We want to be really thoughtful
3 and strategic and ensure that the interventions we're
4 suggesting in partnership with the agencies. Like in
5 this case New York City Public Schools or private
6 schools around the city, and are informed by the
7 lived experience of Jewish New Yorkers. So, I'm not
8 prepared to say yet what we're going to do, because
9 we haven't yet had enough of these conversations. But
10 we are aware of this data as well and taking very
11 seriously the responsibility to think about hate
12 crimes and biases incidents affecting children
13 wherever they gather. And we'll again report back
14 once we have ideas on policy and programming related
15 to that.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And we have- let's
14 say- a pretty talented mayor when it comes to social
15 media and communication. It's pretty good. But
16 you're- the Mayor's Office- the Mayor's Office to
17 Combat Antisemitism doesn't, like have a website to
18 be up?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, we didn't
19 inherit a website or any social media in the previous
20 administration, but we are in talks internally about
21 what is the best communication channels for the admin

1
2 and certainly exploring. We want a way for the
3 public to get in touch with the us are- so, expect
4 that to be operational very soon do learning how to
do that.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I would add do
6 that social media. I mean, to be fair, you didn't
7 inherit a good social me- I mean, it may have been
8 fine, but I think everyone understands that Mayor
9 Mamdani's social media was communicated with a lot of
10 people very effectively. And so the same question
11 about the website I have for social media which is,
12 is your office or the mayor prepared to have social
13 media campaigns to address- as we've discussed the
high number of youth that are perpetrating these acts
of antisemitism?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, as per
15 social media for our office, that's something that's
16 still being explored. Again, what are other mayor's
17 offices doing and what are our sort of
18 administration-wide comms practices? As for the
19 mayor's social media, I think that you've seen that
20 he's been both responsive to antisemitic incidents as
21 well as talked about prevention and the importance of
combatting antisemitism including, for example, last

1
2 week when he went to the Queensborough College
3 Kupferberg Holocaust Center, and then you know,
4 posted about that on social media and the importance
5 of "Never again." I imagine that he will continue to
6 both respond to incidents and use his platform for
7 prevention. I don't know the specifics of his social
8 media plans, though.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. I know
10 you've been there for six weeks, but I would just
11 imagine that part of your strategy is a robust social
12 media campaign and having a website.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: If we learn
14 from-

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Is it
16 part- is having a website and-

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: [interposing]
18 Oh, having a website, yes, but again-

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] A
20 robust social media campaign, is that part of- again,
21 given the strengths of this administration, is that
22 part of your strategy?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Certainly
24 using all communications channels to talk about
25 prevention of combatting antisemitism, yes. As far

1
2 as a robust social media campaign, that has not yet
3 been planned, but it's certainly among the many
4 things that we're considering as we talk to Jewish
5 New Yorkers and hear about what they want and need
6 from this administration.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah. I would
8 repeat, given the number of incidents which we don't
9 know, but we know a large number are youth. Also,
10 given the number of victims that are youth that need
11 to ensure at every step of the way they see that our
12 city is there for them or that- or potential
13 perpetrators are learning from our city, I think it's
14 critical that you are using the strength of this
15 administration leveraging those to actually- to
16 combat antisemitism, to make that a robust part of
17 your office. And this is a question for all of you.
18 We touched on this with the training, but I know we
19 wanted to move on to other questions, but I really
20 want to kind of dig into it which is the training.
21 And you mentioned it was part of- antisemitism
training was part of the curriculum that all officers
undergo, but then you said- you kind of listed all of
them. Like, you know, kind of lumping antisemitism
into the same legal bucket as other forms of hate.

1
2 And it is true, when they are prosecuted, you are
3 looking at antisemitism from a legal perspective, but
4 there's more than the legal perspective. There's the
5 cultural competency that needs to exist from our
6 patrol officers which I know you mentioned
7 misconduct, but it is the case that patrol officers
8 turn people away or tell them it's not antisemitism
9 or just say, oh, that's political speech, it's not-
10 and it gets under-reported, or people feel like they
11 can't report to the NYPD, and they're discouraged
12 from reporting to the NYPD. So, I just want to be
13 very clear, is when officers are trained on what acts
14 of bias look like, is it general acts of bias, or is
15 it, hey, this is how the Jewish community is
16 experiencing antisemitism and here's what you need to
17 understand about it that may be unique?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Thank you very
19 much for the question, Chair. Anecdotally, because
20 it's not a rote curriculum when answering your
21 question, when we find precincts with spikes
specifically of hate crimes, and obviously because of
the numerical value associated with anti-Jewish
incidents, we'll speak to that. Our dedicated
attorney for the Hate Crime Taskforce will go and

1
2 conduct roll call training in those precincts where
3 we see a spike of antisemitic incidents. And as a
4 result, that would speak anecdotally to the core
5 competency of understanding the basis of both a bias
6 incident and a hate crime, and what antisemitism
7 looks like in that specific command in and around the
8 crimes that were reported at that time.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, it seems
10 responsive. Like, what do you- I mean, just waiting-
11 it's sort of- it's a weird order to do it in too,
12 because what it sounds like you're saying is it's
13 responsive. When you see a spike in hate crimes, you
14 respond by going and doing some sort of training. I
15 am interested in what that looks like as well, but if
16 it's going under-reported, it may not trigger the
17 need for that training to come in.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I want to
19 push back on that a little bit. I mean, you say
20 responsive. I would say tailored to what's happening
21 in the community. I think that's actually really
important, right? Hey, are things that we're seeing.
Here are things to watch for. I think that's
actually- that's particularly effective. That's not
some abstract general thing. Here are the

1
2 possibilities. Hey, here's what we're seeing on the
3 ground. Here's what you need to watch for. I think
4 that's actually- that's actually really important.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, I do- I just
6 do want to say- I don't think I cited this before.
7 That in 2022, the Office of Prevention of Hate Crimes
8 did a report on hate crimes and one of what it spoke
9 of was under-reporting. And one of the things it
10 said is some of the following reporting barriers were
11 identified by respondents trying to report and not
12 being taken seriously was one of the things that they
13 reported. And so we have people reaching out to our
14 offices. You have a report from New York City saying
15 that this is an issue. And so, what is the barrier
16 for making sure that when they get trained for the
17 first time, they're getting these core cultural
18 competencies, and you're not- and you can also be
19 responsive, which is good. That's what we want. We
20 want an NYPD that's responsive. But we don't just
21 want them to be responsive. We want them to be
proactive. What are the barriers to ensuring the NYPD
officers get this training so that they take people
seriously and understand that people have to be taken
seriously?

1
2 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Well, I would say
3 that what is not a barrier is the training that's
4 provided at the police academy. It's provided to
5 sergeants upon promotion, lieutenants upon promotion,
6 and captains upon promotion. What we do is we augment
7 those four areas that I've explained with what you
8 just labeled to be reactive training at the roll call
9 level from our Hate Crime attorney. And the question
10 you have may not be specific to simply anti-Jewish. I
11 could be applied to the whole universe of hate
12 crimes, because obviously under-reporting is
13 something that's a conversational piece across every
14 protected class, and so it's imperative for our front
15 line officers and sergeants and lieutenants and
16 captains to understand that when any incident
17 regardless of whether it is a bias incident, a hate
18 crime or a police-related incident is addressed by
19 the officer having that conversation with the
20 complainant or victim with professionalism and a
21 grasp of their experience.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. I mean, I'm
19 not sure- I'm not sure I quite grasp everything. And
20 by the way, just to be clear, you know, we're here to
21 address antisemitism, because it is the number one

1
2 reported hate crime. Just to be clear, it's not to
3 the exclusion of other people's as you've sort of
4 suggested, right? Like, every people deserve to be
5 seen and heard, and I'm- what I'd love to hear from
6 the NYPD is just an affirmative yes, we train our
7 officers to identify all sorts of cultural
8 competencies so we can hear communities in which we
9 were not raised, that we understand, and that we are
10 not under-reporting, that we are pushing it up the
11 ladder to make sure that at the start that it is
12 reported.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Well,
14 Council Member, I mean, we- this is obviously
15 incredibly important to the Department which is why
16 at every stage we're training on this, right? In the
17 academy, every time someone gets promoted, right,
18 that reflects- we have to make choices about
19 training, right? We can't train on everything. The
20 fact that we train on this time and again and again
21 and again speaks to how important this is, how core
this is for the Department. The fact that we have a
taskforce that does just this shows how important it
is to the Department. No matter what- and then- and
then when we're seeing spikes, the further- I would

1
2 say very like tailored follow-up, doing this at roll
3 calls, we actually see as a whole of department
4 focused on exactly what you're talking about. Now, to
5 the extent officers still fall short, that's a
6 problem. And I really- if there's a complaint to
7 your office, you should please bring that complaint
8 to us so we can address it appropriately both to make
9 sure that the victim is heard, and that- that
10 underlying incident is addressed, and so that we can
11 take appropriate disciplinary actions, because that
12 matters, too. There's a piece of it, right, that
13 we're going to train on this time and again. It's a
14 priority for the Department. And to the extent
15 individual officers for whatever reason are falling
16 short, there are consequences. That matters too.
17 But I really want to emphasize that we do take this
18 incredibly seriously. We do train on this, and
19 there's a training- again, like, really at every core
20 opportunity that we have.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, I- the
18 question isn't intent. But I don't think anyone up
19 here is saying like, yeah, let's have more
20 antisemitism. The question is the actions being
21 taken, and that's why we're all here, and I think

1
2 we've done a- you know, clarified a number of really
3 important things, a number of next steps that can
4 address this. I do want to turn it over to Council
5 Member Epstein, but I think it is important for us to
6 just know not whether or not training is being given,
7 but what it looks like. And I think that is a clear
8 distinction. And I'm going to turn it over to him,
9 but I think that's a further conversation that we
10 need to have to make sure that we know officers are
11 being trained in the proper meets cultural
12 competencies before they have- you have to go in and
13 be responsive. Council Member Epstein?

14
15 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you,
16 co-chair. Just to DA Gonzalez, like, can you tell us
17 what your conviction rates have been on these hate
18 crimes?

19
20 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: As I
21 indicated, often a hate crime will last for a long
time.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Right? So,
when you look at year after year, conviction rates,
they don't actually align with the number of
incidents that took place for that calendar year, but

1
2 they're very high. They- I can- they're very high,
3 and-

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: You say they're
5 very high. Of the cases, more than 50 percent you
6 see convictions?

7 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Well, I was-
8 what I was going to explain is that, you know, in a
9 number of our trials, right, we take a lot of pleas
10 and of course are always convictions, but if we're
11 doing a trial, there's time where a jury may not find
12 the hate crime, right? So, there's an assault that
13 takes place. We charge the assault as a hate crime,
14 but they convict on the underlying assault. And so
15 the overall conviction rate is exceedingly high,
16 probably- and I don't want to give you a number of
17 the hand, but it's in the high 90 percent, but they
18 may not be a conviction on the actual, you know, the-

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: [interposing] The
20 hate crime itself.

21 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: hate crime.
It may just be on the underlying-

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: [interposing] An
assault or something else, exactly.

1

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Correct.

2

But we overwhelmingly win these cases. They're
3 highly investigated. In terms of our own training,
4 we table top- okay.

5

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah, I just-
6 how many cases go to pre-trial diversion? How many
7 of these cases are you trying to do education and
8 other pre-trial work?

8

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: with our
9 younger offenders we're trying to handle a lot of
10 these cases in ways that are a diversion or
11 restorative justice. A number of our cases, however
12 are-

10

11

12

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: [interposing]
13 [inaudible] like-

13

14

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: people with
15 mental illness. I would have- I don't want to give
16 you inaccurate information but a number of our cases
17 go to our mental health court where the diversions
18 have been there. But in terms of, you know, people
19 committing a hate crime, and that hate crime was
20 intentionally committed, those cases tend not to get
21 diverted. It's the young people and the people with
22 mental illness.

20

21

1
2
3 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: and what
4 effective tools do you see to reducing hate crimes
5 from your office? Do you feel like the diversion
6 programs work, the education programs work? Like,
7 statistically important, how do we see this being
8 effective long-term?

9 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: We don't see
10 repeat offenders in our hate crime universe that come
11 through our office and then prosecuted. It's very
12 rare to have a recidivist person in the hate crime
13 universe. We do see a lot of recidivism with people
14 with mental health issues acting out in that way.
15 But with our young people that have gone through our
16 diversion, we're not seeing repeat offenders.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Can I ask the
18 NYPD, what tools have you seen effective to avoid
19 hate crimes? Have you learned over the years there
20 are certain things that have been more effective than
21 others?

ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: I don't know that
the response to be to avoid hate crimes. I think that
to prevent hate crimes and I think that educational
programming and conversations between community

1
2 leaders and religious figures and the community
3 speaks to a greater cultural understanding. And we
4 see impactful statements from various people in the
5 community when they learn about the cultural
6 competencies and practices of a specific community
7 and want to go more granularly in the Jewish
8 community.

9
10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah. And to
11 the mayor's office, Ms. Wisdom, is part of what
12 you're trying to do to put more resources into
13 prevention, into doing education? We've heard now
14 both from the NYPD and the DAs office that that kind
15 of education seemed to be effective tools in
16 preventing these kind of hate crimes.

17
18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes,
19 absolutely. Thank you for the question. We don't
20 have a specific budget proposals or program or policy
21 proposals for this budget cycle, because we're
22 mid-budget cycle. But absolutely want to follow
23 through on the mayor's commitment to increase funding
24 to hate crime prevention.

25
26 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: I mean, I know
27 we've seen the Speaker, we've talked about it, and
28 Council Member Brewer raised this earlier, beginning

1
2 to talk about the Holocaust and trying to do real
3 education out there around antisemitism. Is there a
4 commitment from the mayor's office to look for
5 additional resources to do the education that we're
6 talking about, whether to the DA, NYPD or through
7 your office?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes,
9 absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And what would
11 you need from the Council to advance, or what
12 structural support with the mayor's office need to
13 make sure that we're saying the same thing? Because
14 clearly- I know the Speaker's talked a lot about
15 prevention, you know. What else do you need from us
16 to do to ensure that prevention is happening-
17 resources are happening?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I think
19 primarily to keep in touch with each other about what
20 we're hearing from communities, what they need, and
21 then there will be budgetary asks most likely next
year that will be coming to the council floor to talk
about.

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah, we'd love
to see something this year, obviously, because we

1
2 don't want to— you know, obviously, people who get,
3 you know, injured, harmed by hate crimes. We want to
4 get in front of this as much as possible. Whatever
5 we can do collectively to ensure there are resources
6 in place whether through the DAs office or through
7 the NYPD, with your office to that kind of
8 prevention, I think it really goes a long way in
9 drawing with the underlying problems we've seen over
10 the rise of antisemitism. I want to thank the
11 co-chairs for letting me ask again.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Council
13 Member. We actually have no further questions for DA
14 Gonzalez. You're free to stay, but— if you wish.
15 Thank you very much for being here.

16 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GONZALEZ: Thank you,
17 Chairs, and thank you, Council Member Epstein.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Alright. I have
19 some— I have some questions for the NYPD. Just
20 following up on Council Member Dinowitz's question
21 about your training, could you tell us a little bit
about what materials you use for training?

ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: We can certainly
provide you with the curriculum.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Please. Thank
3 you. What is the headcount in your Hate Crimes Unit,
4 if you have it?

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Yes, the current
6 headcount of the Hate Crime Taskforce is 25 uniformed
7 members of the service, and that is inclusive of 20
8 total detectives that investigate cases.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Is that- do you
10 find that sufficient?

11 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: We do.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Can you
13 talk a little bit about how the NYPD defines- I know
14 you spoke about how you define hate crimes. You
15 follow the penal law. But what about antisemitic
16 hate crimes and how do you define antisemitism, and
17 what if any guidelines you use for that definition?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Alright.
19 So, we're coming back really to the state statute,
20 and we're not using- we're not using some
21 free-standing definition of antisemitism. Other
words, the legal question that we're answering as a
matter of state law is under the hate crimes statute
was- and again, this is a paraphrase, but this is the
concept, right? Was this person a victim in whole or

1
2 in substantial part because that person was Jewish or
3 perceived to be Jewish, right? That is the question.
4 That is the question- the legal question that has to
5 be answered. We have probable cause supporting that.
6 And that's the question we're answering. So, there's
7 no sort of free-standing definition of antisemitism
8 that we're applying or really in any of these bias
9 categories some sort of free-standing definition.
10 We're - in each case we're saying, okay, this is the
11 protected characteristic. Here- Judaism is Jewish,
12 and then we're answering that legal question under
13 state law.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, we're not
15 following any specific definition? For example, our
16 definition is used quite often. Are you saying just
17 case by case basis?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, no, no.
19 I'm not saying case by case. What I'm saying is that
20 this is a state law question. In other words, we
21 can't just sort of unilaterally decide oh, we're
going to pick up everything from antisemitism and
apply that to the New York State hate crimes law,
right? Like, we- that's a state law. The state
legislature says, okay here's how we're defining a

1
2 hate crime, right? And the way that it's defined
3 under state law is, again as I said, it's penal law
4 and it's 45.05. Again, in whole or substantial part,
5 because of- and then it lists the various
6 characteristics. So, we're obligated to follow state
7 law.

8 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, how do- just
9 so I'm clear, how do we know if something is an
10 antisemitic hate crime?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, that's
12 what the investigation is, right? So, we talk about
13 like bias, right? Was this because, in whole or in
14 part, because the person was Jewish or perceived to
15 be Jewish. That's the question the detectives are
16 trying to answer, right? Again, take the example of
17 someone who's punched in the face. Did that happen
18 in whole or in substantial part because the attacker
19 had a belief or perception about their being Jewish,
20 perception that they Jewish? If that's why this
21 happening- that's why this happened, now we're
22 talking about a hate crime.

23 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. We can
24 explore more a little bit later on. I want to ask
25

1
2 you, has the Mayor's Office of Antisemitism reached
3 out to you?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, I mean,
5 I've spoken with the Executive Director on multiple
6 occasions. I think we actually had our meeting- an
7 in-person meeting scheduled- I'm not sure exactly
8 when. It's coming up. But yeah, so I have obviously-
9 I spoke with the Executive Director, and we're going
10 to have in-person meetings as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And I assume
12 antisemitic hate crimes are on the agenda.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Absolutely.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Can
15 you talk a little bit about how the NYPD Hate Crimes
16 Taskforce determination process works when it comes
17 to hate crimes and bias incidents?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Well-

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Like, what happens
20 after a person reports a hate crime-

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
Right, so you have the investigation that's done. And
again, what's interesting about these investigations
is because of the really unique nature of a hate
crime, it's not just the crime itself that's being

1
2 investigated, though that is done in an incredibly
3 thorough and deliberate way, but also if there's
4 other evidence that goes to the perpetrator's
5 motivation, right? So, they're- the taskforce is
6 gathering all that evidence, doing all that work.
7 The determinate- as a formal matter, as a formal
8 matter the determination if something is or is not a
9 confirmed hate crime is made by the commanding
10 officer of the Hate Crimes Taskforce. That is very
11 much in consultation with the Legal Bureau, and
12 again, we have a lawyer assigned over there. And to
13 be blunt, there are some cases that are totally
14 obvious, right, that they're not going to need to
15 talk to legal, because it's plain as day that it's
16 anti-Jewish or antisemitic in nature and we can prove
17 it.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Could you give an
20 example of a case that's totally obvious?

21
22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah.
23 Somebody walks up to someone. The person is visibly
24 Jewish. Is saying antisemitic slurs and punches that
25 person in the face.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Could you give an
28 example of an antisemitic slur?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I- I mean,
3 if calling some one let's say a kike. I think that's
4 a pretty, you know, antisemitic slur.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. How
6 many- I think you answered this question before, so
7 I'll just move on. While Jewish New Yorkers make up
8 roughly 10 percent of the city's population, they
9 were targeted in over half of all confirmed hate
10 crimes in the first quarter of 26. If you know, to
11 what does the NYPD attribute this disproportionate
12 targeting of Jewish New Yorkers?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: As I was
14 saying before, it's- antisemitism generally- I mean,
15 it's- this goes back a question across time and the
16 world and millennia and trying to understand and
17 articulate why there's hatred for the Jews, you know,
18 in particular hatred for the Jews that is
19 disproportionate to other hatreds out there in the
20 world, right? It's a very hard question to answer.

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I understand that.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I think
23 there's that constant- there's a constant, right, in
24 history, and then the question becomes okay, to what
25 extent do- you know, for example, world events affect

1
2 hate crimes here in New York City. As I said before,
3 you know, certainly as an intuitive matter, I would
4 think so. We see it in the data post October 7th
5 clear as day. Beyond that, I'm not sure I can tell
6 you in a definite way, oh, you know- hard to draw a
7 line sometimes. Between something, a world event and
8 antisemitic hate crime activity in New York City,
9 but- you know, and to the DA's point, with everything
10 going on in social media, things can happen around
11 the world and have an effect here on crime in New
12 York City.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Does the
14 Department receive written guidance from any of the
15 five District Attorneys or from any of them jointly
16 on what conduct is or is not chargeable as a hate
17 crime under penal law 4505?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, I- we
19 will check. I don't think there's anything like a
20 formal memo the way- I mean- I want to emphasize
21 this, though, we are in regular contact with the DA's
office generally, but in particular when it comes to
Hate Crimes Taskforce. We are talking to the DA's
offices and the US Attorney's offices all the time.
It is a very, very collaborative, productive

1
2 relationship. And so, you know, just to really speak
3 to what you're getting at, I think our detectives and
4 the leadership of the Hate Crimes Taskforce, we have
5 to make our own determinations, of course. There'll
6 be times when we and the DA's office disagree. That
7 can happen and that's okay, but I think we have a
8 good sense, for all the DA's offices, of how they
9 think about these things.

10 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, no written
11 guidance exists, is that correct?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Certainly
13 not that I'm aware of. We will double-check, but I
14 don't think so.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Please, if you
16 could double-check. I mean, if there isn't any, could
17 you confirm that to us in writing?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: thank you very
20 much. When the Hate Crimes Taskforce is building a
21 case that involves difficult classification
questions, for example zionist slogan directed at a
visibly Jewish victim, is there a practice of
consulting the relevant DAs before arrest?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, I would
3 say there's very, very often conversations in these
4 types of situations. So yes, there's very often
5 dialogue. I don't want to say that- I don't want to
6 commit to that it happens 100 percent of the time,
7 right? But yes, there is regular dialogue with the
8 DAs, particularly in the- in more- it's an open
9 question. There will regularly be contact with the
10 DAs, yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. And when
12 the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, which
13 happens often, declines to take a hate crime case
14 referred by the Department or declines to include the
15 hate crime enhancement in his charging, does the
16 Department receive an explanation, whether in writing
17 or not in writing?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Without
19 specificity, I can answer it anecdotally, and I can
20 tell you-

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] I'm
sorry. Can you repeat that?

ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: I'm so sorry.
Without specificity to a specific case, I can answer
it anecdotally and talk about the protocols and the

1 methodology by which the detectives and their
2 supervisors and commanding officer of Hate Crimes
3 Taskforce deals with things like that. Those are
4 conversations that are certainly had between the
5 commanding officer of the Hate Crime Taskforce, the
6 attorney assigned to the Hate Crime Taskforce, and
7 the prosecutor from the DA's office, and if there's a
8 divergence of opinion, we have those conversations,
9 and we note them, and we as the NYPD go forward with
10 what we perceive the charge to be.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: How can we get a
12 copy of those notes?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Actually, to
14 be blunt, those notes, the deliberations over
15 particular cases, internal deliberations whether
16 within the NYPD or with the DA's offices, I actually
17 do not think that is something, respectfully, that
18 should be going out really to the City Council or the
19 public. I mean, those are really important
20 discussions that we need to have. They're really
21 important and they have to be candid discussions.
They have to be very blunt, right? Blunt on both
ends, that we can be candid about our view on a case.
DA's office, blunt on their view. And by the way,

1 that could be strengths and weaknesses of a case.
2 Sometimes the disagreements could be legal in nature.
3 Sometimes, how strong is the evidence, right? We
4 might think the case is strong. They have a concern
5 about a witness. Those are very, very sensitive
6 discussions that have to be done with candor. You
7 know, to the extent that those discussions are not
8 going to be shared with the public, that's going to
9 actually have a really adverse effect on our ability
10 to successfully bring these cases.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I would still
12 request that you provide us with a redacted copy of-
13 let's say from 2025 and as it relates to Manhattan
14 District Attorney's office specifically. And if you
15 really can't provide, I guess just let us know in
16 writing.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: And I also-
18 Council Member, I just want to be clear. It's not
19 like- I don't even know if there are notes. What I
20 mean is-

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] No, I
mean, you just testified that notes being taken.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, I said-
no, there are conversations that are had. There are

1
2 conversations that are had. Whether or not notes
3 were taken, I have no idea. And again, like it's not
4 like there's some form that's filled out in each case
5 and like our view, the DA's office's view. It's
6 going to range tremendously, right? You could have
7 some case where there are multiple conversations.
8 Somewhere there's one, it's long, it's short. These
9 internal sorts of deliberations, again, that we're to
10 be able to have them with candor. And in a world in
11 which that's going to be shared publicly, it's going
12 to make it much more difficult for us to work with
13 the DA's office and for the DA's office to work with
14 us. We have to be able to speak just very bluntly
15 with each other about the particulars of cases.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I still request
14 the redacted notes if possible, and again, if you
15 can't provide it, just let us know in writing if
16 possible. Thank you. Let's talk a little bit about
17 the reporting changes that were made. As we
18 discussed here, there were recent reports about
19 changes and how NYPD reports hate crimes. I know you
20 explained some of the changes. Were these changes
21 made exclusively by the NYPD, or was this decision
from the administration broadly?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: There were
3 decisions by the NYPD. We made these decisions. We
4 stand by them. These were not decisions made by
5 anyone at City Hall. We made these decisions.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And was the mayor's
7 office consulted in any way on those decisions?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Not
9 consulted with. Before we announced the decisions-
10 and again, we announced them twice, right? There was
11 once- one announcement at the beginning of March, one
12 at the beginning of April. Before those
13 announcements were made, we informed City Hall we
14 would be making those announcements. But to be
15 blunt, it was not- we had made the decision. We were
16 going to announce it. We let City Hall know.

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, is it accurate
18 to say that NYPD can make decisions without the
19 Mayor's input?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, we made
21 decisions every day on a wide range of matters. Some
of them, right, are very much in consultation with
City Hall, and then the NYPD, so much going on.
There are many, many things that we decide without
input from City Hall, and you know, there are

1
2 judgement calls about what is raised and discussed
3 and what isn't. I just want to be very, very clear on
4 these issues. These were decisions that we made
5 ourselves.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, thank you.
7 And was the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism
8 consulted or-

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
10 No, no.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: advised?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Again, very
13 shortly began we made each of these announcements, we
14 notified, we told City Hall, hey we're about to
15 announce facts [sic].

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, thank you.
17 During the weeks the Department was publishing only
18 confirmed figures, can you tell us approximately how
19 many incidents- if you have the information. If not,
20 you could provide it to us at a later time. How many
21 incidents were under investigation as possible hate
22 crimes that did not appear in the public [inaudible].

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, you're-
24 so, if what you're asking for- I think- so let's say,
25 going back, we only have the confirmed hate crime

1
2 numbers. We were not tracking in a systematic way
3 all possible, all reported hate crimes. In other
4 words, what we're doing now, and again we're tracking
5 this quite carefully. We're pouring it out monthly-
6 is both the full universe of cases that are being
7 investigated by the taskforce and the full universe
8 of confirmed hate crimes by the taskforce. What
9 weren't tracking before in a way that we'd be
10 comfortable reporting out on is the full universe of
11 just the incoming to the taskforce. So, I'm not sure
12 I could answer your question, because the whole point
13 is that wasn't data we were tracking before. We are
14 now tracking and reporting on that going forward.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I think you've
16 answered the things. Are the reported hate crimes
17 listed separately from the confirmed hate crimes, or
18 just like talk to us a little bit about how-

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
20 Sure. so, going forward monthly, and you saw this in
21 the- you saw this this month when we report on our
March crime numbers. We provided- we actually
provided three things. We provided the confirmed
hate crimes numbers for March. Because it's the
quarter, we gave the confirmed hate crimes number for

1
2 the quarter [inaudible] and then separately was the
3 universe for March of all reported hate crimes broken
4 down by the type of bias.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That's every crime
6 that was reported during that period of time,
7 correct?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: For a
9 monthly basis, that's every case that is coming into
10 the Hate Crimes Taskforce.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. And can you
12 talk a little bit more about what it means to have a
13 confirmed hate crime?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. So,
15 confirmed hate crime is really that legal
16 determination we're talking about saying under the
17 statute, we believe we have probable cause that this
18 is a hate crime pursuant to 45.05. That's what a
19 confirmed hate crime is.

20 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And who makes that
21 determination?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: The CO of
the Hate Crimes Taskforce, and again, if necessary in
consultation with the Legal Bureau.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And what happens
if the victim chooses not to press charges?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, it-

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Is
5 that then considered just a reported hate crime or is
6 that confirmed in some way?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, the
8 analysis of whether something's a confirmed hate
9 crime is going to be separate and apart from whether
10 or not the person wants to go forward. We can have a
11 confirmed hate crime. The victim can say, hey, I
12 don't want to proceed with this. We then have to
13 assess whether we'll be able to make our case, right?

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That's why I'm
15 asking.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: It'll be a
17 confirmed hate crime, yes. There certainly could be
18 scenarios, like hypotheticals where it's a confirmed
19 hate crime. [inaudible] the victim chooses not to go
20 forward, which is, you know, that person's right.
21 But we would still have it a confirmed hate crime.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, got it.
Comes to the public reporting of hate crimes- oh, I'm
sorry, I asked this question. Are there crimes

1
2 reported in the same way that hate crimes are
3 currently? Like sexual assault, for example. Is that
4 reported in the same way as hate crimes?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No. I mean,
6 we- our reporting on hate crimes is unique in that we
7 have these both- sort of these two levels, right?
8 The incoming of the taskforce and the confirmed hate
9 crimes number. We trade- and we have the dashboard
10 and all that. We don't have this for every type of
11 crime. We treat hate crimes differently because of
12 the unique nature of the crime, because as we've been
13 discussing, it's a crime not only- it's harm on a
14 victim, but to communities, the effect it has on
15 society. The fact that the state chooses to treat
16 hate crimes differently than other types of crimes-

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] I
18 mean, I would argue that sexual assault is also a
19 crime of unique nature.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Of course.

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, why is that
reported differently than a hate crime?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Because what
you- the issue is, and this goes back to what DA
Gonzalez was referring to. You have these two steps

1
2 with a hate crime, right? It's the criminal activity
3 itself, and then the question, whether you can prove
4 the motive, right? So, everything we're talking
5 about here with hate crimes, it's a two-level thing.
6 That's separate and apart from the complaint coming
7 in, right? In other words, the per- the situation
8 where someone's assaulted, and the question was can
9 you prove that it was a hate crime? It was, you
10 know, anti-Jewish in nature. In which way, that
11 assault is going to be recorded. It's an assault,
12 right? That complaint has been taken. That's going
13 to be in our data as an assault in whatever the
14 appropriate degree is. So, that's the analog to
15 every other type of crime. The crime comes in. It's
16 recorded, right? And then we see whether we can
17 catch the perpetrator. You have this separate
18 question for hate crimes about motive, whether we can
19 prove it. As the DA said, that is actually unique to
20 hate crimes in what you have is a two-layers of
21 reporting.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, the difference
19 is due to the motives?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: The need to
21 establish motive. Because there are two separate

1
2 questions, right? One, as with anything, okay, is
3 there a crime here? Right? And that's true for
4 anything under the sun. Is there a crime? And then
5 there's a separate issue, right, of can we show that
6 the person's motive was bias-based. And that is
7 really- that's unique. It's unique for hate crimes.
8 Other types of crimes, we don't care what your motive
9 was. You committed a crime. If we can prove that
10 you did it, you're going to get arrested. But for
11 hate crimes, to charge as a hate crime, the separate
12 special thing, you have to prove or have probable
13 cause for bias. That's what makes it different.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: But the sexual
15 assault don't need probable cause?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, no, it's
17 just the motive doesn't matter, right? In other
18 words, if I'm looking at the sexual assault or any
19 other crimes, we don't- I mean, the motive does not
20 matter as a legal issue, right? It's a sexual
21 assault, that's it, whatever the motive might have
been. But for a hate crime, whether it's a hate
crime turns on what the motive was. If the motive
was anti-Jewish and we can prove it, that's a hate

1
2 crime. If it's something else entirely, then it's
3 not.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And that's the
5 reason for reporting them differently?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Well, that's
7 why we have-

8 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] I'm
9 asking you, because it's not just making sense.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, no,
11 because you have these two different layers. Because
12 the point is that you have this universe of crimes
13 that come in, right, the reported hate crimes. And
14 that's going to be- so you're talking about criminal-
15 potential criminal conduct, right? We're capturing
16 that. But then a separate question- but one set is,
17 hey, has a crime that has been reported to us that is
18 under investigation as a hate crime, right? That's
19 one universe. Second universe, yes, we've confirmed
20 that's a hate crime. That distinction wouldn't make
21 sense for other types of crimes. A sexual assault
has been reported. Okay. that's a sexual assault
complaint. A murder has been reported, that's it.
To say, okay, it's like a potential murder versus a

1 confirmed murder, that wouldn't make sense. It's-
2 again-

3 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] But
4 wouldn't it be possible that a sexual assault report
5 is actually not confirmed because it was consensual?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, that's-
7 so, different issue. We- to the extent we have- when
8 we have crime data, we do all sorts of checks and
9 audits, and there are times when things have been
10 misclassified. That does happen, or we learn more.
11 That's to your point. But it's all again, it's a
12 single question. Do we have a crime here? Right?
13 And answer is binary, either we do or we don't.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Understand why it
15 needs to be reported differently. So, using sexual
16 assault as an example, is sexual assault or
17 allegations of sexual assault crimes reproted and
18 displayed ot the public in a different way than hate
19 crimes are? Meaning all of the ones that are just
20 alleged, not confirmed. Are you reporting those as
21 well?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, any
complaint that comes in of any type of crime, we're
going to take and record that as the crime that has

1
2 been described. It has to be classified in our
3 system and we got to- and we're checking. We have to
4 make sure it's classified properly. We're taking
5 those complaints, right? It could be sexual assault,
6 murder. It could be larceny. Whatever it may be,
7 and we're tracking those complaints as they come in,
8 and we report that data out in a variety of ways.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I'm just asking if
10 you reported the reported incidents?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yes, yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: When it comes to
13 sexual assault.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And do you
16 separate them in the same way that you do with hate
17 crimes meaning you have one metric for recorded and
18 one for confirmed or not do that?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, because
20 the reported versus for hate crimes is not whether
21 there was a crime. It's whether if there was a bias
motive, and that bias motive question is unique to
hate crimes.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I guess I just
don't understand why it still needs to be reported

1
2 differently, but it's fine. We can move on. There's
3 been a lot of confusion about what is or isn't a hate
4 crime which may potentially lead to under-reporting.
5 So, to clear this to the public, could you answer if
6 you can, if the following would be classified as a
7 hate crime, a bias incident, anti-semitic hate crime,
8 or it's just free speech? So, I'll give you a couple
9 of examples and if you can tell us I think that would
10 clarify a lot for the public. So, for an example,
11 protestors chanting outside a synagogue in support of
12 Hamas. Hate crime, bias incident, free speech,
13 whatever?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, again,
15 without more-

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Yeah.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I want to be
18 clear without more, all you have is protestors
19 outside of whatever the location is chanting in
20 support of Hamas, no, that's is protected speech.
21 That's free speech.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I want to be-
sorry, just to be clear. I want to emphasize I
appreciate very, very well how painful and awful that

1
2 would be is for people inside let's say that shule, I
3 understand that. But the question is, is that a
4 crime? No, it's not. It's protected speech.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, and then
6 protestors yelling outside of a synagogue at te Jews.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: That is also
8 protected speech. By the way, I'm assuming- again,
9 I'm assuming no other facts. So, they're not
10 otherwise disrupting the services. They're not
11 obstructing anyone in any way, but simply the
12 statement that you made, that is protected speech.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I mean, they are
14 obstructing entrances to synagogues, is that-

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
16 And they're subject to arrest.

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That is a hate
18 crime?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No. So, it
20 would be discon [sic]. Let me back up. If there are
21 services going on, they're obstructing from people
going into services, there actually could very well
be a hate crime. It's going to depend a little bit
on the circumstances. Any which way, if someone's

1
2 blocking an entrance to a synagogue, they're getting
3 arrested, full stop.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: What would be in
5 that- in that fact pattern- in that fact pattern.--
6 in that fact pattern, what would be the circumstances
7 that would make it a hate crime?

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: So, a few things.
9 Certainly if you have any situation in which there's
10 a threat of harm, right- called a true threat in the
11 first amendment right? So that threat situation, we
12 would charge as an aggravated harassment. Right?
13 Aggravated harassment, and we would charge that as a
14 hate crime, assuming you could- well, you'd be able
15 to show in that sort of situation. It'll be charged
16 as a hate crime. One thing also is there are
17 particular statutes. They're not hate crime
18 statutes. There are particular statutes about
19 obstructing religious services. There's a federal
20 statute about obstructing, going into a house of
21 worship. I mean, I think- I actually- I would
characterize that as a hate crime statute, whether
the federal government calls it that, that's what it
is. And so there'd be a charge there. For any kind
of obstruction or threat, criminal in nature, and

1
2 again, I think on the circumstance it would get
3 charged as a hate crime under a hate crime statute.
4 But the speech, if that's what you're talking about,
5 pure speech, whether that's in support of Hamas or,
6 you know, F the Jews I think was an example you gave,
7 that is hurtful and painful, but in and of itself,
8 that is protected speech.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
10 much. So, just to clarify, if there are protestors-
11 let's say there are mass protestors standing outside
12 of a synagogue yelling at the Jews and obstructing
13 the entrance, that is a hate crime?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, so as I
15 said, if they are obstructing an entrance, that is
16 definitely a- you can't do that. They'll be warned,
17 and if they refuse to move they're subject to arrest,
18 full stop. You know, how we charge that, under what
19 statute we charge is going to depend a little bit on
20 the circumstances, but they certainly are subject to
21 arrest, no question about that. Whether they'll be
22 charged in the state, charged federally, how that
23 would get prosecuted is going to depend on the
24 circumstances and every case is different. But

1
2 you're blocking an entrance to a synagogue or to a
3 school, you are 100 percent subject to arrest.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And some other
5 examples. Let's say a kippah is being thrown off
6 someone's head. They're walking on the street.
7 Someone randomly comes over, throws off the kippah
8 without saying anything, is that a hate crime?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, that's
10 going to be charged essentially under the- what I
11 would call a hate crime provision of the aggravated
12 harassment statute. Aggravated harassment in the
13 second degree actually has a special provision. If
14 you're knocking religious head gear off of someone, a
15 kippah or otherwise- and that, I mean, it's not the
16 hate crime statute, but it is an enhancement. It is
17 functionally the same thing, right? That is a
18 provision of the aggravated harassment statute.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: They're subject to
20 arrest?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Oh yeah, of
course, and they'll be charged as aggravated
harassment in the second degree.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I mean, we've
never seen- I've never seen, maybe I don't know, but

1
2 any charges for cases like that. Maybe because it's
3 tough to find the perpetrator, but-

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
5 We do have cases like that.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: love to see these
7 be prosecuted. Just a couple more. Someone on the
8 train yelling "F you, Jew" or "dirty Jew" without any
9 physical assault. Is that a hate crime?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: If nothing-
11 oh, go ahead.

12 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: If creating fear
13 and creating the discomfort and fear to the
14 ridership, we have in the past charged that
15 aggravated harassment statute as discussed by the
16 Commissioner.

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And just one more.
18 A kosher restaurant being vandalized with "Kill the
19 Zionists." Is that hate crime?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, it's
21 going to depend. This is the work of the Hate Crimes
Taskforce to investigate, right? Like, this is
exactly what they have to do, right, to be able to
prove that it was because of the person's, you know,
Jewish identity in whole or in substantial part. I

1
2 mean, it wasn't a pure, you know, call it political
3 motivation. It could be both, obviously. It could
4 be both. You could imagine it being in part political
5 and in part anti-Jewish, right? We have to be able
6 to prove that. That's the work of the taskforce to
7 be able to prove that. If we can prove it, we'll
8 charge it.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And if it just
10 says "Kill the Jews," do you see that as different?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: If- I'm
12 sorry, if?

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Says "Kill the
14 Jews."

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, that's a
16 hate crime right there. That's- that is clearly
17 because of a perceived Jewishness or Jewish identity
18 and that would be charged as a hate crime. That
19 would be charged as a hate crime.

20 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. On December
21 15th, 2025, the second night of Hanukkah, 20-year-old
Minocum Risemen [sp?], an Orthodox Habad member, was
attacked on the Three Train towards Crown Heights.
The attacker shouted "F the Jews" on the video at the
outset of the assault. The Department's initial

1
2 classification was argument over seats, not a hate
3 crime. It was only after community outcry that the
4 hate crime classification was restored. Can you walk
5 us through who made that initial classification, what
6 the Hate Crime Taskforce reviewed before making it
7 and what role the hate crime review panel played in
8 this?

9
10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Council
11 Member, I am not familiar with the particulars of
12 that case. I could not tell you sitting here kind of
13 what went into that, who was making what decisions,
14 what the analysis was. I just don't know.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: That's fine. If
17 you could look into it and get back to us.

18
19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: We would
22 appreciate it. And I want to talk to you a little
23 bit about the incident that took place in my district
24 two nights ago. I think you saw the video.

25
26 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I've seen the
27 video, yes.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, you know what
30 occurred. There was a protest at a location where
31 the individuals often protest. They usually don't

1
2 march after they protest. This time, they decided to
3 march onto a street with a synagogue and a daycare,
4 intimidating students. There was a Rabbi inside, and
5 I talked about this in my opening statement. There's
6 a Rabbi inside training a boy for a bar mitzvah.
7 Parents called me infuriated, intimidated, and feared
8 for the safety of their children. So, and just to be
9 fair, they did not according to the videos I've seen,
10 they did not block any entrances. So, I just have a
11 couple of questions as it regards to this incident
12 and more broadly. Do officers receive training on
13 handling these protests?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. So,
15 we have- as part of the protest settlement. There's
16 actually all sorts of training that goes on.
17 Community Affairs gets training. Our executives get
18 training. We've separately been talking with
19 executives in particular about how to handle
20 situations involving protests outside houses of
21 worship or outside of schools or other sensitive
locations. So, yeah, there's the formal piece as far
as the protest settlement, but there's also work that
we've been doing really at the executive level,
captains and above, to make sure they understand how

1
2 this works. At least say COs and above and how this
3 works in terms of handling protests outside, like I
4 said, shuls, schools, other sensitive locations.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And is sensitivity
6 training a part of that? Just because, as you may
7 know, it's important for officers that are going to
8 protests to understand the sensitivities, especially
9 again that's next to a synagogue or a Jewish daycare,
10 to understand why mass protestors shouting hateful
11 slogans. It's very traumatizing to the Jewish
12 community.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah, and I
14 do think- I'm not sure I can speak to like
15 sensitivity training across the Department. There's
16 all sorts of training that goes on, just you're not
17 talk- these are not- we're not the right people to I
18 think really speak to that, but I do think that for
19 example their COs their job is to know their
20 communities. Community Affairs officers, they do-
21 they do understand this. I don't think the point your
making about the sensitives here, I don't think
that's lost on the CO of that command, the Community
Affairs officers involved, leadership of the
Department. We definitely understand that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. And is
3 there an NYPD directive as to conduct when a sudden
4 protest emerges and ends up directly outside of a
5 house worship or a day care facility. But when
6 they're not- specifically when they're not blocking
7 the entrance. So, yesterday I had a call with the
8 NPYP, and they cited free speech, and I'm very
9 supportive of the First Amendment and I totally
10 believe in free speech, but I know there are also
11 limits and I know we have- we can put in time, place
12 and manner restrictions. So, I'm wondering in the
13 case of what happened two nights ago, what could have
14 been done differently, legally within the authority
15 of the NYPD. And I know there's a consent decree and
16 I know there's a consent decree and I know that
17 you're somewhat limited. But what could have been
18 done differently to prevent protestors intimidating
19 parents and children and worshipers?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. So,
17 as you know, this was in some ways an unusual
18 situation. What I mean is, this was a group that had
19 protested before at a different location, a
20 commercial location and had been stationary in prior
21 instances. Right? So we really had no set- and

1 those I think have gone without incident, and again,
2 stationary in a small, relatively small group, small
3 group, small counter group. And so we did not know in
4 advance. I had no reason to think in advance that
5 they would be marching. And so that was a surprise.
6 It was. We don't have a crystal ball. And we did not
7 have a lot of resources there. We didn't. So, in
8 that situation- so they start marching, limited
9 resources. I think given what- if they had- let's
10 just say. So if they had come to that schools- and
11 they were marching across various blocks, right? I
12 think they- this was one of many blocks they marched
13 down the other day. If they had, for example
14 stopped- like a few scenarios. One, if they had
15 stoped and obstructed entrance, we would have, you
16 know, given them a warning and if they failed to
17 move, they'd be subject to arrest. If they had
18 stopped at that location and were going to set up
19 there let's say to protest there for any meaningful
20 period of time, we would have been concerned about
21 obstruction, right? And we would have- we would have
gotten- we would have set up a frozen zone in front
of the entrance there to make sure there was no
obstructing, people getting in and out without

1 incident. We would have worked to move them across
2 the street. You have to make sure they have sight and
3 sound. They were going to set up there. But make
4 sure we have that frozen zone there with barriers as
5 necessary. Given the video that I saw, they actually
6 were moving along. They actually did not stop there.
7 They were continuing down that street as they had on
8 other occasions, as they had on other streets. And
9 so in that scenario, there's nothing- I'm not sure
10 there's really anything for the PD to do in that
11 moment because they're moving along. They're going.
12 I do agree that given that we know and that we've
13 experienced, this is a group that actually- if they
14 gather again to protest that same commercial
15 location, they may march. We got to think in advance
16 about where they're going to march, plan for that,
17 and part of that is trying to talk to the organizers.
18 Sometimes they'll talk to us, sometimes they won't.
19 It's thinking about how we can enable them to march,
20 and as you said, you know, exercise that first
21 amendment right. It doesn't mean they can march
wherever they want whenever they want, right? And we
have to sort of plan it out in advance, and part of
that is having resources in the right place. They

1
2 were on the sidewalk. They are times when we say the
3 folks who are mentioned, listen, you can go here or
4 you can go here, or you know, you can straight or you
5 can go right, but you're not going to be able take
6 this left turn. If it's the sidewalk, though it
7 means we're closing the street. In other words, if a
8 sidewalk is otherwise open to the public, we can't
9 say it's open to the public except for the
10 protestors. That we can't do. That's a problem. That
11 would be content-based speech regulation, and that we
12 can't do. So, given what transpired, going forward,
13 would we planned for this protest very differently?
14 Yes, 100 percent. How exactly we're going to
15 structure it? We got to figure that out. I do want
16 to emphasize though, again, just for the cops who
17 were there in the moment, they were surprised. I
18 think they were doing their best in the situation.
19 It would be very, very different if the protestors
20 had stopped and looked like they were going to remain
21 there for a meaningful period of time. We would have
had to really sort of address potential obstruction
risks. Given the video that I saw, that's not what
happened.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I'm assuming this
3 is not the first surprise you've had with protests
4 where they marched afterwards to a location. So,
5 that's why I'm wondering if there's a specific
6 directive that NYPD has to the COs or to the entire
7 NYPD regarding what conduct officers need to engage
8 in if protestors are walking and shouting right by
9 houses of worship and educational facilities, or is
10 there no directive and it's just case by case basis?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Well, there
12 is- no, there are very clear directives in terms of
13 concerns about obstruction, about sight and sound. If
14 people are set up, right? So, again, if they had
15 said- if the protestors had come and said, okay,
16 we're going to be protesting outside this Jewish
17 elementary school, we would have a lot- there's a lot
18 we have to say about how that works consistent with
19 the law, consistent with the First Amendment, but
20 also consistent with the safety and security of
21 people inside, and we would set up for that, right?
And they would not be right there in front of the
entrance, probably across the street. Again, sight
and sound- we have appropriate barrier configuration,

1
2 police officers there if necessary. We would do all
3 that, and that's very clear.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: There is a
5 directive?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: What I've
7 just described is, I think, very clear to the
8 leadership in the Department. Again-

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Do
10 you have that in writing? Can we get a copy of that?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: We have- no,
12 this is a- this is directive that maybe I have given
13 and descriptions I have given to the leadership of
14 the Department, to executives in the Department. We
15 have gone over this. I think they know it very well.
16 I just want to emphasize again that what you have
17 here, we [inaudible] day, and again, I understand- I
18 truly do understand why this was upsetting to the
19 people who were inside. I am not minimizing that in
20 any way. It is the case, though, that they did not
21 remain there and they- I can tell from the video were
moving right along. They were, and that does change
the analysis.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, could we have
moved them across the street?

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2
3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: But they were
4 already moving down the block. It was no- I mean,
5 again, they weren't stationary. They were moving
6 down the block already.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: But before they
8 moved to the synagogue and the daycare center, could
9 we have just directed them? Could the NYPD have just
10 directed them to move across the street, go around
11 the synagogue and the daycare center and come back to
12 the sidewalk?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, if we
14 were- if we knew, if we had known in advance they
15 were going to go there and we were concerned about
16 obstruction, we could do a frozen zone around the
17 entrance to the school. We could close off part of
18 the block, however you want to do it, but you have to
19 consider the counter-protestors who were across the
20 street. Like the goal is not to tell the protestors
21 to go stand where the counter-protestors are
standing. That's a recipe for problems. And yeah,
we could 100 percent- if we had- if we had known in
advance that they were going to go there, we could
have certainly have done a frozen there and avoided a

1
2 situation if they were right there moving past the
3 entrance. Again, we didn't know that was going to
4 happen, and we did not have the barriers there in
5 advance. We didn't have the resources there in
6 advance. Now that we know this is a possibility,
we're going to plan accordingly.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you. I
8 just have a couple of more questions. Just want
9 refer you to the penal law 2421 and I'll just read it
10 in part. A person is guilty of disruption or
11 disturbance of a religious service when he or she
12 makes unreasonable noise or disturbance while at a
13 lawfully-assembled religious service or within 300
14 feet thereof with intent to cause annoyance or alarm
15 or recklessly creating a risk thereof. Disruption or
16 disturbance of a religious service is a Class A
17 misdemeanor. So, based on the fact that we just
18 discussed, I assume that what we saw in the video is
an accurate description of what happened, may this
behavior be considered a Class A misdemeanor under
Section 24021 of the New York City Penal Law?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, I really
20 don't think so. I don't. I mean, again, [inaudible]
21 all the information. I did see the video. These

1
2 were individuals- these individuals were walking down
3 which was a publicly accessible sidewalk. They were
4 legally allowed to be there, were not obstructing
5 anything. I don't have any evidence of their intent
6 to disrupt what was going on inside. I don't, and
7 again, I'm not- that is consistent with- I want to
8 acknowledge this again, kind of the pain and the
9 frustration, I get it, of people who are in there or
10 learned about in the community. Not minimizing that.
11 But do I think that those individuals walking past
12 there in the way that they were under these
13 circumstances were committing a crime? I don't think
14 they were committing a crime.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: They were making-
16 we could say they were making unreasonable noise. We
17 could argue that. They were within 300 feet of the
18 synagogue and the daycare center. They were likely
19 doing it with the intent to cause annoyance or alarm,
20 recklessly creating a risk thereof, and that type of
21 disruption according to Penal Law 24021 is a Class A
misdemeanor.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I got to
say, though, at least on what I have, information
that I have, I don't have the evidence of

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2 unreasonable noise, and I don't have the evidence of
3 intent. I think it matters a lot. They were walking
4 along- I mean, it's multiple blocks, right? It was
5 one of the many blocks they walked down. We don't
6 have the evidence that they were targeting this
7 location. We don't have the evidence of unreasonable
8 noise. I just- on the facts as I understand them that
9 I'm aware of, I do not think you have a crime there.

10 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: You don't have the
11 evidence because it happened two nights ago, and I
12 don't think we had the time to investigate.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Again, I
14 have the information that I have. I really do not see
15 evidence of a crime here. And I want to emphasize
16 again that when you have publicly accessible street,
17 there's no frozen zone. They're allowed to be there.
18 They're allowed to march there. To the extent you're
19 suggesting that the fact they were marching there
20 with the message that they had, that in and of itself
21 would give rise to a criminal charge, I do not think
that is correct, again, with the facts that I have.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Even without
investigating the incident?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I'm not
3 sure- I mean, again, if someone wants to make a
4 complaint, they can make a complaint. Anyone is free
5 to make a complaint, and we will take that complaint.
6 We will investigate it accordingly. But I just want
7 to emphasize- but I just have to acknowledge, right,
8 public street not closed off, that's- people are
9 allowed to march down that street. That's what the
10 First Amendment is.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. thank you
12 for that explanation. And just so I know what to
13 tell my constituents that are very concerned, what
14 can be done in the future other than setting up
15 buffer zones in case of obstruction of entrances, but
16 what I can tell them to make them feel that their
17 children are going to be safe? And I'm not just
18 talking about this particular incident, but I'm sure
19 we're going to see a lot of protests and marches that
20 walk by and intimidate worshippers and daycare
21 centers.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. I
19 think there are a few things to be said. First of
20 all, there is an open line of communication to the
21 NYPD directly. We are happy to engage with

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2 individuals from the school, with Community Affairs
3 or otherwise, the leadership of the school so we can
4 hear directly from them. I think that is totally
5 appropriate, and if they want to do that, we are more
6 than open to that. They should know that the NYPD
7 takes this responsibility for public safety extremely
8 seriously. We do this every day. Yes, we have-
9 there's a real challenge, right? We have to both
10 make sure we're ensuring First Amendment rights and
11 ensuring that people are safe. We do this to the
12 very best of our ability, and I think they- we are
13 going to take a hard look at certainly in this area,
14 right, in terms of if protestors are marching going
15 forward, how are we going to handle that. Again,
16 consistent with the First Amendment, allowing people
17 to march, and if we have to do more in terms of
18 frozen zones, then we'll do what we have to do to
19 make sure that this is all safe.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you.
22 Those are all my questions, and I appreciate the open
23 line of communication. And thank you for the service
24 of the NYPD. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Listening to some
26 of the answers of the questions, it's very

1 interesting to hear, but there are directives for
2 what the protocol is around protesting around schools
3 and houses of worship, and it's my opinion and the
4 opinion of this council, actually, that those
5 directives should be transparent and there should be
6 time for public input. And when you say schools and
7 protestors can always reach out to you, that it
8 should be very clear on a public plan who the point
9 person is at the NYPD. That is in fact a law that we
10 passed in this council, one that will provide much
11 needed transparency to avoid incidents like this
12 altogether. So, community members, protestors,
13 schools, houses of worship, everyone under the sun
14 knows what they're getting and knows who to contact,
15 and that there is community input for that. That is
16 what we passed in this council and I look forward to
17 it becoming law so we can increase the amount of
18 transparency in our NYPD. I was- one of the questions
19 Council Member- Chair Vernikov asked was, there's a
20 kosher restaurant and someone spray paints,
21 vandalizes and writes zionist on it. And you said
maybe it's a hate crime. And then if you use the
word Jew it's definitely a hate crime. I- we've just
seen time and time again where the word zionist is

1
2 used as a proxy, and- for Jew, right? Where we've
3 seen in our city kosher restaurants who never made a
4 political statement in their life vandalized and
5 spray painted zionist and a Jewish star on it. Like,
6 there should be no question that those would be hate
7 crimes, and I think what you've delivered is sort of
8 like the out saying the NYPD does not necessarily- if
9 you just use the word zionist instead of Jew, then
10 it- then you might be okay.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: We have to
12 follow the law. We have to follow the law, and the
13 law does distinguish between- so, a few things. One,
14 it distinguishes between crimes because of one's
15 religious identity and one because of- it's called a
16 political view point. I understand what you are
17 saying, and I'm not naïve about this. Of course, it
18 may very well be the case, very well be the case, the
19 person when they vandalized that store and they say
20 zionist that that is an anti-Jewish hate crime. That
21 is not lost on me. We have to be able to prove that.
I'd have to be able to prove it. That's- we have to
be able to prove it. And so that's the work of the
hate crimes taskforce, and if we can prove that, we
will charge it. We are not shy about doing that.

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2 We also have to follow the law, and the law says we
3 have to be able to prove that it's because of
4 religious identity. So, that's what we do. We are
5 applying the law to the very best ability and
6 investigating these cases very aggressively and very
7 deliberately and very carefully so that we can charge
8 hate crimes when we have the evidence.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I want to-
10 Executive Director Wisdom, you had mentioned earlier
11 in your testimony that you will model the report
12 after the Biden administration, right? In their
13 report, they laid out examples of when the
14 anti-zionism crosses into anti-semitism. They tried
15 to make it explicit and clear. They used the nexus
16 document and the [inaudible] definition to make
17 clear, like these are the examples of how the Jewish
18 community is experiencing antisemitism. Do you
19 expect that to be part of your work? Laying out the
20 examples so that the city knows that when you do
21 spray paint zionist as a slur, which is not, on a
kosher restaurant simply because it's kosher, that
that is in fact- from an educational standpoint, not
from prosecutorial standpoint, from an educational

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2 standpoint, are you including- do you plan to include
3 any of those examples or that work in your report?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you for
5 the question, Chair Dinowitz. I want to clarify that
6 we're modeling the process after the Biden Whitehouse
7 process. And so that's just about who we're talking
8 to, how we're talking to them, providing a framework.
9 In terms of the actual layout of the document, I am
10 not yet sure, but I do imagine that we will be
11 getting into some of these secure [sic] questions,
12 and at least publishing a statement of sort of
13 principles and values about what antisemitism is
14 without using a specific definition.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, well, we've-
16 well, as you know, the Biden administration didn't
17 use a specific definition. They modeled it on those
18 two definitions which are good definitions.
19 Obviously, the vast majority of the Jewish community
20 values those two definitions. And at schools like
21 NYU, which a university here in New York City that
did lay out of examples where anti-zionism is very
clearly antisemitism. They have seen a decrease in
antisemitic incidents, right? And so that's what I'm
asking of you. If you're not addressing this issue

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2 in your report, because this is what people are
3 reporting that zionist is a proxy for Jew, right?
4 And this is very often where they get turned away
5 from- by the patrol officers which we've spoken
6 about. I don't want to rehash that.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: No, I do
8 want to be clear, though, if I may. Of course, the
9 Hate Crimes Taskforce would investigate that, and
10 again, if we have the evidence, we will charge it as
11 a hate crime, anti-Jewish hate crime, but we need to
12 have the evidence. We have to.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I agree that
14 we need to be contending with what are sort of the
15 stickier examples of what constitute antisemitism,
16 and again, I don't know yet what form that will take,
17 but understand that this is the crux of this
18 conversation, and is one that we will certainly be
19 addressing in one form or another.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah. I mean, you
21 now even have people saying "zio." They're throwing
22 "zio" as like a slur.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I believe
24 David Duke invented that slur.
25

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CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: That's correct.

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That is correct. But you have people on all sides of
3 the aisle using this white supremacist invented term
4 as a slur against Jewish people. So, I would impress
5 upon you how important it is that this sort of
6 language is outlined, and when we have seen it
7 outlined and seen it- you know, it identified as
8 that, it gives people the confidence still that if
9 they report it- it gives people the tools to know if
they report it to the NYPD it won't go unnoticed.

10

It'll give them the confidence to go to the NYPD and
11 report actual hate crimes, because again, there is
12 significant under-reporting, and it's under-reporting
13 because at times NYPD doesn't take it seriously or at
14 times they just don't feel that the city and the city
15 agencies understand. Your work, the work you do
16 individually and together is critical in identifying
17 and reporting. And I lastly want to ask about bias
18 incidents. So, Chair Vernikov went through a few
19 examples, and you highlighted that sometimes it's
free speech, and sometimes it's a hate crime, but
regardless calling someone an f-ing Jew is an act of
bias, right? That's a bias incident.

20

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yes.

21

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I don't- it's not
3 clear to me how the NYPD defines bias versus hate
4 crime, but the important thing is for my question,
5 it's a bias incident. No matter what the law says-

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: [interposing]
7 Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: it is felt as a
9 bias incident. What happens to those bias incidents?
10 To where do they get reported and where is that data?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So, a few
12 things are going to happen, right? So, the Community
13 Affairs is going to be notified, notifications up the
14 chain, and there'll be a notification to the Hate
15 Crimes Taskforce which will look at the incident,
16 because there are two pieces to this, right? One,
17 let's assume the facts are just that. Right? It's
18 just a slur, nothing else.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, a slur walking
20 down the street, they report it, right?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Nothing
else, yeah. So, it's not a crime without more, but
there still may be a need for outreach, right?
Community Affairs following up with that individual,
with the local school, the local shul, maybe. The

1
2 Community Affairs piece, because obviously that
3 individual is going to be upset. The community is
4 going to be upset. People may be concerned. So
5 there's an outreach piece. Separately, there's- the
6 Hate Crimes Taskforce opening a case to make sure we
7 have the full picture of what happened.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Does the Hate
9 Crimes Taskforce really opening a case when it's a
10 slur?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Well,
12 they're going to go talk to the complainant to make
13 sure there wasn't anything else going on. So,
14 because- and to your point, right, this is about
15 making it- trying to make it as easy as possible for
16 complainants and engaging with complainants. You can
17 imagine a situation in which initially you only hear
18 about the slur, and then there's follow-up from
19 trained detectives and you learn more. This person
20 was following me for several blocks. This person
21 was- this person pushed me. I was actually trying to
cross the street and this person blocked me from
crossing the street. Any number of things. You can
easily imagine this happening, right? They focus on
the slur because it's so jarring and hurtful and

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2 hateful. There are other things that have legal
3 significance that the detectives elicit, and- all of
4 a sudden, actually, now you have a hate crime, right?
5 Because if there's conduct that's married up with
6 that, we're going to, you know, go make an arrest and
7 charge a hate crime, if you see what I mean. So
8 that's why it actually is really important for Hate
9 Crimes Taskforce to get these when they first come in
10 so they can have a full picture of the facts.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, so there's
12 two separate things I will say it again. I think
13 it's work an audit of your- of the NYPD worth
14 retraining, because there are officers out there, if
15 it's more than zero it's too many, who will hear this
16 story, say, you know, someone called me the whatever
17 word, and they'll say there's no really crime
18 committed, sorry. And then they'll turn them away.
19 And of course, that discourages people from reporting
20 anything at all. But in addition to that, the ones
21 that aren't- that don't include the harassment, the
ones that don't include blocking and obstruction, the
ones that don't include following them, is that data
collected and is it reported, and is it- and
importantly, is it shared with the Mayor's Office to

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2 Combat Antisemitism which would then address,
3 alright, it's not a hate crime, but it- there is hate
4 going on in the community, and their job is to
5 address hate. So, is that data collected?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. So
7 that data of everything coming into the Hate Crimes
8 Taskforce is what we're now reporting on for the
9 first time, right? That's going to be in that
10 universe of possible of reported hate crimes, even
11 though it's not going to pan- it may or may not pan
12 out. If the facts are just a slur, nothing more,
13 it's not going to pan out. It will not be confirmed
14 as a hate crime, but it will be included in that
15 universe of cases that the Hate Crimes Taskforce
16 opened. And then in terms of the data sharing, we do
17 share with the- go ahead.

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: So, in cases of
19 violent hate crimes, crimes against persons, for
20 instance, that is shared within 72 hours to OPHC for
21 their outreach and work that they do. The metric is
now going to be reported out as the Commissioner
explained, but there is communication between Hate
Crime Taskforce and OPHC in those cases of crimes
against persons that rise.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Alright. We as
3 Council Members get outreach when a violent hate
4 crime occurs. We don't get notification when a hate
5 crime occurs which should change, and I have a bill
6 on that, by the way. So, I'll sign on. I'm going to
7 move on to another round for Council Member Felder,
8 followed by Council Member Brewer and Council Member
9 Epstein.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you. Okay,
11 thank you. I admire your persistence. No, no, I mean
12 it in- I mean it very much, because it's a very
13 complicated issue. I just- it's just in my mind it's
14 so hard to get a permit even to put up, you know,
15 some rides for the holiday that it just seems odd.
16 So, thank you for trying. I want to- you know, I want
17 to go back to the question that Chair Vernikov and I
18 should say- talked about the distinctions between
19 zionist and Jew, and I- it's not to you. It's to my
20 favorite person at the desk, because I know that she
21 feels very, very left out of, you know- I just want
to- it's not a question. So, I just want to tell you
that everything that I've read- I'm not a lawyer in
any way, and I don't read much. In fact, I hire
staff to read everything and give me bullet points

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2 which was- if it would be- I'd be in school for 50
3 [sic] years, got an ADHD, I would be like the king.
4 So, I just want to tell you that everything that I've
5 read indicates that the Mayor does not consider
6 calling somebody a zionist in any way hate speech or
7 the- I should- let me correct that. Erase. The
8 equivalent of calling somebody a Jew. That calling
9 somebody a zionist and calling somebody a Jew are by
10 no means in any way the same in any way. If you
11 want, I can get you some more material that indicates
12 that publicly. Second, when I asked you whether you
13 experienced antisemitism, the example you gave me
14 indicates that you never experienced antisemitism
15 personally. You felt it. You felt it. I'm not going
16 to indicate about somebody's feelings in any way. I
17 just will tell you what to me is experiencing
18 antisemitism. It is a four-year-old names Simcha
19 Felder walking down the street and somebody knocking
20 him to the ground and calling him an f-ing Jew. I
21 didn't feel that. That was that. Or waking up one
morning, coming outside as a 10-year-old and finding
a swastika that was spray painted on our house. So,
again, it's not a competition. I just really, really
am bothered by the fact that you seem like a very

1 nice person and I'm not judging your character or how
2 much hate you've encountered if- you know, maybe
3 there are other experiences, and I'm not suggesting
4 that you shouldn't have been bothered by what you
5 saw, but when we talk about antisemitism and hate in
6 this city, I would just hope that you in addition to
7 running this area that you have people on your staff
8 that have actually personally- and personally really
9 experienced hate and antisemitism physically and
10 emotionally. And it just- you know, I would hope so.
11 That's all. So, I want to thank the Chairs for the
12 hearing and there are so many people here that have
13 been waiting to testify and unfortunately again we
14 have other hearings that are again conflict with the
15 ones we have and people are going to have to leave.
16 So, I'm going to give you back the 47 seconds that I
17 took last time.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Would you want to
19 respond, Ms. Wisdom?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yeah, I
21 guess, I mean, I completely appreciate what you're
saying. I hope that someday you and I will have a
chance to sit down and get to know each other, and
I'll have more than 30 seconds to talk about my

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2 experiences with antisemitism beyond what's happened
3 in the last 24 hours. But I take very seriously the
4 safety of every single Jewish person in this city,
5 across religiosity, identity, race, and understand
6 very acutely the differences between how we
7 experience antisemitism. But if my answer indicated
8 to you that what I saw yesterday is the only
9 experience I've had with antisemitism, I will clarify
10 on the record that that's not the case.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. And I
12 have some questions for the Mayor's office. Ms.
13 Wisdom, I think it's no secret that- and I speak on
14 behalf of my community when I say that we are deeply
15 dissatisfied with the way this mayor has handled
16 antisemitism. That being said, I heard really great
17 things about you personally and your character and
18 your competence, and I do want to work with you and
19 look forward to talking. I know we didn't have a
20 chance to sit down. But I think that there's been
21 virtually no information about this office that the
public has been given. They don't know what this
office is about, who's in charge. So we do have some
questions for you. Can you talk a little bit about
what- I'll skip because I know you're pressed for

1
2 time. Just tell us as Executive Director can you tell
3 us what your job is at this office?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: sure. I'm the
5 Executive Director of the Mayor's Office to Combat
6 Antisemitism. It's an office that's just under a
7 year old. We're building a staff right now. I have
8 a Deputy Director who may have left to take a meeting
9 for me. He's still here. And we will have more
10 staff as well. Our role is- I read the text earlier
11 from the Executive Order, but there is, you know, a
12 specific mandate for this office which is to identify
13 and develop efforts to eliminate antisemitism and
14 anti-Jewish hate, coordinate non-law enforcement
15 responses to antisemitic incidents which means sort
16 of across city government, liaise with the Jewish
17 community, law enforcement, and other agencies to
18 improve reporting and victim services. And other-
19 and basically identifying policy and programming to
20 prevent antisemitism and encourage Jewish safety and
21 belonging across this city.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, thank you.
How- do you have an office?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes. Like a
palace where I sit? Yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Just making
3 sure. Is there a phone number that the public can use
4 to contact you?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We each have
6 land lines at our desks and government phones.
7 There's not like a Mayor's Office to Combat
8 Antisemitism specific number, and as I indicated
9 before, we will be thinking through how to- when we-
10 when and if we make a website, indicate how the
11 public can get in touch with us. Our office, though,
12 is largely internal-facing and doing this kind of
13 coordination. So, if New Yorkers want to, for
14 example, report an incident, the NYPD is the number
15 that they should call.

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, I know you
17 said you're in the process of building a website or
18 you're talking about it, but currently- and this
19 office has been functioning for you said six weeks or
20 so?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I started six
weeks ago, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, how do you
currently- six weeks in office, I mean, I think every
agency has functioning social media and

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2 communication- ways to communicate with the public.
3 You don't have a phone number, don't have a website.
4 How do you communicate with the public?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I think I'll
6 have to check with my other Mayor's Office Directors,
7 but thinking for example of the Mayor's Office of
8 Child Care, Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants, there
9 will be some norming across this administration of
10 how these mayor's offices communicate with the
11 public. I don't believe either of those have social
12 media either. But we understand why New Yorkers
13 really want to be hearing from this office in
14 particular and take that very seriously, and will be
15 having conversations imminently about what the best
16 way to do that is.

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And when do you
18 think that will happen?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I'm learning
20 quickly that the speed of government is different
21 than the speed of a small nonprofit, but I will get
back to you as soon as I know.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you.
We appreciate that. On his first day in office Mayor
Mamdani revoked a previous Executive Order pertaining

1
2 to the definition of antisemitism. In light of this
3 revocation of the Executive Order, how does this
4 office define antisemitism?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you for
6 that question. I know that's a hot one in the
7 community. The first thing I'll say is that across
8 city government there is not a definition codified
9 for any form of hate at all. So the way that we
10 combat hate and that our colleagues in NYPD address
11 these incidents is without a codified definition.
12 That said, we understand broadly in the universe of
13 civil rights and combatting antisemitism it to be
14 prejudice, violence and discrimination against Jews
15 because they are Jewish. We understand usually what
16 that looks like, and we understand that our
17 colleagues at CCHR who deal with Human Rights Law and
18 NYPD have their own definitions that are codified
19 into law, or not definitions, but understandings that
20 help them do their work to keep Jewish New Yorkers
21 safe.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Does that include
19 national origin?
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2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I believe at
3 CCHR Human Rights Law, it does cover national origin
4 as a protected class as well as religion.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, so just to
6 clarify, has the Mayor's Office replaced the
7 definition of antisemitism with something else-

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: [interposing]
9 We don't believe there needs to be a codified
10 definition-

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing]
12 definition?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: at all. So,
14 we have the understanding I shared.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, is the policy
16 of the Mayor's Office that we will not have a
17 codified definition of antisemitism?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: The policy of
19 this administration is that we will not- we will
20 continue to not have any codified definition of any
21 form of hate.

22 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, how are we
23 supposed to identify antisemitic incidents and
24 antisemitic hate crimes, and how is the Mayor's

1
2 Office going to determine what is antisemitic if we
3 don't have a definition?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I mean, I
5 think what you're asking is a good question, because
6 it is hard, and these are sort of based- these
7 determinations are based on the facts on the ground,
8 just like they are with any other form of hate when
9 it comes to crime. Again, NYPD and the DAs have
10 their own methods for identifying antisemitic crime,
11 but in terms of bias and hate, it's really sticky and
12 extremely serious stuff, and it's case by case, but
13 our understanding again is that when we're looking at
14 prejudice, violence, and discrimination against Jews
15 because they are Jewish, that is- that is what we are
16 trying to prevent through policy and programming that
17 we will set up in this office.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I mean, would you
19 agree that it's difficult without a specific
20 definition?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I think
sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't, and that's
the case, again, across forms of hate.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And who in the
Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism will make the

1
2 determination whether or not something is or isn't
3 antisemitic?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I believe
5 that would be office-wide, but our work, again, is
6 sort of- it's policy and programming. So by the time
7 we get to a situation where something has happened,
8 that is the purview of the NYPD, although we will, of
9 course, be kept abreast and be in communication with
10 them, but something the mayor said recently is that
11 we've historically treated antisemitism if it were
12 medical- follow me on this metaphor- in the emergency
13 room. And our work is actually more like the work of
14 an internist. We are doing prevention work. We're
15 ensuring best practice sharing and communication
16 across government, but determining whether or not
17 something is antisemitic is case by case, and even
18 our office's involvement will be case by case.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: But who is going
20 to be determining what is and isn't antisemitic? Who
21 in your office?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Our team.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And who is that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I'm the head
of this office, so it would-

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2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] I'm
3 sorry?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I'm the head
5 of this office, so I assume- I think me is the answer
6 to that question.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, is the team
8 just one individual, the staff?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: The team is
10 right now two, and depending on the outcome of the
11 Executive Budget we'll be three or four total, which
12 is a 300-400 percent increase.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. But who will
14 be identifying? Who will be deciding what is or
15 isn't antisemitic?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I guess I'm
17 having a hard time answering, because like in what
18 kind of situation would I be determining what is or
19 isn't? The pol- we are- the things that we will be
20 planning and doing, policy, programming will be based
21 on the idea that antisemitism is prejudice, violence
or discrimination against Jews because they are
Jewish. So,--

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: [inaudible]

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Quiet please.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Council Member
3 Felder, thank you so much. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: [inaudible]

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. So, I
6 have to remind everyone we have decorum here.
7 Everyone here has the opportunity to testify, and
8 right now the administration is testifying. And
9 whether or not you like what they have to say, that
10 is their testimony and we as Chairs and Council
11 Members are asking questions of the administration.
12 You will have the opportunity to testify, and in your
13 two minutes you will have the opportunity to share
14 whatever you want as related to this topic.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Ms.
16 Wisdom, when hate crimes occur, do you think it's
17 important for public officials to condemn them?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes, I think-

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] It's
20 just yes or no.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I think in
general when hate crimes occur there are a lot of
processes that should happen, including-

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2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] It's
3 just yes or no. Do you think it's important to
4 condemn them for public officials?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I
6 unfortunately don't have a quick answer on that.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: It may not be
8 important to condemn?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Hate crimes
10 occur in this city every day as far as I'm aware. So
11 I think what rises to the level of public
12 condemnation-

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing]
14 That's not what I'm asking. I'm just asking if you
15 think it's important to condemn hate crimes for
16 public officials. It's just a simple yes or no.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes. Yes.
18 Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. And same
20 goes for antisemitism?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And you've seen, I
assume the many, many antisemitic incidents that have
occurred at the very least since you've been
Executive Director of this office?

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2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Yes, I've
3 seen antisemitic-

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] And
5 has the office, the Mayor's Office to Combat
6 Antisemitism condemned any of these antisemitic hate
7 crimes?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We have.
9 Again, we're thinking about what our public presence
10 is, but when asked by the press or when given an
11 opportunity to comment publicly, yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Where can we see
13 that? There's no website. There's no social media.
14 There's no X page. Where do we- where does the
15 public get to see these condemnations, and could you
16 give me some examples of antisemitic hate crimes that
17 the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism has
18 condemned?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thus far,
20 those have been in the form of press statements,
21 because as you've said, we don't have public-facing
communications like other mayor's offices at the
moment, and do agree that it's important that the
public knows our position on the horrors of
antisemitic hate crimes. And so, in addition to

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2 right now answering questions about them in the press
3 or sending statements, we will be thinking through
4 other channels of communication to communicate that.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And who's
6 responding to the press in this office? I assume
7 it's you, because you said that you were the only
8 member of the office currently?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: No, there are
10 two of us like I said.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Oh, okay. I
12 apologize.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: And we have a
14 comms team in City Hall.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Could you
16 send us some of the statements that you've made
17 condemning antisemitic incidents? We would
18 appreciate that, because I haven't seen anything, and
19 we did a Google search like my colleague mentioned.
20 We didn't find anything from the Mayor's Office to
21 Combat Antisemitism.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Sure. I'll
have our comms office pull that.

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Do you plan to
release any reports on the work that you're doing,

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2 and if so, could you just tell us what kind of
3 reports?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Sure. So, as
5 I indicated before, we're doing a listening at the
6 beginning of our work in this administration, and the
7 first thing we'll be producing is a public-facing
8 document reporting on what we learned from that, and
9 then also plan to be publishing something that is
10 like the antisemitism strategy. I think we had
11 planned to in this first iteration do so including
12 suggestions for investments, policy and programming,
13 but because of where we are in the budget cycle, that
14 won't be right away after we conduct this listening
15 tour, but we do plan to produce a report following
16 that and then I imagine over the next four years
17 additional reports as we learn what's needed.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. And
19 have you reached out to any of the District Attorneys
20 to discuss antisemitic hate crimes or antisemitism in
21 general or your work?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So far, this
office has a relationship with DA Bragg's office, but
do plan to reach out to other District Attorneys for
sure.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. The 2025
3 Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism report
4 recommended capital funding for physical security to
5 protect against vehicle attacks and others at
6 vulnerable Jewish institutions. Can you confirm if
7 this specific infrastructure funding is prioritized
8 and fully accounted for in the Mayor's upcoming
9 Executive Capital Budget?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I can't yet
11 speak to the outcomes of the Executive Budget
12 conversations, but I know that we are having
13 conversations, but I know that we are having
14 conversations about hard security including things
15 like bollards.

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Yeah, that's
17 exactly what I'm actually talking about. So, is that
18 something that this office supports?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: We're in
20 discussion about it.

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Could you
let us know what- thank you. Are you aware of the
incident- the incident I discussed earlier with the
NYPD, the incident that took place in my district
where protestors marched down a street past a

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2 synagogue and a daycare center and chanted and
3 intimidated worshipers and children and their
4 parents, and as a result parents don't feel that
5 their children are safe? Are you aware of this
6 incident?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I'm aware of
8 the incident, yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And when did you
10 become aware of it?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: I believe
12 yesterday or the day before, early this week.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: So, in situations
14 like this, could you tell us a little bit about what
15 the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism does? You
16 know, do they condemn it? How do they- what do they
17 do after incidents like this take place?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, in some
19 incidents like this where there's been something that
20 was traumatizing to a community, we've gone and met
21 with those who are impacted when- example of this is
an Israeli kosher restaurant on the Upper East Side.
after there was an incident there, we went and talked
about what they needed and offered support, made sure
to connect them with the NYPD. In fact, called and

1
2 sort of tried to ensure a speedy response from the
3 NYPD. Some of this is about what we know. So, as we
4 build this office and our infrastructure and our
5 reporting relationships with other agencies, I expect
6 we will be sort of fine tuning this reporting in and
7 our relationship to incidents that happen. But it is
8 definitely our intention to build relationships with
9 anyone who is impacted by something scary that
10 happens to them.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And then once you
10 talk to these individuals and victims, and by the
11 way, we welcome you in our district, and I don't know
12 if you reached out to any of the parents or the
13 community.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: No, not yet,
14 but I welcome being connected.

15 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. What is it
16 that you would do after that, following speaking to
17 victims? Like, would you advocate for the NYPD to
18 prosecute or like what is it that- what action do you
19 take after that?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So, the
20 NYPD's processes are certainly their own, but if they
21 haven't yet reported, we would recommend that they

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2 report either to NYPD if there's something criminal,
3 if there's discrimination to CCHR. We talk to all of
4 our colleagues about what the best government
5 approach is, but sometimes as we've heard here, there
6 are things that are upsetting and traumatizing that
7 don't rise to the level of crime, and in that case,
8 it's talking through connecting to community
9 supports, keeping in touch about prevention of future
10 incidents, that sort of thing.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you.
12 And we look forward to working with you and being in
13 touch.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: You too.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Council Member
17 Brewer?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
19 much. For Mr. Gerber, on the west side, as you can
20 imagine, the 24 is helpful, the 20, Sunset [sic]
21 Park, certainly Midtown north and certainly the DA's
Office, and we do get way too many paint on Jewish
restaurants. We get tons of of swastikas on benches
in the park and graffiti, way too much of it that's
antisemitic. But two issues- there is confusion.

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2 Obviously, if it's a violent crime we're going to
3 call 911 on any topic. But there is some confusion
4 about whether people call 311 or they call 911, and
5 we tell people because we've had so many, stay on the
6 site, don't leave until NYPD arrives, no matter what
7 you call. NYPD takes a report, takes photographs, and
8 then of course- unfortunately in some cases we've had
9 this problem, people erase whatever the issue is. We
10 try- do not do that. So, that first question is,
11 311/911. Second issue, when that happens, it's
12 obviously hurtful and horrible. People want to know
13 what happens to their reports. Now, you obviously
14 have a bias, you have a antisemitic. You don't know
15 exactly legally. But how can those who report hate
16 crimes and even bias incidents under this two-tiered
17 program now- obviously, we're looking at hate
18 graffiti traditionally, and how can they know the
19 results of any investigatory process for a particular
20 incident? How do they know what happened to their
21 efforts?

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Thank you very
19 much for your question, Council Member.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

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2 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: So, when 911 or
3 311 are called, police respond to the scene, take the
4 report, and the possible bias procedure is
5 implemented, and obviously there's a hate component.
6 That case is then investigated actively by the Hate
7 Crime Taskforce. Obviously, in an incident that you
8 outlined that would be a swastika on real property,
9 obviously a video canvas would be conducted,
10 interviews would be conducted. Witness canvases
11 would be conducted, and we'd extend those to look for
12 the best possible prohibitive image of who committed
13 such a crime. As the investigation progresses from
14 inception to conclusion, obviously the custodian of
15 that property would be contacted, and obviously there
16 would be conversations including and not limited to
17 the cost to clean that up, and you know, request for
18 video footage if they were custodians of the video in
19 that building. As the investigation progresses and
20 if we were to make an arrest in that situation, they
21 would be notified by the investigator from the Hate
Crime Taskforce that it's progressing with the
investigation and affecting that arrest. Because for
prosecutorial purposes, that deponent or custodian of
the video or reporter whose building was defaced

1
2 would then have to proceed in the criminal justice
3 system with the DA's Office.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Then say for
5 instance it was a passerby who noticed it, who did
6 exactly what you suggested, 311/911, stayed on the
7 scene. They wouldn't necessarily know because they
8 don't live in the building. They're not the
9 custodian, right?

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF ARIAS: Correct.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is there some way
12 we could have that information be available as time
13 goes on so that they do know. I don't know- it
14 wouldn't be in every case, but that is the question
15 that we get. What happens after I did what I felt
16 was my civic duty?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I think it's
18 a fair point. I think- I think it's a little bit
19 complicated, right, when you're talking about sharing
20 information in an ongoing investigation.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I know. It
would be the very end of the conclusion.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Yeah. Yeah.
but I tell you what you're saying, I think- it sounds
like what you're saying is or we should think about

1
2 for the case detective, right- certainly in a
3 situation where an arrest has been made.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's- yes.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right.

6 Letting people know-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] Of
8 course, like many cases, no arrests, many cases.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right. But
10 arrest or a no arrest, but basically the cases come
11 to confusion.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Correct.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Hey, letting
14 people know what happened and not thinking about it
15 just in terms of the complainant, but also witnesses
16 who- to your point, the witnesses who identified
17 something, did the right thing, is invested and they
18 want to hear. I think it's a very fair point and we
19 can definitely take that back.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I would
21 appreciate that, because that is- again, people will
feel better when they know that something happened.
Obviously if it's a horrific situation they're going
to get information.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Sure.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm talking about
3 the swastika on the building. You know, it
4 disappears. They don't know if the person was
5 arrest- you know, they don't know what happened. So,
6 yes, if we could figure out some way of tracking that
7 that's appropriate for your work, but also for the
8 public, I think that would be terrific. I'd love to
9 hear back on it.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Point very
9 well taken.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: That concludes the
13 administration testimony for this hearing. I want to
14 thank the NYPD, the Mayor's Office to Combat
15 Antisemitism, and District Attorney Gonzalez for
16 their testimony, for answering our questions today,
17 and for being working partners to combat antisemitism
18 here in our city. We will soon call the public
19 session . As a reminder, if you'd like to testify
20 in-person, you must fill out a slip with a Sergeant
21 in the back of the room, and we will be calling those
names shortly. Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: We're going to
3 take a five-minute recess everyone, five-minute
4 recess. Thank you.

5 [break]

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank
7 you for your patience. I would like to remind members
8 of the public that this is a formal government
9 proceeding, and before you testify reminder that
10 decorum shall be observed at all times. As such,
11 members of the public and spectators shall remain
12 silent at all times. The witness table is reserved
13 for people who wish to testify. No video recording
14 or photography is allowed from the witness table.
15 Further, members of the public may not present audio
16 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
17 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at
18 Arms for inclusion in the hearing recording. As a
19 reminder, if you wish to speak at today's hearing,
20 please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant
21 at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized,
you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing
topic: reporting on antisemitic hate crimes and bias
incidents in New York City. If you have a written
statement or additional written testimony you wish to

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2 submit for the record, please provide a copy of that
3 testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. I will now call
4 the first panel. Ruth Lichtenstein, Hillary Stuchin,
5 Brandon Pinsker, and Scott Richman. Reminder that
6 when you testify, please state your name and if
7 you're with an organization, the organization for the
8 record. We'll go from my right to my life. So, Ruth,
9 you'll begin. Again, please state your name for the
10 record. And a reminder, testimony is limited to two
11 minutes. Thank you.

12 RUTH LICHTENSTEIN: Okay. Ruth
13 Lichtenstein, Project Witness, Holocaust Education
14 Resource Center, Brooklyn, New York. Okay. So, let
15 me introduce myself and what am I doing here. I think
16 that it will be easier if I share with you one
17 picture, and this is a picture of my- this is a
18 picture of my half brother, one of million and a half
19 children who were murdered in the Holocaust. He was
20 murdered in Auschwitz four months before liberation.
21 Saying that, I am a proud daughter of two Holocaust
survivors. While my mother spoke, my father did not.
Whatever he did not, he put in writing and I learned.
From his silence, I learned. He left me a will, and
in the will I just want to share with you two lines.

1
2 "We cannot correct these wrongs, but we can and must
3 recount for those in the future who will come after
4 us so our memories are not going to disappear into
5 the abyss or forgotten." Saying that, there is no
6 need to explain today about the spread of
7 antisemitism. We heard now for a long time a very,
8 very, very important discussion about what could be
9 done about hate crime. But I believe that having the
10 experience with relationship with different
11 organizations, if this is in New York State, if this
12 is New York City, if this is across the United
13 States, or if this is in Europe or in other location
14 in the world. Antisemitism today, if we want to fight
15 it, number one, number two, number three is
16 education, and we need your help in order to move
17 things the way that it should be. This is a must.
18 This is something that we cannot rely anymore to what
19 is going on in the public school system, and I am
20 saying it as somebody who has long-experience-

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Yes.

Thank you.

RUTH LICHTENSTEIN: with the
administration.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

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RUTH LICHTENSTEIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much for your testimony.

SCOTT RICHMAN: Chair Vernikov, Chair Dinowitz, and members of the taskforce, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the urgent matter of data and reporting of antisemitic incidents in New York City. My name is Scott Richman and I'm honored to serve as the Regional Director for ADL's New York and New Jersey region. ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world, dedicated since 1913 to fighting against antisemitism and securing justice and fair treatment to all. A core part of the work of my team is tracking and responding to antisemitic incidents. From that we know firsthand that we face an alarming situation in New York City. Consistently, the city with more antisemitic incidents than any other city across the nation by far. This was the case before October 7th, 2023, and our most recent audit shows that number nearly tripled in the post 10/7 period. Data drives policy. These statistics are there for critical to countering antisemitism and hate, and yet, we know that they represent only part of the picture. Experts widely agree that hate

1 crimes and hate incidents are significantly
2 under-reported. Barriers to reporting exist for many
3 communities, particularly marginalized communities
4 ranging from language barriers to fear of retaliation
5 to a perception that authorities will not take the
6 incident seriously or be able to respond.

7 Compounding the problem is the fact that the NYPD
8 statistics capture only criminal conduct. Yet, the
9 vast majority of antisemitic acts to which we track
10 and respond do not rise to the level of a crime. And
11 while the New York City Commission on Human Rights
12 does track discrimination complaints on the basis
13 "creed" the data is not broken out based on religious
14 affiliation. So we do not know how many of these
15 incidents are actually anti-Jewish. To bridge the
16 gaps, we strongly support Speaker Menin's proposal to
17 establish a dedicated hotline to report incidents to
18 the New York City Commission on Human Rights, but
19 this must include a breakdown by bias type to allow
20 us to better resource the threat. We encourage this
21 taskforce to consider additional avenues of data
collection and information sharing between city
agencies such as the New York City Public Schools.

The establishment of this taskforce is an important

1
2 first step. Thank you for your leadership and the
3 opportunity to testify.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

5 BRANDON PINSKER: Thank you. Good
6 afternoon, Chairs Dinowitz and Vernikov, taskforce
7 members. Thank you very much for convening this very
8 important hearing. My name is Brandon Pinsker and I
9 am the Acting Director of American Jewish Committees
10 New York Regional Office, AJC New York. I also want
11 to thank Commissioner Jessica Tisch for responding to
12 concerns about the NYPD's hate crimes reporting and
13 for restoring and ensuring the publication of both
14 reported incidents and confirmed cases. This was the
15 right decision. These two data points serve
16 different purposes. Reported incidents give us a
17 real-time picture of what communities are
18 experiencing. Confirmed cases reflect the legal
19 standard after investigation. We need both to
20 understand trends, respond early, and maintain public
21 trust. Even with that correction, it's important to
be clear. Hate crimes data captures only part of
what's happening. Many incidents, as we know, are
never reported. Others don't meet the formal
classification threshold. The numbers we discuss are

1
2 incomplete by definition. That's why perception and
3 behavior matters just as much as incident counts.
4 According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America
5 report released earlier this year in 2025, 56 percent
6 of New York Jews have changed their behavior out of
7 fear of antisemitism. That means avoiding Jewish
8 synagogues and institutions, removing one's yamimah
9 or Star of David necklace. In 2021, that number was
10 36 percent. So, in the past four years we've seen a
11 20 percent increase in people fearing being Jewish
12 and displaying that behavior. But it's not just
13 a statistic. It's how people move through the world,
14 their daily lives here in New York City, the city
15 with almost a million Jews. We need to be honest
16 about where we are. Antisemitism is not just rising,
17 it is becoming normalized. This is the line we cannot
18 afford to ignore. On behalf of AJC, thank you, and
19 we look forward to being constructive partners in the
20 work ahead.

17 HILLARY STUCHIN: Hi. Thank you, Chairs
18 Dinowitz, Vernikov, Council Member Brewer, for being
19 here holding this hearing that is just of such
20 importance to our community. I'm Hillary Stuchin.
21 I'm Government Relations Director at UJA. Proud to

1
2 represent us today. So, first, we just want to
3 appreciate the creation of this taskforce to begin
4 with, to help address the issue of antisemitism in
5 New York. We're so happy that it is being recognized
6 as such a major issue among this council. Because
7 while we've seen a decrease in violent crime, we do
8 know that antisemitism has only surged, and this must
9 be addressed. We do recognize Commissioner Tisch for
10 rolling back the NYPD hate and bias reporting
11 changes. Limiting those reports to only confirmed
12 hate crimes would have created a false sense of
13 security while diminishing the transparency and
14 representation of antisemitism in New York City. But
15 we do know that hate crimes remain under-reported.
16 And to achieve a better understanding of the range of
17 incidents, we recommend and stand with many of our
18 colleagues in this- in the following. So, the
19 Council must urge the administration to increase
20 reporting mechanisms and data sharing between city
21 agencies so we can get a fuller picture of
everything. The Commission of Human Rights should
detail its data related to discrimination based on
creed, as noted by ADL. Breaking out incidents by
religion will help clarify threats against different

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2 faith groups and provide a more complete picture
3 again. Council should prioritize the implementation
4 of Speaker's proposal for a dedicated hotline at the
5 Commission on Human Rights. And with the Jewish
6 increasing under threat, we further encourage that
7 the data collected include a breakdown by bias type
8 to facilitate analysis. And finally, we also urge
9 the city to increase educational resources and victim
10 support in communities that are underserved. It's
11 critical that the Jewish community and actually all
12 communities across New York City feel safe,
13 protected, and supported. We look forward to
14 partnering with the taskforce in its efforts to
15 address these issues. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. And I
14 encourage us to continue the conversation, because as
15 you were hearing during the committee and as you are
16 testifying, there's a lot of room for data sharing, a
17 lot of room to improve reporting, whether it's
18 through the DA's Office and the NYPD or the
19 Commission of Human Rights, disaggregating certain
20 data would certainly be helpful. And we look forward
21 to continuing these conversations with you about ways
to increase transparency and data sharing, data

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2 reporting to address this really serious crisis in
3 our city. Thank you so much for your testimony.

4 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you for
5 being here. I'll call the next panel. Gerard
6 Filitti, Alan Scheiner, Avrohom Malachowski, and
7 Mosche Sporn.

8 GERARD FILITTI: Good afternoon. Thank
9 you, Chair Vernikov, Chair Dinowitz and the
10 taskforce, for this opportunity to speak. My name is
11 Gerard Filitti. I'm a Civil Rights Attorney and
12 Senior Counsel at the Lawfare Project, as well as
13 Counsel for the End Jew Hatred Civil Rights Group
14 where I work on a daily basis with victims of hate
15 crime including in New York City. From what I've seen
16 over the last many years, there is a significant
17 disparity in how Jewish victims are treated under the
18 law, and the consequences that are imposed on their
19 attackers, and this is a major problem. The biggest
20 deterrent that we see is when consequences are
21 imposed on acts of hate targeting a minority
community, and we're just not seeing that in New York
City. It seems to be a structural problem between
NYPD and some of the DA's offices, and that's best
highlighted by the number of cases that have been

1
2 taken on by the Federal Justice Department when DA
3 Alvin Bragg or other District Attorneys have not
4 actually moved forward with prosecutions on clear
5 cuts act of violence against Jews. This is also an
6 issue that we've seen with NYPD where there seems to
7 be some misunderstanding or intentional misreading of
8 laws that do not give them the best ability to pursue
9 charges in instances that should be very clear cut as
10 we saw at Park East Synagogue, again, requiring the
11 federal government to step in. So, I would ask that
12 this taskforce and the City Council work closely to
13 figure out and impose more clarity and more
14 transparency on how the NYPD and the District
15 Attorney's offices are actually handling these hate
16 crimes in reality, because the testimony that we
17 often hear from their officials seems to be that
18 they're doing everything they can when that in my
19 experience as an attorney working with hate crime
20 victims is simply not the case.

17 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

18 ALAN SCHEINER: Good afternoon. I'm Alan
19 Scheiner. I'm the Senior Litigation Counsel at the
20 National Jewish Advocacy Center. We're a nonprofit
21 law firm litigating against antisemitic

1
2 discrimination, violence and terrorism. NYPD data
3 shows that on average Jewish New Yorkers are the
4 victim of hate crimes nearly every day, six out of
5 seven days per week. More broadly, recent weeks have
6 seen bomb and gun attacks on synagogues in the UK and
7 Canada, and in March in Michigan a Jewish synagogue
8 and preschool was attacked by a gunman driving a car
9 bomb that could have killed dozens of children. One
10 result of the campaign of violence against Jews is
11 fear, fear that I've seen in my daily work at NJAC.
12 Many Jews are afraid to publicly identify as Jewish
13 or to speak up in defense of Jewish rights in their
14 workplace or at a school or on social media or in
15 public spaces. Although the Mayor has acknowledged
16 the hate crime statistics, his response does not
17 match the data. The city has shown indifference to
18 the heightened particular peril faced by Jewish New
19 Yorkers, and that indifference reflects bias and
20 threatens Jewish safety and Jewish lives. Among many
21 other things, the NYPD stood by as two synagogues
were besieged by mobs threatening harm, engaged in
menacing and harassment. If the NYPD believes that
to yell threats at Jews within sight and sound of
worshippers is protected First Amendment activity and

1
2 lawful, they are mistaken about the law. The Mayor
3 has not yet signed the City Council's very modest
4 legislation calling for reporting on the protection
5 of houses of worship. I want to note also today is
6 Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day,
7 celebrating the declaration and legal recognition of
8 the state of Israel 78 years ago. Today, my office
9 received reliable reports of Jewish schools in the
10 United States being closed due to bomb threats. That
11 is not a coincidence. Many like to pretend that
12 crimes motivated by hatred of Israel are not
13 antisemitic, but that is a grave error. Anti-zionism
14 is the most common species of antisemitism today.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Go
17 ahead.

18
19 AVROHOM MALACHOWSKI: Chair Vernikov,
20 Chair Dinowitz, my name is Avrohom Malachowski. I am
21 here representing the Auschwitz Jewish Center
Foundation. We come first to express our
appreciation. Speaker Menin's decision to establish
the taskforce was not symbolic. It was necessary.
Antisemitism in New York City is not abstract. It is
measurable, visible and too many in our community,
lived. The data is clear. The incidents are real.

1
2 The impact has been profound on students, families
3 and institutions across our city. The taskforce
4 sends an important signal, that the Council
5 recognizes both the scale of the issue and the
6 responsibility to confront it. That matters. The
7 Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation has been proud to
8 partner with this council in that effort. Through
9 our Decode Hate program, together, we are currently
10 reaching nearly 30,000 middle and high school
11 students throughout New York City's public schools
12 this academic year, providing them with the tools to
13 recognize, understand and confront antisemitism and
14 hate in the environment where it lives increasingly
15 online. That work is ongoing. It is structured, and
16 it is delivering results. But education alone is not
17 enough. Addressing antisemitism requires
18 enforcement, accountability and sustained
19 institutional leadership. That is the role this
20 taskforce has been thankfully employed to play. We
21 are here today to say clearly we stand with you and
we're ready to support you in that work. We view this
body not only as necessary, but essential to ensuring
that the response to antisemitism in the city is
coordinated, serious, and sustained. We look forward

1
2 to working with you, this body, and helping wherever
3 it is possible to ensure your success. Thank you
4 very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Mr.
6 Spern?

7 MOSHE SPERN: Hi, Moshe Spern. I'm an
8 educator and Jewish community advocate, and I sit
9 here before you, Councilwoman Vernikov, Councilman
10 Dinowitz, as someone who personally experienced
11 antisemitism right before October 7th. I'm an
12 educator teaching a classroom when a student stood up
13 and for the first time in my career had done
14 something antisemitic to me by doing a gesture of a
15 hail Hitler. And that in itself was very, very, very
16 traumatic. A week later, October 7th happened, and
17 of course, as you both know, that sort of opened up
18 my advocacy. My principal did nothing wrong,
19 reported it to the right places, did everything
20 right, consulted with me, investigated, and
21 everything was done by the book. But I know this,
because when I reported this incident to the Adams
administration, the Borough Safety Director of Queens
reached out to my principal. My principal was quite
surprised. He didn't know that I had reported this,

1 and he wanted to make sure he did everything right.
2 He was told he did. But I was never interviewed by
3 NYPD. there was never any followup from anyone in
4 the Superintendent or DOE office. In the last couple
5 years, for the first time in a school that I've been
6 in for over 12 years, we've had multiple swastikas in
7 our school. And it's not just- as you both know,
8 people come to be about other- about antisemitism in
9 their schools. This was the first time I was dealing
10 with it in my own school, one in which I discovered-
11 that a student had shown me- and we had- I shared it
12 with the administration. NYPD was called in. I was
13 interviewed a couple times. The point that I'm
14 making is, when I found out other schools within my
15 superintendency was dealing with the same issue, I
16 reached out to my superintendent who then directed me
17 that he was taking guidance from the meeting the
18 moment in the chancellor's office of New York City
19 schools. When I reached out to them, I got silence.
20 That continues to happen in New York City public
21 schools. When you report things to the people on
top, there was silence. There is no help. As we
both know with Sammy Steichman [sp?], who was denied
speaking in a school initially. When I reached out,

1
2 this actually would not have ever hit the media had I
3 been responded to by the superintendent of that
4 district. The point is, the people in power never
listen.

5 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Mr.
6 Spern. I just have one question for Mr. Filitti.
7 Mr. Filitti, as a Civil Rights attorney, after
8 listening to the testify from city agencies this
9 afternoon and the NYPD, do you- and the DA's offices.
10 Do you believe they are limited in their ability to
investigate and prosecute hate crimes?

11 GERARD FILITTI: I think that they're all
12 limited by the lack or presence of political will.
13 I'll give you two examples. One is the application
14 of penal code 240.-- [inaudible] need my glasses for
15 this- 240.21 which you read verbatim into the record,
16 and 240.70 which is also New York penal code about
17 protests at synagogues and house of worship. Now,
18 when we say the Park East protest directly targeting
19 it meant to intimate people who were attending
20 religious service at Park East Synagogue. Those
21 could have been pursued as criminal charges by NYPD.
They were not. There's never been a clear explanation
given as to why they were not. Instead, they're

1
2 leaving it to the federal government to come into
3 what is essentially a city prosecution a state law
4 case. And the other example that really strikes a
5 nerve is the example of zionist written on a-
6 graffiti'd onto a restaurant that is- that has kosher
7 food. The problem there is that this is not a
8 question. This is not an open-ended question. This
9 is a question that should be resolved in favor of the
10 finding of an attempt to commit a crime on the basis
11 of either religion, ancestry or national origin,
12 because when you have that combination of a kosher
13 restaurant and zionists which is understood by most
14 to be a component of Jewish identity, that is
15 something that should be de facto and primarily
16 identified as a potential hate crime and investigated
17 as such. The fact that we're not seeing NYPD provide
18 clear answers, leads the question as to whether they
19 actually have guidance. And I encourage this
20 taskforce to get those answers in the sense of what
21 guidance NYPD has, what materials they use in order
to make these determinations and how they come to
them, because as a matter of law, a lot of these
determinations are questionable and probably wrong.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
3 much. Thank you for your testimony, your expertise,
4 sharing it [inaudible] with us and sharing your
5 experiences. We will definitely do our very best to
6 follow up to hold individuals accountable and to take
7 action. Thank you. This panel is excused. And now
8 we will call the next panel: Jack Lster, Carin
9 Feldman, Abe Postnik [sp?], Moshe Davis, and Leo
10 Ferguson. You can begin.

11 LEO FERGUSON: Hello, Chairs Dinowitz and
12 Chair Vernikov and Council Members. My name is Leo
13 Fergusson. I am the Scholar and Resident of Jews for
14 Racial and Economic Justice on behalf of whom I'm
15 testifying. I'm not going to repeat the statistics.
16 We all agree that hate crimes are rising and that
17 even one is too many. The only real question is,
18 what are we going to do about it? At the outset of
19 this hearing, Chair Dinowitz said we will not be the
20 government of inaction, but that's largely what we've
21 had for as long as I've been doing this work. I have
22 been to many hearings like this one. I hve heard a
23 lot of zero tolerance rhetoric. I've heard the NYPD
24 testify over and over again about all the things that
25 they are doing, and that entire time I have just

1
2 watched the numbers go up and up and up. We don't
3 get any actual, real, effective policy. New Yorkers
4 deserve to have hate violence taken seriously and
5 deserve policy solutions that make them safer. It is
6 difficult to understand how we're going to get real
7 effective policy when unfortunately - very
8 unfortunately you have a co-chair of this committee
9 who has spouted an ongoing litany of bigoted and
10 egregious statements directed at Muslims, about queer
11 New Yorkers and even about other Jews. that Council
12 Member Vernikov is the co-chair of a committee that
13 is ostensibly dedicated to fighting hate undermines
14 the credibility of this committee and make it hard to
15 see it as anything an attempt to separate and
16 alienate Jews from the rest of New York, something
17 that can only serve the interest of antisemites.
18 There is no safety for New York's Jewish community
19 that does not include a safety and respect for all
20 New York's communities. Since our mayor has been
21 giving us a masterclass on what Democratic Socialism
can accomplish for the City, it's with remembering
that antisemitism has famously been called the
socialism of fools. While substituting empty
publicity stunts and rhetoric for good evidence-based

1
2 policy is the hate violence prevention of pools
3 [sic]. I have unfortunately watched the co-chairs
4 here demonstrate their ignorance of even the most
5 basic facts about how hate crimes are charged. I
6 haven't heard a single work about any kind of serious
7 rigorous policy response that would serve the one
8 million Jews who live in the city. This is not a
9 serious committee, and unfortunately I don't think
10 the co-chairs are serious people. New York's Jewish
11 community deserves much better.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Go
13 ahead.

14 KAREN FELDMAN: Hi. My name is Karen
15 Feldman and I am a veteran New York City public
16 school teacher, educational coordinator at the Governa
17 [sp?] Fund and co-founder of the New York city Public
18 School Alliance. For nearly a decade, I have
19 documented antisemitism in our public schools,
20 something students, educators and families are now
21 confronting every day. I recognize this hearing is
not a focus specifically on education, but I'm here
to share what I've witnessed firsthand, both in the
classroom and through my work with the New York City
Public School Alliance. I also want to acknowledge

1
2 the New York City Public School Alliance's joint
3 report with NCRI, Entryism, the Rise of Antisemitism,
4 Anti-Israel, and Anti-American bias in the New York
5 City schools. The reflection they reflect- sorry- it
6 reflects and defines what we are seeing across the
7 system. Antisemitism among the youth is rising at an
8 alarming rate. It is becoming embedded in school
9 environments, often goes under-reported and it is not
10 being addressed with the seriousness it demands. For
11 example, a student at Wagner High School in Staten
12 Island was repeatedly called a dirty Jew. He reported
13 the incident, completed the proper documentation,
14 trusting it would be handled appropriately in school.
15 Instead, the report was misfiled as a non-bias
16 incident, and it never received the investigation it
17 warranted. Therefore, he reached out to me for
18 guidance and help. As Rabbi Johnathan Sachs [sp?], a
19 blessed memory warned, antisemitism is a mutating
20 virus. Today we are seeing that mutation as
21 anti-zionism, often disguised as social justice.
Since October 7th, 2023, the New York City Public
School Alliance has collected over 11,000 pieces of
evidence. The patterns are consistent, widespread
and deeply concerning. Jewish students report being

1
2 called slurs such as Jew dog, baby killers. In
3 addition, being accused of- I'm happy to provide the
4 needed documentation for future hearings from these
5 reports.

6 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

7 AVI POSNICK: Good afternoon, Chair
8 Vernikov and Chair Dinowitz. Thank you for convening
9 this important hearing and thank you for Speaker
10 Menin for your leadership in establishing this
11 taskforce. My name is Avi Posnick. I'm the
12 Northeast Director for Stand With Us, an
13 international organization that educates and empower
14 students and communities to fight antisemitism.
15 We've all seen the number of antisemitic incidents
16 that have occurred here in New York City since
17 January. We have seen the recent videos from
18 Williamsburg and Borough Park of Jews being harassed
19 and assaulted. We are grateful to NYPD for
20 responding and investigating. However, we're not only
21 concerned about the documented incidents that have
22 been shared by NYPD, but we have also seen a general
23 climate of antisemitism growing. Examples of this
24 include people walking past the 92nd Street Y saying
25 Jews are controlling everything, a delivery worker

1
2 telling my colleague that Jews only listen to money,
3 protesters standing outside the Second Avenue Deli, a
4 Jewish-owned restaurant, because they don't like
5 Israel. All of these have happened since January
6 2026, and there are many more examples. Here in New
7 York City and across this country it is socially
8 acceptable to be antisemitic. That attitude and
9 climate need to change. Stand With Us is on the
10 forefront of empowering the next generation, and we
11 are here to work together with our leaders and
12 policymakers. Holding this hearing and others is an
13 important step, and again, I thank the Chairs for
14 this taskforce. I would also like to suggest the
15 following. Like all groups, Jews must be the ones
16 who define their own experiences of oppression. Jews
17 alone must have the right to define how they
18 experience antisemitism. A clear
19 universally-accepted definition would help to ensure
20 modern day antisemitism is able to be identified and
21 addressed. This would be a helpful guide- key word
being guide- for DAs, police, educators and more.
Finally, there needs to be accountability, not just
for those who commit violent acts, though our DAs
need to be tough on those as well, but for

1
2 non-violent antisemitic or other hateful acts. Thank
3 you again for holding this hearing and Stand With Us
4 looks forward to working with the Council and others
5 to combat antisemitism here in New York City. Thank
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

8 JACK LESTER: Good afternoon. Jack
9 Lester. First of all, I would like to thank the
10 committee and Council Member Vernikov for convening
11 this hearing. It was somewhat illuminating, but
12 somewhat troubling to sit through the testimony this
13 morning from the governmental officials who are
14 tasked with the responsibility of responding to
15 antisemitism. I think we heard a lot of kind of
16 misdirection and avoidance of the central issues.
17 But there were five issues that all governmental
18 officials agreed upon. They agreed upon
19 accountability. They agreed upon sufficient
20 resources. They agreed upon that this should be a
21 priority in terms of how the government treats hate
crimes. They agreed that there should be follow-up
on disposition. But where they did not agree and
where I was somewhat troubled, and I think Council
Member Felder in his advocacy, perhaps a little bit

1
2 overzealous, he identified the problem which I think
3 exists under this mayor- is how do we identify
4 antisemitism? I am a former prosecutor. I prosecuted
5 anti-bias crimes during the height of the Howard
6 Beach case, which some of you may not recall, but
7 there was a wave of anti-Black violence in Howard
8 Beach in Queens County, and we formed an anti-bias
9 Unit to respond to that. There was pushback against
10 that unit from the NYPD and from the many District
11 Attorney's office, because they said what evidence-
12 what evidence do you have? And I think Council
13 Member Vernikov you put a very good quest- if I just
14 may finish? You put a very good question to the NYPD
15 representative, is how do you identify antisemitism
16 and he could not answer that question.

14 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

15 JACK LESTER: And the mayor's rep could
16 not answer that.

16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

17 MOSHE DAVIS: Good afternoon. I'm Moshe
18 Davis, and I serve as the Founding Executive Director
19 of the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism. Thank
20 you, Co-chair Vernikov for convening this meeting,
21 and I'm pleased to lead the nation's first municipal

1 office dedicated solely to confronting anti-Jewish
2 hate through policy, enforcement, and education. Our
3 goal is to prove that while government cannot
4 eradicate centuries old hatred, we can create policy,
5 enforce the law, and speak with more clarity.

6 Antisemitism is not only a Jewish problem and cannot
7 be fought with nice statements and [inaudible]
8 videos. It's a public safety crisis that demands
9 municipal action. We established MOCA [inaudible]
10 Taskforce spanning more than 35 city agencies to
11 address incidents within city government and develop
12 agency-specific policies. We advance the legislative
13 agenda to protect all New Yorkers from unruly
14 demonstrations of hate, and Mayor Adams signed four
15 Executive Orders to protect Jewish New Yorkers. Then
16 in 2025, our office published the first annual MOCA
17 report documenting the work we've done and to ensure
18 this work continues. I'm glad this council has taken
19 up legislative proposals from our 2026 agenda and
20 convened this taskforce, but I am disappointed that
21 this current mayoral administration has revoked two
of those Executive Order that were there to protect
the Jewish community. The first, defining
antisemitism, and the second, prohibiting the

1
2 discriminating or boycotting of New York City
3 companies because of their perceived ties to Israel.
4 You cannot ensure the safety of Jewish New Yorkers
5 while remaining willfully blind to the sources of
6 hatred directed at them. The MOCA report provides a
7 road map for understanding that hatred, and it
8 includes legislative priorities, plans for crucial
9 safety infrastructure like security bollards in front
10 of all institutions, citywide trainings. And I urge
11 this council and this administration to keep building
12 on that foundation so that every New Yorker is safe
13 in our city. Thank you for the opportunity to
14 testify, and [inaudible].

15
16 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
17 much, and I just have a few questions for Mr. Davis.
18 Mr. Davis, as former Executive Director of the
19 Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism, can you talk a
20 little bit about why- how the IRA [sic] definition of
21 antisemitism was essential for that office's policy
framework?

18
19 MOSHE DAVIS: Yeah, sure. One of the
20 first things we did in the Mayor's Office to Combat
21 Antisemitism was create this Executive Order to use
the IRA definition of antisemitism as part of our

1
2 framework. And the reason for that is, is it's an
3 educational framework to help others understand how
4 does the Jewish community experience antisemitism?
5 Where does it come from and how does it work? And
6 it's base off of the three D's, de-legitimization,
7 demonization, and double-standards of Israel and the
8 Jewish people, and I'll explain. It's that most of
9 the hatred that we see directed toward Jewish people
10 in the past, past few years really since October 7th,
11 is that it comes from anti-Israel rhetoric,
12 propaganda that is being turned into hatred against
13 Jews and to their relationship with their [inaudible]
14 homeland [sic]. And if you're not going to understand
15 where the hatred is coming from, it's going to be
16 very hard to create policy and legislative frameworks
17 to be able to combat that hate.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: And how does that
19 rhetoric that delegitimizes or demonizes Israel
20 translate into tangible violence?

21 MOSHE DAVIS: We've seen acts of hatred
happening across the world, from Bondi Beach where
people were celebrating a Hanukkah celebration and
someone was there to- you know, for the zionist cause
to- wanted to kill Jews. he didn't come to look at

1
2 their political beliefs. He didn't come to look at
3 what they are, you know, actually doing. They were
4 being Jewish people and therefore he was coming to
5 kill them. Same things happened in Michigan, D.C.
6 and in New York City itself. We've seen many
7 incidents where people have been engaging in
8 antisemitic propaganda through their anti-Israel
9 political behavior.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
12 much and thank you, every one of you, for coming here
13 today and for your testimony and for patiently
14 waiting.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Next panel is
17 Abraham Soussan, Carin Bail, Natasha Severin, Zachary
18 Winters, and Ira Chazan. Alright, you may begin when
19 ready. As a reminder, please state your name for the
20 record.

21
22 ABRAHAM SOUSSAN: Hello. Good afternoon.
23 My name is Abraham Soussan. I wasn't planning on
24 being here today. I didn't know about the taskforce
25 until about 24 hours ago. I am the father of two
26 young kids, ages two and five. And a lifelong
27 Brooklynite. I'm from Brooklyn, New York, from south
28 Brooklyn from the Midwood Gravesend location. I grew

1
2 up there and now I send my kids to a school down
3 there. On Monday, April 20th, you know, an incident
4 occurred that shattered my belief that Brooklyn, New
5 York as a whole, is a safe place to raise a family,
6 let alone any family, not just the Jewish family.
7 But it was shattered. When I arrived for preschool
8 dismissal- this is around 5:50 p.m. Most parents,
9 they take- you know, they work. They pick up their
10 kids a little bit later, some at four. Some need to
11 work a little bit longer, so they have until six. I
12 do so every day. I go pick them up with my car. I
13 encountered when going to dismissal, I encountered a
14 mob. I'm not going to call them, you know- they're
15 "protestors" but this- it was a mob-like protest.
16 You know, their faces were covered with keffiyehs,
17 with a ski mask. They're waving flags, these flags
18 that represent extremist groups. They're chanting
19 anti-Jewish, anti-Israel slogans, effectively, you
20 know, creating a menacing environment at the door
21 step of a school. So, Michael Gerber was sitting
right where I was sitting, right, and he was saying,
oh, the video doesn't represent. I see them walking.
My vehicle could not pass because the crowd was so
big. iI spilled over into the street. I got the

1
2 attention of an officer wearing a white shirt with
3 al. the badging, and they could not be bothered. I
4 will continue if you let me. The group was, you
5 know, directly on the footstep of the school.
6 They're shouting at staff and children, intimidating
7 them. My toddlers were forced to walk through a wall
8 of fear and terror.

9 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Just that- Abraham,
10 just as a reminder, you can submit your testimony in
11 writing.

12 ABRAHAM SOUSSAN: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you very
14 much.

15 ABRAHAM SOUSSAN: One last message I just
16 wanted to be that there are- schools are off-limits.
17 There's no buffer zone. There's no managed-

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Thank
19 you. Thank you. Go ahead.

20 CARIN BAIL: [inaudible]

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Yes, and then you
can begin.

CARIN BAIL: Okay. Dear members of the
Council, thank you so much for having me here today.
My name is Carin Bail. I'm a parent, educator, civic

1 leader, and someone who's worked for the education
2 system for 25 years, and the proud granddaughter of
3 two Holocaust survivors. Antisemitism is not new,
4 but- and it's not coming from our youth or social
5 media. What is different now is how it's being
6 normalized and how people are becoming afraid to
7 speak up, hiding behind the word zionist to say
8 hateful things about Jews is hatred. This is not
9 about sides and when speech turns into harassment and
10 leads to real world behavior, we've crossed the line.
11 NYPD resources are constantly being used for daily
12 protests. I'm curious, is there data on that? We're
13 seeing swastikas in public places where children
14 play, in the lake where I walk, children being
15 targeted, pouring milk onto a child's meat sandwich
16 to mock religious identity. Kids screaming free
17 Palestine and have no idea what it means. This is
18 happening now in our community and in our schools.
19 Education is the most powerful weapon which we can
20 use to change the world, and lining the streets near
21 a high school, Francis Louis, 6,000 students attend-
I documented posters reading murdered by Israel
lining the streets to resemble those of the hostage
posters. It took weeks to get them removed. At the

1
2 same time, there's a bulletin board inside that
3 school celebrating Linda Sarsour. At MS 447 in
4 Brooklyn activist-aligned materials that are
5 connected to the mayor's office are used in art
6 lessons while Holocaust survivors are denied
7 opportunities to speak. So what messages are we
8 sending our children? The Holocaust was a systematic
9 attempt to eliminate the Jewish people and the term
10 genocide was created to describe it. And this is
11 very personal to me. So, I want to just address
12 Resolution 95, because I'm going to lose my time
13 soon. It was described as unanimous. It was not. Not
14 every Council Member supported it. And backed by 34
15 organizations- and I've seen firsthand that the lines
16 between advocacy and education are being blurred.
17 The same network shaping public messaging are also
18 influencing professional learning and curriculum, and
19 that raises serious concerns about balance and
20 transparency. One more second. Doing nothing is no
21 longer an option, and I'm asking the Council-
independent vetting of all organizations, inclusion
of credible Jewish representation, adoption of the
IRA definition, a full audit of New York City Public
School curriculum-

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CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

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CARIN BAIL: Holocaust education, and enforcement towards standards addressing antisemitism.

5

6

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

7

CARIN BAIL: Thank you. And I can provide more information if necessary.

8

9

CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you. Go ahead.

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IRA CHAZAN: Hello. Thank you for providing this opportunity. My name is Ira Chazan. Events of violence such as those on June 13th, 2024 have caused me to become scared to be on the subway system. I saw a frightening news video depict a takeover of a subway car by a masked leader of protestors screaming, "Repeat after me, raise your hands if you're a Zionist." Alarming as well was the news video I saw on April 9th, 2025 of the shutting down of Grand Central Station by anti-Israel protestors, many of them masked. I am openly identifiable Jewish due to the kippah I wear, the traditional head covering of Jewish men. This harassment is also a life-threatening, unacceptable

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2 breach of public safety and interruption of vital
3 services. Being masked in public must be illegal to
4 maintain accountability. Protests must be prohibited
5 in public transportation, facilities and roads and be
6 peaceful at all times. When I saw the news report
7 stating that on January 22nd- sorry, January 2nd,
8 2026, Mayor Mamdani revoked the implementation of the
9 IHRA definition of antisemitism which is accepted by
10 the U.S. State Department, I felt discriminated
11 against by the New York City administration. New York
12 City must adopt and implement the IHRA definition of
13 antisemitism. I saw the news reported the same day
14 stating that Mayor Mamdani revoked implementation of
15 New York State Executive Order 157, prohibiting
16 boycotts against Israel. This singling out of the
17 Jewish state as a boycott target is discriminatory
18 against the Jewish state and Jewish people. I feel
19 discrimination because I am Jewish. One more
20 sentence. Mayor Mamdani must be held accountable for
21 this and New York State Executive Order-

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] Thank
19 you.

20 IRA CHAZAN: must be reinstated.

21 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

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IRA CHAZAN: Thank you.

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ZACHARY WINTERS: Good afternoon and thank you to the Council for convening this inaugural hearing on the Antisemitism Taskforce. My name is Zachary Winters and I'm here today both as a victim of a hate crime and as a representative of the Combat Antisemitism movement. I applaud the Council for taking antisemitism seriously and creating a space to address it head-on is an important and necessary step forward. This issue is not just theoretical for me. It's personal. Last summer, I had the privilege of working in the U.S. Senate on the Foreign Relations Committee staff. During that time, I was the only visibly Jewish intern, not just on my committee, but in the entire U.S. Senate. I wore a kippah proudly every day. My work focused solely on the Asia desk and I had nothing to do with Israel policy, yet that did not matter. One day while helping prepare an ambassador for his confirmation hearing, I was singled out outside a room of protestors. I was called a baby killer and a occupation supporter, not because of anything I had done, but simply because of how I looked and the kippah on my head. That experience did not stay in Washington. Back in here

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1
2 in New York I've heard that same rhetoric walking
3 down our streets. I can recall multiple times last
4 year walking with friends to NYU chabad for Shabbat
5 services being yelled at by strangers, targeted
6 simply because we look Jewish. In those moments it
7 became clear that hate like this is not isolated and
8 it's a growing and dangerous reality. And what's
9 most troubling is how normalized this has become, how
10 often Jewish people are told to ignore it, to brush
11 it off, to accept it as part of daily life. It's
12 often just dismissed as another minor antisemitic
13 incident, nothing serious, nothing worth addressing.
14 But how can this be acceptable? I along with many
15 visibly Jewish New Yorkers walk the streets, take the
16 subways and go about our daily lives knowing that we
17 may be targeted, not for anything we've done, but
18 simply for who we are and choosing to wear our
19 kippah's proudly. I look forward to working with the
20 taskforce to improve the benefits of Jewish New
21 Yorkers all across New York. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

19 NATASHA SEVERIN: Can you hear me? First
20 of all, thank you very much for this historic
21 hearing, because victims, Jews, we have some hope

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2 after this hearing. My name is Natashas Severin. I
3 am a senior citizen and I represent single Jews who
4 are scattered around New York and live in different
5 places, especially in the public housing. It's a
6 place that I consider maybe sometimes nest of crime,
7 and nest of hate crime as well. I'm undergoing hate
8 crime as a Jew for last few years in this building,
9 before even the story in Israel. And I have- I made
10 130 calls to 311 and 911. I have got 11 police
11 reports, harassment, burglary, but never hate crime
12 report. Police do their best not to mention hate
13 crime in housing buildings, and I'm against them-
14 this. The point is our housing buildings, especially
15 senior buildings, are always filled with young
16 tenants who live here instead of their grandmothers,
17 and American taxpayers are paying for them. And these
18 younger tenants, they commit these hate crimes.
19 Police tell that- once I have such story- I have a
20 Jewish star, a David Star on my door and the star was
21 desecrated. It was covered with dirt with machine
oil. I call police, and they told me it is not hate
crime, because they didn't draw swastika on your
door. So, I was very surprised there was no- any
report. Nobody was punished. And I think that

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2 police has old-fashioned police with Jewish hate
3 crimes. That's why they don't open police report.
4 They have to change this police and make it more
5 modern.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you so much
7 for your testimony. I'd like to thank this panel for
8 their testimony, for staying, for sharing their
9 stories. As a reminder, you can submit additional
10 official testimony in writing, and of course, Chair
11 Vernikov's Offices and mine are always available for
12 other outreach. Thank you. I'll now call the next
13 panel. Ronald Greenberg [sp?], Ross Glick, Elizabeth
14 Schultz [sp?], and Jonathan Vick [sp?], and if I
15 mispronounce your names, apologies. You'll correct it
16 on the record. Thank you so much for your testimony.
17 Really appreciate it. Really appreciate you coming
18 down. Make sure your mic is on. State the name.
19 Yeah. If your mic's on, you state your name for the
20 record and you may begin your testimony.

21 ROSS GLICK: Hello. My name is Ross
22 Glick. First of all, thank you for holding this
23 hearing. I commend you. I'm very disappointed. So
24 little turnout from your colleagues. And even more
25 concerning, the feedback to the great questions you

1
2 guys were asking to Phylisa Ward [sic]. You know, in
3 my view and many people's view, anti-zionism is
4 antisemitism, right? Disagreeing with the politics
5 of the Israeli government is one thing. That's
6 certainly great and free speech. I'm an absolutist.
7 But when you're standing on the doorstep of a
8 synagogue or even in close proximity of a synagogue
9 with the intention of harassing and using slogans
10 like "globalize the intifada" in addition all of the
11 other vile obscenities, I'm confused by what I heard
12 from testimony of Phylisa Ward and even more so if
13 you saw my videos a few weeks ago. I confronted
14 Mahmoud Khalil who seems to be a friend of our mayors
15 amongst many City Council Members, and I was trying
16 to engage in a reasonable conversation, not attacking
17 him, asking him why he supported Hamas, why he stands
18 for intifada, why he's supporting it, and who was I
19 attacked by? New York City Council Members, Alexa
20 Aviles, Shahana Hanif. You can see the video,
21 screaming at me, telling me that I stand with
genocide when I stand for peace. So, I think the
problem is not just amongst the constituents, it's
amongst the Council Members, not only the mayor, but
there are many Council Members who are now

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2 propagating additional antisemitic narratives around
3 deed theft. We saw one of your Council Members get
4 arrested today, Chi Osse, in some performative what I
5 would call BS activism, and if you look at the
6 comments in social media, they're attacking and
7 blaming Jews.

8 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Reminder to please
9 stay on topic. Thank you.

10 ROSS GLICK: Yes, well this is related to
11 antisemitism, because they're fomenting antisemitism
12 with this new wave of what they're calling deed
13 theft, and they're attributing it to Chabad and
14 Hasidic Jews. If you look at the social media posts,
15 and Chi Osse is one of them who has been amplifying
16 these social media posts. I've been following it,
17 and this is another wave of antisemitism that's
18 percolating well beyond the street protest. Thank
19 you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you for your
21 testimony today. No questions?

22 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Okay, that
23 concludes the in-person portion of our public
24 testimony. We will now move to remote testimony. If
25 you're testifying remotely, please listen for your

1
2 name to be called. Once your name is called, a member
3 of our staff will unmute you. You may then start
4 your testimony once the Sergeant at Arms sets the
clock and cues you to begin.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We're
6 going to start with Alyza Lewin and they'll be
7 followed by Arlene Schlezinger [sp?]. So, Alyza,
please begin when you're ready.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 ALYZA LEWIN: Thank you Chairman Vernikov
10 and Dinowitz. I'm Alyza Lewin, President of U.S.
11 Affairs for the Combat Antisemitism Movement. I'm an
12 attorney with over 30 years of experience countering
13 religious discrimination. And earlier today,
14 witnesses from the New York Police Department
15 explained that the identity of a victim alone is not
16 sufficient to establish an incident as a hate crime.
17 They explain that what they need is evidence to
18 establish that that crime was motivated by an
19 anti-Jewish bias in order to confirm it as a hate
20 crime. That's exactly wherein lies the rub [sic],
21 because if the police doing that investigation pigeon
hole Jews as only a religion, they're likely to miss
or even ignore evidence of bias that targets Jews on

1
2 the basis of Jewish peoplehood and the Jewish
3 people's connection to Israel. To effectively
4 address antisemitism today, it's essential to
5 understand that Judaism is an ancient ethno-religion
6 defined more than religious belief and religious
7 practice. Jews are also a people whose history,
8 ancestry, theology, customs, and culture are
9 inextricably intertwined with the land of Israel.
10 Jews in New York are increasingly being targeted due
11 to this connection between the Jewish people and
12 Israel, the Jew's ancestral homeland. Those who
13 attack Jews and Jewish property in New York harass
14 the Jewish business owners and patrons because they
15 view all Jews around the world as connected to
16 Israel. Today, those who recognize that the Jews are
17 a people indigenous to Israel are frequently branded
18 as "zionists," blamed for the world's misfortune,
19 treated as pariahs and even assaulted. And in
20 addition, as the IHRA definition explains, "Israel"
21 is often substituted in the place of Jews in
conspiracy models. So instead of accusing the Jews
of inspiring to harm humanity and controlling
government, the media, and the banks, there are those
now who accuse "Israel" of these evils, and that's

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2 antisemitism. To protect Jews from contempt or
3 antisemitism, law enforcement must recognize as a
4 hate crime both when Jews are targeted on the basis
5 of their shared ancestry rooted in the land of Israel
6 and when Jews are targeted on the basis of their
7 religious belief-

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
9 you. Your time expired.

10 ALYZA LEWIN: [inaudible] Okay. I'm happy
11 to answer any further questions you may have.

12 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: I just have one
13 question for Ms. Lewin. Thank you for testifying
14 today. You stated that the IHRA working definition is
15 an essential tool that can help law enforcement
16 distinguish between a political debate and
17 antisemitic harassment of Jews. Can you elaborate
18 and explain how the IHRA definition does that?

19 ALYZA LEWIN: Sure. Thank you, Chair.
20 Understand and apply the IHRA definition correctly,
21 you have to understand both what I was explaining
about Jewish peoplehood, but you also have to
understand that the way antisemitism manifests
throughout the centuries is that it villainizes the
Jews. It demonizes the Jews, right? The Jews become

1 the source of the evil. Jews are often- and this is
2 what the IHRA definition explicitly states- is that
3 Jews are frequently blamed for why things go wrong or
4 accused of trying to harm humanity. And then the way
5 it progresses is the idea is well, since the Jews are
6 standing between us and utopia, we need to push the
7 Jews out of acceptable society. What we see today
8 and what the IHRA definition explains is that Israel
9 is frequently treated as the "Jewish collective" as
10 the collective Jew. So, if antisemitism is targeting
11 not only individual Jews, but the Jewish people,
12 sometimes what happens is you get people who will
13 just substitute in the world Israel, when what
14 they're really referring to is the Jewish people.
15 That's not a criticism of Israel as the IHRA
16 definition says, similar to that leveled against any
17 other country. Right? That's not a criticism of the
18 policies of the government of Israel which the IHRA
19 definition explicitly states cannot be regarded as
20 antisemitic. So, in other words, when you criticize
21 the policies, that's not antisemitism, but when you
substitute Israel in as the Jewish collective or
zionist in as the Jewish collective and you accuse
Israel or zionists as conspiring to harm humanity or

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2 you substitute Israel or zionist into that conspiracy
3 theory about how the Jews are always controlling the
4 world, right, because what it really is just using
5 those terms as a substitute for the collective Jew.
6 That's antisemitism, and that's how the IHRA
7 definition- it doesn't conflate criticism of Israel
8 with antisemitism. It actually distinguishes between
9 criticism of Israel that it says is not antisemitism
10 on the one hand, and the vilifying, the demonizing of
11 the Jewish people on the other hand which is
12 antisemitism.

13 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you.

14 ALYZA LEWIN: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We next
16 have Arlene Schlesinger followed by Dorina Prokopez
17 [sp?]. Arlene, you may begin when you're ready.

18 ARLENE SCHLESINGER: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Arlene Schlesinger. I want to thank you for
20 this chance of speaking up. I am a senior citizen,
21 and I'm going to remind people that there was a time
when being Jewish in the city meant strength,
belonging, and safety, safety in numbers, safety in
knowing that New York Jewish people didn't have to
live with their heads on a swivel. We helped people

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2 build neighborhoods, businesses, hospitals, schools,
3 garment centers, cultural institutions, and became
4 the very heartbeat of the city. Jewish families
5 poured their labors, dreams, and sacrifice into
6 making this city what it is. I am now called brave
7 for wearing my Star of David. Today, Jewish New
8 Yorkers are told to stay quiet, hide symbols of
9 faith, avoid certain streets, avoid certain campuses,
10 avoid speaking openly, avoid drawing attention.
11 Hatred is excused in politics and intimidation is
12 rebranded as activism. Harassment is minimized until
13 it becomes violence. We see at a danger when public
14 figures trafficking rhetoric or associations that
15 make New Yorkers feel dismissed, targeted, or unsafe.
16 When leaders cannot clearly condemn or excuse those
17 who spread it, those people in power, okay, or trying
18 to get into power, okay, they're our biggest threat.
19 This is not progress. This is surrender.
20 Antisemitism is allowed in schools and universities
21 without restraint. Education is a huge key. With the
bar so high being able to prove bias attack, think of
this- the Jewish population is only 10 percent of our
population, yet Jewish hate crimes accepted as hate
crimes are 55 percent alone in 2026. Take a time

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2 machine back, just a short time ago, Jewish New
3 Yorkers felt safe when our children and grandparents
4 could move around the city without calculating risk
5 for being visibly Jewish. I would like to see that
6 education is mandated on Holocaust Remembrance Month
7 or Jewish Month.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Time
9 expired.

10 ARELENE SCHLESINGER: Okay. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

12 We'll next have Darina Prokopetz [sp?] followed by an
13 anonymous testifier. Darina, you can begin as soon as
14 you're ready.

15 DARINA PROKOPETZ: Good afternoon. My
16 name is Darina Prokopetz and I thank you for the
17 opportunity to testify today. I was not planning to
18 be here, but I learned that just two days ago there
19 was a mob [inaudible] Palestinian and IRGC flags
20 outside my family synagogue and the school that one
21 of my children attends, and that my younger child is
to start attending this fall. District Attorney
Gonzalez rightfully stated today that no one should
feel afraid to send their children to Jewish school
or to attend their house of worship, but I do feel

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2 afraid. So much so that I have already stopped
3 allowing my five-year-old son who previously
4 regularly attended synagogue to go. The mob outside
5 the synagogue two weeks [sic] ago [inaudible] this
6 fear. I'm not willing to gamble on whether one of my
7 children would God forbid become a hate crime
8 statistic if and when this antisemitic mob under the
9 guise of free speech escalates its behavior to an
10 actual crime, and on whether or not the NYPD could
11 foresee their conduct. I appreciate the right to free
12 speech, but I want to know what my recourse is in
13 order to feel that my children are safe in this city.
14 I do not find anything that was said today by
15 representatives of the NYPD and others reassuring or
16 meaningfully and practically intended to actually
17 protect my children from exposure to antisemitic hate
18 and violence, whether or not constituting a defined
19 criminal act. I find empty rhetoric and empty
20 gestures of sympathy deeply insufficient and
21 unacceptable when it comes to the safety of my
children. At this point, it appears that little is
done to confront antisemitism, unless and until
egregious physical violence or harm occurs, and this
is not an acceptable standard. More should be done

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2 at the forefront to prevent such mobs and antisemitic
3 intimidation. I thank you for your time today.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
5 We'll next have anonymous followed by Dora Finns
6 [sp?]. Anonymous, you can begin as soon as you're
7 ready. Okay, we'll come back to you. Dora Finns, you
8 can begin when you're ready.

9 DORA FINNS: Good afternoon. Thank you,
10 Council Members. My name is Dora Finns. I'm a
11 lifelong New Yorker and a descendant of Holocaust
12 survivors. I'm testifying today because I think
13 antisemitism is a serious problem in New York City
14 and it deserves to be addressed that way, but this
15 taskforce is co-chaired by a known bigot with a
16 history of making offensive statements about Jews and
17 Muslims and using a gun to intimidate campus
18 protestors. Her presence here delegitimizes this
19 entire taskforce. I'm now going to read aloud some
20 of Council Member Vernikov's own tweet. "Hollywood
21 was hijacked years ago by the radical left. It
should come as no surprise that it's a cesspool of
woke, pandering, virtual signaling tools. It should
come as even less of a surprise that Hollywood claps
for a self-hating Kapo Jew denouncing his

1 Jewishness.” This was on March 11th, 2024 about the
2 film maker Johnathan Glazer [sp?] at the Oscars. The
3 Council Member put the word Jew in quotation marks,
4 implying that Glazer is not a real Jew. It should be
5 set for the record that Kapo is a disgusting and
6 unacceptable antisemitic term. It comes from the term
7 used to describe Jews made to be Nazi collaborators
8 in concentration camps during the Holocaust. The
9 Council Member has used this term repeatedly to
10 degenerate Jewish New Yorkers. On October 22nd, 2025,
11 the Council Member tweeted in response to a Jewish
12 New Yorker sharing a letter then candidate Mamdani
13 wrote to the Hasidic community in Jewish- in Yiddish,
14 sorry- “OMG, he wrote a campaign card in Yiddish, but
15 he wants you to burn in an oven. How much do you
16 hate yourself, Kapo?” That same day, she tweeted at
17 the grandson of Holocaust survivors who shared the
18 Yiddish letter, “You should change your bio to Kapo
19 sellout.” Council Member Vernikov’s antisemitism is
20 only the tip of the iceberg. She has also made
21 extremely Islamophobic statements, especially about
Mayor Mamdani. In addition to the outrageous false
claim that our city’s first Muslim mayor wants Jews
to burn in an oven, she has also called him a Marxist

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2 Jihadist, a terrorist lover, a radical Isalmist
3 sympathizer who pals around with jihadists. She even
4 defended Elon Musk calling people who accused him of
5 giving a Nazi salute at the inauguration-

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
7 you. Time has expired.

8 DORA FINNS: She has no business-

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
10 We'll now turn back to anonymous followed by Irene
11 Segal [sp?].

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

13 ANONYMOUS: On July 27, 2022 I was a
14 passenger on the subway on my way home. While I was
15 seated, a group of young men entered the train car.
16 They began playing loud music and dancing on the
17 subway-

18 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: [interposing] I'm
19 sorry to interrupt. It's very difficult to hear.
20 Can you please try to speak a little more loudly.

21 ANONYMOUS: Sure. During the activity,
one of the individuals in the group landed on my foot
[inaudible] individual [inaudible] he said. The
situation escalated quickly and [inaudible]. The
individual approached and struck me in the face with

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2 his fist. [inaudible] caused immediate pain and
3 visible injury, and I began bleeding everywhere.
4 [inaudible] the individual and his friend [inaudible]
5 the subway, and while he was [inaudible] cause me
6 additional fear and stress. As a result [inaudible]
7 the back of my head, including bleeding and pain as
8 well as emotional distress [inaudible].

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
10 We'll next hear from Irene Segal. Irene, you may
11 begin when you're ready.

12 IRENE SEGAL: My name is Irene Segal. I'm
13 a Jewish educator, a member of JVP, JFREJ [sic], and
14 also the Jewish Community Safety Campaign with whom
15 I've developed a community safety guide for Jewish
16 institutions. I co-facilitate trainings against
17 antisemitism and other forms of hate and proudly
18 advocate for the JFREG Develop Community Safety
19 Initiative adopted by the City Council Progressive
20 Caucus. I'll add that I'm a non-zionist Jew and
21 embody the living truth that zionism is not an
intrinsic component of Judaism and nor is criticism
of zionists or zionism intrinsically antisemitic by
any stretch of the imagination. I'll also correct an
earlier statement that claim protestors at Park E

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2 [sic] synagogue were targeting Jews attending worship
3 services, when there were in fact no services taking
4 place at the time. Instead, there was a political
5 non-religious event encouraging attendees to
6 illegally occupy Palestinian lands. So, I'm here
7 because I think antisemitism is a serious problem and
8 deserves to be addressed that way, but this taskforce
9 is co-chaired by a known bigot with a history of
10 offensive statements about both Jews and Muslims, and
11 using a gun to intimidate campus protestors. Her
12 presence delegitimizes this entire taskforce. And
13 I'll now read aloud some of Vernikov's own tweets.
14 "Hollywood was hijacked years ago by the radical
15 left. It should come as no surprise that it's a cess
16 pool of woke, pandering, virtual signaling tools. It
17 should come as even less of a surprise that Hollywood
18 claps for self-hating Kapo Jew denouncing his
19 Jewishness." This was about Jonathan Glazer at the
20 Oscars who Vernikov implies is not a real Jew. It
21 should also be noted that Kapo is a disgusting and
unacceptable antisemitic term used to describe Jews
made to Nazi collaborators in concentration camps
during the Holocaust. Vernikov has repeatedly used
this term to degenerate Jewish New Yorkers,

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2 especially non-zionists. Vernikov also tweeted in
3 response to a Jewish New Yorker-

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
5 you. Time has expired.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
7 I'll now read out the names of everyone who signed up
8 to testify, and if you hear your name and wish to
9 testify, please get the Sergeant's attention. Michael
10 Cohen, Judy Baum, Maureen Silverman, Naheed Norani
11 [sp?], Catherine Wolfe [sp?], Tali Finkelstein [sp?],
12 David Okinov [sp?], and Adrian Bond [sp?]. Seeing no
13 one else signed up to testify, I'll turn back to the
14 Chairs.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I just want to
16 thank everyone who came out today from the
17 administration, everyone who testified, of course my
18 co-chair, Chair Vernikov, and my colleagues on the
19 taskforce. You know, this taskforce is really
20 critical in addressing a problem that it seems a lot
21 of people understand exists, but others don't want to
admit exists. That is the prevalence of antisemitism
both in terms of hate crimes and acts of bias that go
severely under-reported. And with today's hearing,
hearing from members of the community but also our

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2 city agencies, we are going to continue to take steps
3 to make sure we are reporting these crimes, people
4 know what to do, because people deserve to be safe in
5 our city. The Jewish community deserves to feel safe
6 and in contrast to a dark history of being persecuted
7 and evicted from our homes, this government is not
8 going to sit idly by and let that happen. We are
9 going to act. We are going to do something to make
10 sure Jews are and feel safe in our city.

11 CHAIRPERSON VERNIKOV: Thank you, Chair
12 Dinowitz. Seeing no one else who wishes to testify,
13 this hearing is now adjourned.

14 [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 May 14, 2026