CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE TO COMBAT HATE

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway- 8th Fl.-Hearing Rm. 1

B E F O R E: Yusef Salaam
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Shekar Krishnan
Darlene Mealy
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Lynn C. Schulman
Carl Wilson
Julie Won

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

Vijah Ramjattan
Executive Director of NYC Office for Prevention of Hate Crimes

Phylisa Wisdom
Executive Director of Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism

Aliya Latif
Executive Director at the Office of Faith-Based Partnership

Scott Richman
ADL New York

Julio Cesar Herrera
Hispanic Federation

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CAIR New York

Hillary Stuchin
UJA Federation

Madison Mounty
Simon Wiesenthal Center

Marisa Bearak
AJC

Leslie Claire Allen
NYC Anti Violence Project

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for the Committee to Combat Hate. If you would like to testify, you must fill out a testimony slip with one of the Sergeant-at-Arms. You can also submit testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov. At this time, please silence all electronic devices and no one may approach the dais at any time during this hearing. Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Yusef Salaam, and I serve as the chair to the Committee to Combat Hate. I would like to first start off by thanking everyone for joining us here today, and I would also like to recognize my colleagues as they come into the room. None yet, but- today's oversight hearing examines the role of community engagement in preventing and responding to hate and bias. New York City is one of the most diverse places on Earth. The diversity of our— the diverse— that diversity is our greatest strength, and it is a source of great pride and unity for New Yorkers. Hate crimes strike at the very heart of this strength by seeking to divide, seeking to pit us

against each other, as opposed to uniting one another. They target not just the individual but all our communities, sending a message of fear and exclusion to all who share the victim's faith, the victim's race, the victim's gender identity, or the victim's background. That harm is immediate, but it can be— it can reverberate throughout generations. At our last hearing, we examined some very concerning multi-year trends of increasing hate crime and bias. Yet in 2025, we also saw some encouraging trends. Last year, New York City recorded a 20 percent citywide reduction in hate crime complaints across the board compared to the prior year. This includes decreases across all four major categories of bias: religion, race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, and of course, age. Much of this progress reflects sustained investments in prevention, in youth leadership, in community outreach, and in coordinated citywide action. We are here to learn more about this work and how it can be supported and expanded in the coming years. And at the same time, we must also take an honest look at where the fight against hate is falling short. Even in a year of overall progress, some communities still

suffered spikes in hate bias violence. Buddhist communities, for example, saw a dramatic increase in reported hate crimes, and anti-female crimes rose as well. These variations remind us that aggregate data can obscure real challenges and harms. We must ensure that no community is left behind and that no community is ignored. We also know that hate crimes are chronically underreported, not necessarily because of distrust in government, although that can be a part of it. Instead, many turn to their communities for trusted support when they have been the target of hate and bias. This is why it's crucial that we partner with community-based organizations to build trust, to encourage reporting, and to connect affected individuals and communities with the resources and support they need. Today we will hear from three offices whose work reflects this principle: the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism, and the Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships. I look forward to a thoughtful discussion surrounding these issues, as well as feedback and testimony from the administration and of

course members of our public. I'll now like to pass it to our Committee Counsel to administer the oaths.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here. If you could raise your right hand, please, and repeat after me. I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this committee. Thank you so much. You may begin.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: There it is. Good afternoon, Chair Salaam, members of the Committee to Combat Hate, and all members of the New York City Council. My name is Vijah Ramjattan, and I am the Executive Director for the New York City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, also known as OPHC, which under Mayor Mamdani's leadership is now proudly part of the city's new Office to come-for Community Safety. Before I begin, I want to thank Mayor Mamdani, the Deputy Mayor of Community Safety, Renita Francois, and the Commissioner of the Office of Community Safety, Dr. Ayesha Delany-Brumsey, for their bold vision and for making the prevention of hate a genuine priority of this administration. The decision to bring OPHC into the Office of Community Safety was not a routine reorganization. It was a

clear statement of value. By preventing hate before it ever takes hold is not peripheral to public safety, but rather it is central to it. That commitment has finally given offices like ours the mandate, the partners, and the support to do the work at the scale our city deserves. For too long, hate prevention has often been treated as an afterthought, expected to solve growing challenges without the resources necessary to meet the moment. This administration has made a different choice. The Mamdani administration has made an unprecedented commitment to hate prevention by increasing funding to OPHC by $26 million, an increase of more than 800 percent. This historic investment recognizes that preventing hate is not simply about responding after incidents occur. It is about building resilient communities where hate cannot take root in the first place. For the first time, OPHC is being resourced at a scale that matches both the urgency of its mission and the diversity of the city it serves. That investment will allow us to expand programming, deepen partnerships, reach more communities, hire more staff, and build a city prevention infrastructure. It is an investment worthy of our

city, the most diverse city in the world. That diversity is one of our greatest strengths, but it also requires intentional investments to keep those bonds strong, investments in relationship building, investments in education, investments in community trust. Today, I would like to highlight how OPHC, with the backing of the Mamdani administration, fulfills its mission to prevent hate, strengthen communities, and foster belonging across our city. No New Yorker should ever feel unsafe because of their identity, their beliefs, their appearances, or background. This administration had made that principle a foundation of its community safety agenda, and OPHC is proud to help carry it forward. One of the primary ways we accomplish this work is through Partners Against Hate Initiative, or PATH. PATH is the backbone of New York City's community-based hate prevention infrastructure. Through six anchor organizations and more than 40 sub-vendors, PATH provides culturally responsive programming in more than 20 languages and reaches communities across all five boroughs. Because we believe hate prevention is not only about responding after harm occurs, PATH helps build resilient

communities by creating opportunities for New Yorkers to connect, learn from one another, and recognize the common humanity that binds us all. In fiscal year 2025 alone, through our PATH initiative, and OPHC-led programming, we conducted nearly 700 events, engaged more than 62,000 participants across New York City, worked alongside over 240 partners, and in over 20 different languages. These efforts include anti-hate education, victim support services, conflict de-escalation training, youth programming, and outreach to communities that have historically faced barriers to reporting hate incidents. What makes PATH successful is that it is led by trusted organizations deeply rooted in the communities they serve. These organizations are often the first places residents turn to for support, information, and healing after experiencing bias or hate. Co—PATH partners, including the 67 Precinct Clergy Council, the Jewish Community Relations Council, JCRC, the New York Anti-Violence Project, the Arab American Association of New York, the Asian American Federation, and the Hispanic Federation, work together to combat antisemitism, anti-LGBTQ+ hate, Islamophobia, anti-Asian hate, anti-Arab hate, anti-Black racism,

and other forms of bias while fostering inclusion, solidarity, and safety for all New Yorkers. The impact extends beyond any single event. When communities have trusted relationships, know where to seek help, and feel connected to one another, they are better equipped to prevent conflicts from escalating, support victims when incidents occur, and build resilience against hate and bias. Another way we accomplish this work is by bringing communities together through initiatives such as Unity in the Community 7 on 7. This initiative emerged during a period of heightened concern along Roosevelt Avenue in Queens. Public conversations about street vending, quality of life concerns, and changing conditions in the corridor were creating tension among residents and community groups, threatening to erode trust and deepen division. Rather than allowing communities to retreat further into silos, OPHC chose to create spaces for dialogue and connection. OPHC and its partners brought together diverse communities connected by the 7 train corridor— 7 on 7, that's the whole thing— including East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asian communities, Latino communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and all diverse of other

communities. We partner with city agencies to bring resources directly to neighborhoods while creating opportunities for residents to share experiences, learn about one another, our culture, and identify common concerns. The goal was simple: to remind New Yorkers that what we have- that there is more in common that unites us than divides us. The initiative demonstrated the power of bringing communities together by creating opportunities for residents to connect, share experiences, and build relationships. It helped strengthen trust, deepened understanding, and reinforced the sense of belonging that makes communities resilient. These connections are the foundation of community cohesion helping neighbors see one another not as strangers, but as partners in building a strong and more connected community. Finally, as a critical part of our long-term prevention strategy, is investing in young people through our Youth Ambassador Leadership Program, or YALP. Launched in October 2025, and in partnership with New York City Public Schools, the Youth Ambassador Leadership Program, or YALP, empowers young people between the ages of eight and 18 to become ambassadors of inclusion, respect, and

belonging. The program brings together youths, parents, educators, mentors, and city leaders from across all five boroughs. Participants receive training in leadership development, civic engagement, public speaking, community organizing, and restorative practices. What makes YALP particularly powerful is that young people are not simply learning about leadership, they are practicing it. Participants in the program return to their schools and communities to lead projects, facilitate discussions in their schools and communities, and serve as a positive role model for their peers. At a time when young— many young people are exposed to misinformation, division, and online hate, YALP provides an opportunity to equip the next generation with the tools necessary to build stronger, more inclusive communities. The young people we engage today will become the community leaders, educators, public servants, business owners, and parents of tomorrow. By teaching empathy, leadership, civic engagement, and respect for differences, now we are investing in the long-term prevention of hate and bias before it takes root. All told, our programming at OPHC, which includes interfaith engagement, youth

art projects, community dialogues, anti-hate education, and victim support services, help build trust, strengthen relationships across communities, support victims, and create opportunities for New Yorkers to engage across differences before conflicts occur. As part of the Office of Community Safety and with the support of Mayor Mamdani, Deputy Mayor Francois, and the newly appointed OCS Commissioner Dr. Ayesha Delany-Brumsey, OPHC is working closely with our partner— with partner offices to strengthen coordination, share data and best practices, and identify new opportunities to advance community safety. Together we are helping shape a coordinated approach to prevention that recognizes the importance— the important role community engagement, education, and relationship building play in keeping New Yorkers safe. Mayor Mamdani's historic investment in OPHC will allow us to expand and enhance our work. We are exploring ways to deepen engagement within emerging communities, strengthen community-based hate prevention efforts, broaden access to culturally responsive programming, and build upon successful initiatives such as the PATH program, the YALP program, and community project grants. Finally, I

want to emphasize that preventing hate is not the responsibility of any one agency. It requires collaboration across government, schools, faith communities, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and everyday New Yorkers. We are fortunate to do this work under an administration that shares that belief and has backed it with, with real attention and investment. OPHC is proud to serve as a convener and connector in that work. Every day, we witness communities choosing understanding over division, dialogue over conflict, and unity over hate. Those moments may not always make headlines, but they are the foundation of a safer and stronger New York City. Under Mayor Mamdani's leadership, we have a true opportunity to build a city where belonging is strengthened, communities are connected, and neighbors see one another as partners in a shared future. By investing in prevention, we can address the conditions that allow hate to take root and create communities that are more resilient, inclusive, and safe. Thank you for your continued partnership and support. I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for your testimony. I'd like to recognize that we've been joined by Council Member Darlene Mealy.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you, Chair Salaam, and all esteemed members of the Committee to Combat Hate. My name is Phylisa Wisdom, and I'm the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism. The Mamdani administration is deeply grateful to all of you for the work that you do, both in this committee and outside of it, to ensure that our city remains safe and welcoming for every single New Yorker, regardless of their background. Our city is in a delicate moment, even amidst the joy that so many of us have felt this summer. While hate crimes as a whole are on the decline, we see a distressing trend of rising hate crimes targeting the Jewish community, making up over 50 percent of the sum total. The Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism is in the midst of a listening tour with members of the Jewish community across all five boroughs. While we've heard universal appreciation for the diversity of this city and its rich Jewish culture, we've also heard some distressing anecdotes. Nearly every single visibly

Jewish person we've spoken to, for example, someone who wears a kippah or other religious garment, has said that they've personally been the victim of an antisemitic incident. These incidents have left entire communities shaken, afraid to proudly do what they've done for years, to simply be who they are in the greatest city in the world. Other New Yorkers who wear religious garments understand this fear. Whether or not these rise to the level of crimes, they represent a tear in the fabric of our city. It's wrong, it's unacceptable, and it's something that my office, in collaboration with the NYPD, OPHC, City Commission on Human Rights, and the Office of Mass Engagement, and many other offices up to and including the Mayor himself, is working day in and day out to chip away at. When this administration entered City Hall, the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism was a six-month-old office consisting of a single employee. The work was not yet designed to stand the test of time beyond any one administration. The mayor and our team have set out to remedy that. I'm joined in this work by Deputy Director Josh Binderman, and we are in the midst of growing our staff to at least one or two others. This office will

be equipped to advance meaningful and proactive policy, programming, and messaging with a goal to stand the test of time. We've revitalized this office's interagency work, meeting individually with nearly every single member of the Interagency Task Force to Combat Antisemitism, while also convening an initial group meeting to discuss how antisemitism arises in the contexts of various agencies. Previously, this task force had a single meeting, and members are enthusiastic about working together in pursuit of our shared goals. We maintain strong, consistent, open lines of communication with NYPD, OPHC, CCHR, and Office of Mass Engagement, and other relevant agencies. We've also served as a facilitator for conversations on these issues with a variety of agencies. Our office has developed and retained close relationships with clergy, organizations, and other community leaders to understand how antisemitism impacts their day-to-day work and the New Yorkers they serve. Moreover, our office, along with the Office of Mass Engagement, plays a critical role in constituent services ensuring that Jewish communities around New York City are able to access functions of government while also ensuring cultural competency

across agencies. Our office seeks to combat antisemitism with a robust whole-of-government approach with education on the front end and enforcement on the back end. As I mentioned in the beginning of my testimony, our office is in the— is deep in the throes of our listening tour, having met with scores of Jewish New Yorkers from across the religious and political spectrum. We are using these sessions in part to develop what may be the first municipal strategy to combat antisemitism in the United States. We're tracking to have this released by the end of the summer. Any New Yorker who's interested in joining a listening session or otherwise connecting with our office can reach out via the contact form on our website, which is at newyorkcity.gov/combatantisemitism. On this note, the administration strongly believes that government should be accessible. Under the previous iteration of this office, there was not a website or way to contact the office unless you had an existing connection. Therefore, it was a priority for us to develop a website where New Yorkers could get in touch with us while also demonstrating details of some of the day-to-day work of our office. The

website will continue to be updated over the coming months and years, and we look forward to further developing and formalizing all of our communications practices. Finally, I'd be remiss if I did not mention what my colleague just mentioned, which is one of the most exciting priorities and accomplishments of the Mamdani administration thus far, the massive influx of funding into OPHC. OPHC's funding has dramatically increased under this administration from $3 million annually to $29 million annually, an increase of 886 percent. We are in close communication with OPHC and the Office of Community Safety broadly regarding how to best use this increased funding to meaningfully combat antisemitism alongside our administration's work to combat all other forms of hate. Thank you again for inviting my colleagues and I to testify before this critical committee. I look forward to answering your questions and continuing our shared work over the coming years.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for your testimony. Alright, I'm going to- first, thank you for your testimony. I'd like to acknowledge as well that we have been joined by Council Member Carl

Wilson. And I'm going to start with some questions, starting with the Office of the Prevention of Hate Crimes. OPHC prides itself on its work with community partners. Could you speak to some of the long-term, long-standing partnerships that you have in this— in the selection process for these partnerships?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, thank you so much. OPHC's PATH program is the vehicle where we work with over 60+ organizations, but we have six major anchor organizations who we work with directly, and then they have sub-vendors under each of their portfolios. Namely, we have the God Squad, 67th Precinct Clergy Council, JCRC, Jewish Council of Relations. We have the Arab American Association of New York. We have the Hispanic Federation, the New York City Anti-Violence Project, and we have the Hispanic Federation, and Asian American Federation, if I missed that one. Those are the six anchor organizations that we work with. Since the inception of this office in 2019, those groups who are identified as the broader groups who can take the load of amplifying this work, but also to bring this work on a grassroots level across New York City

diverse communities, and they have the bandwidth to do so citywide across the five boroughs.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: How does OPHC allocate funds to organizations that it works with? And are there some neighbors— are there some neighbor— are there some neighborhoods or community prioritized when it comes to funding? And if so, what is that prioritization based on?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yes, so before my time in the office, in 2019 when this office was founded, those were the organizations that were selected to be part of this programming. After coming into this role, I realized that— I noticed the great work they were doing, and also to the diversity of portfolios that they have under each of the organizations. The way we allocate the funding is historically each organization receive the same amount of funding across the $3 million, and then they subvent to vendors across New York City to reach most neighborhoods. Of course, with the prior funding, we could not reach every single community.

That's why we welcome this administration's expanded funding by 800 percent to make sure that we are going to meet most of the communities in New York City going forward.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: In fiscal year 2025, OPHC worked towards reaching communities that are typically underserved by prevention services. For example, through the PATH program in 2025, OPHC reported engaging with five grassroots organizations in underserved areas of Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. Which areas in Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan were targeted? How does OPHC determine whether an area is underserved? And are there plans to target areas in Staten Island and the Bronx?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So I'm happy to report that we do have programming in all five boroughs across New York City. So aside from the PATH program OPHC has what's called, in partnership with the City Commission on Human Rights, we have a program called the Community Project Grants that we sought to fund 10 organizations across New York City or individuals, anyone 14 years old or older, with $10,000 each year to meet those needs that you mentioned before, the pockets that we feel like is

missing out in the community grassroots work. But also too, if we see an escalation, just this year, this past two months, we worked with a group called Central Queens Against Hate because of the rise in hate crimes in Queens, specifically in the Forest Hills area, Rego Park area, Kew Gardens area, and we pivot and to make sure we give out seed grants as well. So this past year and in 2025, we funded approximately 12 different seed grant opportunities, and this year we gave out 14 seed grants to different community members across the city to meet those needs as hate crimes happen.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And can you tell us more about the Roosevelt Island 7-on-7 series and any initial feedback that you've received from the communities that are being served? And has this part— this project concluded, or is engagement with these communities ongoing? And are there plans to replicate 7 on7, the 7 on 7 model, by working with any other transit corridors or by replicating any other successful aspects of this particular series?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, thank you. I'm very proud of the 7 on 7 program. I mean, the name is catchy, right? 7 on 7. So we want to do

five on the 1s and 10 on the A's. And, you know, one of the strengths of New York City is its diversity. I think if you go into any train cart in New York City, you will find the wealth of New York City's diversity on any cart. Sadly, no one speaks to each other. So we have used the veins of the natural existing subway lines and bus routes to use those as connectors of communities, but more or less— more so to highlight that diversity, but also to bring those teams together. The 7 on 7 Project came about in a time when we saw heightened community disharmony along Roosevelt Avenue, and different communities, you know, blaming each other for the street vending or whatever activities were happening. So we saw this as an opportunity to bring these communities together, but more importantly, we wanted to bring communities who belong to one part of the world in one, the same room to build unity within that community. For example, we brought together 12 Southeast Asian communities in one room. We brought together six different nations in one room for the East Asia. We brought together almost, like, 10 different countries, people for the Southeast— for the South Asia community, Breaking Bread, Building Bond

initiative. These programs bring these communities together first and foremost to build belonging. To say, here, we see you, we appreciate you, and we value you and all you bring to New York City. This program is ongoing. We have completed six of the seven– 7 on 7, six of them. And the final one is gonna be where we bring all the communities together in one culminating one and say, we are one Roosevelt Avenue. We have heard positive things about this program in the sense where communities felt seen, they felt respected, they felt heard, and more importantly, city government as a whole is coming to their doors where we are bringing resources and saying, hey, how can we serve you? How can we make sure you feel seen, heard, and respected exactly as you are? This is one of the priorities of this administration to make sure every New York City— and again, I'm thankful and I'm grateful for Mayor Mamdani's expansion by 800 percent in our office to make sure we can expand this program, of course, with staff as well, to every borough. So we have five of these sessions happening all the time across the five boroughs. Staten Island only has one train, but we'll find other routes as well.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Gotcha. OPHC emphasizes the importance of working with our city's youth as key components in hate prevention. Which of your youth-based initiatives have seen particular success, and what do you attribute that to? In addition to that, what feedback have you received from the youth, from the young people that participate in your programs and at the events, and how is this feedback incorporated into future planning?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Thank you for that. So we have a young lady, her name is Zoe, and we had gone— so we started a program called NYC Youth Moving Forward Against Hate. This initiative started in 2025, in January of 2025. When I came into this role, at that time, we saw a lot of college campuses experiencing heightened, you know, hate and bias and discrimination. And my thought was that at some point, these college campus students were youths. And I truly believe that the first time a child or a person know what a hate crime is, is not when they commit one or when one is committed towards them. They should know what the difference between bias, discrimination, and hate is. And more

importantly, they should know that there are consequences for these actions. But more— but also to build unity and alliance among these students at a very tender age. So the NYC Youth Moving Forward Against Hate program, we are in schools. And it was groundbreaking because before people said it couldn't be done because parents will rally against it. And we found a way to work with principals and school districts to say, how can we come to your schools and speak to the 4th and 5th graders so they leave with knowledge going to middle school about hate, bias, and discrimination? How can we speak to elementary students in the 7th and 8th grade, and high school students in the 11th and 12th grade, and expand this programming also to colleges? And I'm proud to say we have worked with City College, City Tech in Brooklyn, to also bring this knowledge there too. And what we're doing, we're talking about hate, bias, discrimination, the difference between these things, how to recognize it, but more importantly, how we can build allyship. How can we appreciate the differences in our classrooms? And what we have seen at this point is more than 35 percent of our students- and we do a pre and a post survey to these programming. And

we leave each student with one of these brochures that we have printed out, that we've made. We have an elementary school brochure, we have a high school brochure, we had a middle school brochure, and an adult version. And at the back of these brochures, there's a part to sign that says, I pledge to help create a community where everyone is safe and accepted. And I pledge to defend my peers if they are being treated unfairly based on who they are. And I pledge to help New York City move forward against hate. And each student gets one of these to sign, and they make an informal pledge, like we pledge to you, to tell the truth. And they say they're going to be a part of me to solve hate crimes. The point is this: this work cannot be done from my office sitting where I am. It has to be done on every single level, on the grassroots level, at the schools, at the mosques, at the synagogues, on the streets, at the bars. Wherever we can go, we go. And we ask each student to sign this portfolio— this flyer and keep it with them. Lastly, I'll say that we've seen over 35 percent of students report post-survey that they now know the difference between hate, bias, and discrimination. More than 18 percent of them now know the difference

between those three, what resources their school have, and more than 20 percent of them know now, know they can get in trouble if they continue to do hate, bias, and discrimination.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Listen, that's really, really excellent. Young people are often unfortunately exposed to hate right in their very own schools, one of the places that they should feel the safest. So my question is, how does OPHC track the impacts of its work in schools, whether it be bullying, hateful graffiti, property damage, or hate-motivated violence? Has any schools reported improvements as a result of the OPHC programming that has been conducted? And also, has OPHC ever been contacted for guidance or education specifically in response to an incident at a school?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, thank you for that question. So again, OPHC's work is not enforcement in nature. We are preventative, so we don't want anyone calling NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force in the first place, but we do get our reports from the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force who gives us a report quarterly, monthly, as I ask them to let me know which schools you are seeing increased reported bias

incidents happening on their premises. And then we reach out to those schools and we say, hey, here's what we do, here's what we can do and help you to do this programming. And we go to the schools and we meet them. This program has been successful as we have received a lot of incoming requests to go to the schools. We have also gone beyond the New York City public schools. This past year we went to the largest Imam training school in Hillside Avenue where we educated all the students who were part of that school over there. So we go beyond the New York City public schools. Anywhere students are learning, we want to be also there teaching about hate, bias, and discrimination. The good thing is that, listen, as I mentioned it again, I am super excited about the administration's investment in our office because while these are all programs we tested out to see if they're working and what the impact is, now we have the real backing. We have the real funding. And the commitment from this administration to make sure we expand this success across the city.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for that. I want to move towards the Mayor's Office to Combating

Antisemitism. Could you provide what combating antisemitism covers?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Sure, thank you for that question. So like my colleague, my office is not an enforcement office but rather focused by executive order on prevention, policy, and programming to prevent antisemitic incidents and also include— increase social cohesion across groups.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: As a diverse city, I'm concerned about antisemitic people writ large. And of course, Arabs are ethnically Semitic. Arabs and even Aramaic are Semitics, and, you know, there's— these are Semitic languages, of course. And what we've seen is that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all born in the Semitic region. Considering that scholarly studies have shown that hate against Muslims are often categorized under race-based bias, we do not know the true numbers of anti-Muslim hate. On top of that, anti-Muslim hate are often not reported due to the 9/11-related fear. In parallel, Arabs are often ethno-linguistically— or an ethno-linguistic group. What I find interesting is that considering the rise in hatred against Arabs, Muslims, and Jews, despite underreporting of such

incidents, specifically with regards to the Arabs and Muslims, they continue to be miscategorized and thrown into a bucket of broader-based hate-based incidents instead of being considered equally as antisemitism, despite being a Semitic of origin. Can we expect that MOCA will incorporate these groups under the umbrella of antisemitism and then subcategorize them based on what origin, such as antisemitism against Jews, antisemitism against Muslims, and antisemitism- a little bit of a tongue twister- against Arabs, etc.?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So I agree with you that there are lots of forms of hate that are scary and rising and should— and, and deserve an enormous amount of attention from our city government. Anti-Semitism is widely understood across countries and academic contexts to be prejudice, hatred, and violence against Jews because they're Jewish. I understand what you're saying about Semitic and what that word means, but the term anti-Semitism is widely understood to be against Jewish people because they are Jewish. So in terms of how this administration combats the serious crises of anti-Arab and Islamophobic hate and bias incidents,

that is across other agencies. This agency— this office is focused on antisemitism and the safety and thriving of the Jewish community. And across all of our offices and across City Hall, there is certainly focus on those other communities. But I would, I guess, refer those questions to my colleagues who work on a broader hate and bias portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: No, I definitely appreciate that. I think that especially in a place like New York City, the most diverse place in the world, there definitely is an opportunity for us to be able to pull that reality into the broader meaning of antisemitism. Because of course those folks who are here are saying to themselves, hold on, I'm of Semitic origin as well. I speak Semitic languages. How come I'm not included? And I think that to exclude them causes greater division, right? Especially when we want to be able to— you know, I'm looking at what's going on around the world and the fact that countries have been able to begin tolerance— I don't want to say experiments, but they've been doing tolerance exercises, and it's been really, really great. And I think America,

specifically New York City, has an opportunity to really be a leader in that particular space.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you. And I have colleagues in the room who I'm sure will talk when it's time— or not colleagues, community organizations— so I'm sure we'll talk about the definitions of those terms when it comes time for public testimony. The Mamdani administration does understand the term antisemitism to be related particularly to the Jewish community, but also sees a responsibility to combat all forms of hate in solidarity with each other. No form of hate privileged above another when it comes to the focus and investment. As you heard, $26 million additional dollars to the Office for Prevention of Hate Crimes, which is charged with prevention and combating hate across all identities in New York City, and we're, we're very excited to be partnering with them and with the Office of Faith Partnerships, NYPD, CCHR, anyone who has a very broad purview and portfolio to combat hate. And that work is ongoing and taken very seriously.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Well, I can say this, as the Chair to the Committee to Combat Hate, I do

know that initially when we first started our hearings, the overwhelming sentiment was this was specifically only going to be talking about antisemitism as been understood by the broader definition of anti-Jewish hate. And of course, you know, as the Chair, I'm supremely aware of my responsibility and also being able to have the melting pot, that kaleidoscope of the human family, really being represented here, especially in City Council. So maybe there's a more– more to do and more to include as well. How many people are currently on staff at the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Currently there are two staff members, and we, depending on the outcomes of the executive budget, will grow to three or four. Given that religion-based hate crimes generally and anti-Semitic hate crimes specifically are consistently among the most reported hate crimes, are there currently any plans to expand MOCA?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: MOCA is experiencing expansion of 300 to 400 percent from the previous administration. So yes, we are, we are expanding.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And we've heard from some of our constituents– gotcha. Could you tell us about MOCA's outreach and community engagement efforts? What does MOCA on-the-ground work look like, and do your partner— do you partner with any community-based organizations, and are there any efforts being made towards interfaith cooperation and engagement?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you for the question. So to the last part, yes, there are interfaith. We believe strongly in the Mamdani administration that combating hate is a group project. And while each form of hate— Islamophobia, homophobia, antisemitism— is unique, that we are all impacted by hate in our city and need to be thinking about combating hate across all identities. In terms of community organizations, as you heard in my testimony, this office is really very new. So in terms of the norms of our day-to-day work, we're building those right now. And the first order of business is a listening tour where we're talking with Jewish New Yorkers and people who work in the space to combat antisemitism across the religious and political spectrum across all five boroughs to

understand the work that they do, what the people that they serve are experiencing. And then we'll make a first round of recommendations in our report coming out at the end of the summer, and we'll continue to iterate on that report year upon year.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: New York City is home to the largest Jewish population outside of Israel, and Jewish New Yorkers are not just one community but many. What kind of work is MOCA doing in relation to increasing dialogue and understanding amongst the different Jewish communities inside of New York City itself?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you for that question. It's true that there is both the work to increase group understanding— intergroup understanding between groups, as well as in the moment we find ourselves. The Jewish community is quite divided, and there is work to be done to increase cohesion among the Jewish community. The role of the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism in that work, as opposed to communal organizations who do communal work, is to ensure that every single group has a seat at the table and has a relationship with the administration and their voices heard. And

their experiences as Jews are seen as legitimate and taken seriously.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Just a follow-up. Has MOCA done any work in the restorative justice space, and how much does MOCA focus on education as a tool for rehabilitation?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: MOCA thus far hasn't. Again, previously, you know, we're sort of picking up a very new office and looking at what that work will look like throughout the administration. I know that our colleagues are— in OPHC in particular, but also the entire administration, New York City Public Schools, other agencies are thinking very seriously about how to infuse restorative justice practices in their work, and we will support them in that.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Can you describe for us in more detail about how MOCA collaborates with other offices or agencies? What portion of MOCA's work focuses on interagency collaboration and coordination versus direct engagement with the communities?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: So one of the things that we are tasked with doing by executive

order is to convene an interagency task force on antisemitism. So that task force, which we have picked up— again, it had previously met once, so there wasn't an enormous set of norms to follow through with, but we are meeting with representatives from each agency ensuring that there is a feeling of a cohesive working group on this topic that is regularly meeting, sharing best practices with each other, and infusing this work into the rest of the work the agency is doing to combat hate of all forms.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And MOCA is a relatively new office. Are there any startup challenges or questions you are still facing?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WISDOM: Thank you for that question. I think in a new administration in general, we're all figuring out what our offices look like in this admin. This office in particular, as you noted, is just over a year old. And so we're really building its work in some ways from scratch. Recommend taking the report that was left for us before, but really building up policies and practices that make sense within the Mamdani administration. So I don't think we're seeing it as a challenge. I think we're seeing it as an opportunity to be really

thoughtful and deliberate about what kinds of policies and programs and budget allocations would best serve our diverse communities. And I think after year one, when we've been through a budget and we are fully staffed, we'll just continue to see this work grow and iterate.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Absolutely. I want to move towards the Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships. The Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships was established in 2022 by the previn— by the previous administration with the purpose of connecting city agencies with faith communities throughout New York City. However, there is little public information about your work. The office's previous website was very minimal to begin with, and it was recently taken down. My questions are: does the OFCP plan to establish a more public presence And how does the OFCP currently engage with communities without having a public website?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Thank you so much, Chair Salaam, and thank you for the entire committee for allowing me to participate on this panel with my colleagues. My name is Aliya Latif. I'm

the Executive Director at the Office of Faith-Based Partnerships. And thank you for that question. The Office of Faith-Based Partnerships is under the auspice of the Office of Mass Engagement, and so every New Yorker can get in contact with our office through the Office of Mass Engagement's website.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: OFCP generally works to support policies and programs related to social welfare, public safety, and community engagement. Could you give us some examples of such policies and programs and the groups OFCP has worked to support?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Thank you for that question. We work very closely with local congregations, nonprofits across the five boroughs. We have the capacity to liaise with all communities across ideological spectrums. It's really important to us that everyone has access to government and that there's proper follow-up. So we are big tent and welcome anyone who might want to work with us or who needs services. So we have a policy of come as you are, and we will meet our communities where they're at. Specifically, in terms of programs and partnerships, we want to integrate faith partnerships in every aspect of OME as well as this

administration. So to that end, we've worked closely with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to give out more than 30,000 Know Your Rights flyers on how to protect yourself during interactions with federal agents. At our first event, which was our interfaith breakfast attended by more than 400 faith leaders, we hosted an information session with faith leaders from 2K child care districts with the Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to seek their partnership in helping connect families to free, highly quality early childhood education opportunities in their communities. In collaboration with the Interfaith Center of New York and Union Theological Seminary, we coordinated a preliminary briefing on the city's racial equity plan with the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice for faith leaders to give their input on that plan. We shared New York City Emergency Management's request to hundreds of houses of worship to consider serving as cooling centers in moments of heating emergencies. We have hosted roundtables and meetings with faith partners as part of a listening tour to better understand their issues as well.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Some anti-religious biases are not from other religious groups, but rather from non-religious communities that have a negative view on one religion or just religion broadly. Nearly a third of New Yorkers do not affiliate with any religion. Does OFCP engage with or have any plans to engage with unaffiliated New Yorkers to promote interfaith understanding?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Thank you so much for that question. We define faith leaders broadly. There are individuals who we are engaging with across ideological spectrums who may be unaffiliated with a house of worship but still identify and leverage their faith-based values for social good. We welcome all and everyone who wants to partner with us.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And lastly, are there any special projects on the horizon for OFCP?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Yeah, thank you so much for that question as well. As I mentioned, we're currently on a listening tour. We want to make sure that decisions about community include community. We have gone across the city visiting

houses of worship and faith leaders, and we look forward to those partnerships.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Actually, that was second to last. The— do— this is the last part.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Have there been any changes to your office's structure since the start of the current administration, and how many dedicated staff does OFCP have? Are you currently hiring, and do you feel your resources are adequate in order to successfully complete your goals?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Thank you so much for those questions. I hope I answer all of them, and if I don't, please let me know. We currently have three staff members, four including myself. We are looking to have a 4th in the summer, and we are actively hiring for a 5th. Could you ask the follow-up question?

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Oh yes, well, you did say you were current— I guess currently hiring, so that's, that's probably a yes. Do you feel your resources are adequate in order to successfully complete your goals?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LATIF: Yes, we are really excited to be part of the Office of Mass Engagement. The office is incredibly committed to faith partnerships. This office is something that the Mayor has prioritized, and as the Executive Director of this office, I'm dedicated to make sure that faith partnerships is part of every aspect of this mayoralty.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. I'm going to pass it to my colleagues for their questions, if you have any. I'm going to start with Darlene.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes, thank you. I'm glad that we have this committee because so many- so many things are going on right now. But what is very alarming to me- could you explain, do you think Christians do not get harassed? Faith-based Christians? Because we have bishops that say they anti-this, anti-that, and on Facebook they get harassed. And I haven't heard anything about African-American Christians dealing with hate crime also. Could anyone explain that to me? Where do the African American clergy fit into this hate crime? Because Catholics get— so I hear everything else. I just want to make sure that we putting that faith

base in this scenario. And strong. Don't everybody answer at one time.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Sure, I can, and I would like to— if you could please give to the Council Members one of these books, I'd appreciate this. This has a report that has a very deep description of all our programmings and our partners that we work with. One of the partners that we work with is specifically the 67th Precinct Clergy Council that is based in Brooklyn, New York, and they work with the clergy specifically and a lot of programs in Brooklyn where they amplify-

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] Want to talk about that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: programmings in the communities and with faith-based partnerships as well. Our office also has what's called the Interfaith Council on Words and Symbols of Peace and Hate, where we have diverse faith leaders in that space where we work with them specifically to provide programming. And we give seed grants to these— anyone who come to us and say, hey, we were experiencing bias, discrimination in our church, in

our faith, and we give them programming funding to do that, those in the communities.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Do you know I cover 67 Precinct?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Pardon me?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I cover 67 Precinct.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Beautiful.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: God Squad, but that's in Crown Heights, East Flatbush. I have a big part of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Ocean Hill. Half of those programs do not come into that area. God Squad don't really talk to the pastors there. They have one or two meetings and that's it. So I hope going forward, I definitely want to know where these six programs come from. You said 67th, and where is the one in the middle? East Flatbush? No. ABC? No. What is your six anchor organizations?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So we have the God Squad, the 67th Precinct Clergy Council. We have Asian American Federation. We have Arab American Association of New York. We have the Hispanic

Federation, the Anti-Violence Project, yeah. And JCRC.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. Which one of them are in like Bedford-Stuyvesant?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So of the 51 council districts in the city, we are in half of them across the city. We are in half of them across the city, and we have a lot of our programs in Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So these 67 Precinct is for practically all Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Crown Heights, Canarsie. Yeah, they really do Canarsie– Bushwick. That's what you're saying?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, so they're the anchor partner.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And I have one more question.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: And then they have sub-vendors, right? So they have different, like, six sub-vendors that is citywide. So while they may be based in Brooklyn, the programming takes place across the city, and the same is true for all the other organizations as well. The programming takes

place across the city on all five boroughs regardless of where they're based in. We— the, our request for each of these organizations is to make sure the programming is not only centered in the community but also make sure that diversity is within the portfolio as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So I would love to really get into this because somehow or another it's not being across the board and we cannot leave anyone out. And one thing I wanted to ask you about was your program with- under Local Law 49 of 2020, OPHC is also required to create a hate crime notification system which notifies the community boards, community-based organization, and elected officials of violent hate crimes in their area. How often do you use that? Because I know only time I found out about a hate crime in my community, that's if the precinct texts me. So what outlet do y'all have that y'all give to the community board, then it trickles down to the elected officials and community-based organizations?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yes, thank you for that question.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Instead of the webpage.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Sure. So we- whenever we receive notifications from NYPD that a hate crime has happened, we then go ahead and within 24 hours of receiving that notification, we send out a notification to all the groups you just mentioned there. We will triple check and double check to make sure that you're on that list to make sure that you get those notifications.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Oh, my lord.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: And also too, if there's anyone else you want to let us know to include, we will be happy to include them in that list as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: But I'm just saying, if you say y'all do this, it should automatically come to our City Council emails, true or not?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: It's supposed to be coming there, and it should be. So I will triple check to make sure that it is.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: It’s not coming. Please do.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: I'll ensure that you're added.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Can I just ask one more question? This— please, Chair? I got to ask. Okay. Can you explain to me the 7 on 7 series? Initial feedback, you say it's 7 on 7, it's closest to the train stations. How did you pick these 7 on 7? Just Roosevelt Island, different— why not other locations? Do you think the 2 or the 3 train does not— do you think the A or the C train does not have hate crimes? Or you just feel it was more in Roosevelt Island? Because I had on Eastern Parkway, four to five, vendors was everywhere. The community was mad, the vendors was mad, everyone trying to make money. So why wasn't considered the 4 to 5 line?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, thank you for that question. You know, I want to just highlight two things. Within capacity, we can only do what we can. Now that with the increased funding come to the office, our goal is to— and this administration made it very clear that the investment that they're going to give to us is going to expand these programs as been working across the city. We piloted that program last year to get feedback, to

learn what works, what does not work, and specifically Roosevelt Avenue because we've seen a heightened sense of community division within that community. Our PATH program partners do work across New York City already, so now that this program has been successful, we do have intentions to exactly follow the whole of the 4 train, the whole of the 5 train, and go through each of the lines across–

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] 2 or 3 train.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: 2, 3, 5, A, 1–

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] A, C train.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: C, E, all of them, Z. We're goning to be doing all of them over time.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And the J and the M.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: J and the M.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Do you know how many hate crimes we have over there on that line, that should have been the first one.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: And you'll be happy to know this, and bus lines too, because we-

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] Sounds good.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: know Queens don't have many trains, so we're going to do bus lines as well. The point is this, we're going to use the natural lines that's already created where people connect to bring them even more close in the room, but also to bring that diversity in one room and say, hey, we are all New Yorkers.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Please remember that. So I would definitely be looking forward to it because so many different hate crimes, and I don't know how I was just picked for Queens, and Brooklyn is like the epicenter. So I look forward to making sure I get those notices.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: And I'll schedule a meeting with your office to make sure we can learn and hear more-

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] I so look forward.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: about you and tell you about the work that we're doing as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. And how would we find out who got those seed grants?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So, seed— so let me just discuss two things. The community project grants, their applications go out every year. So we have- everyone could— this past year we had applications increase by 300 percent from the previous year. Now that we-

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] Could you name one, for example, in Bed-Stuy, Brownsville, anywhere in—

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: [interposing] Julia Keto [sp?], the new— the Red Lotus. We have Christina Blackin [sp?]. These are all African American individuals who live in Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: New organizations too.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: New organizations, because the idea is innovative work, right?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Don't forget the old for the new also.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Absolutely not.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Remember that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So if anyone applies- I mean, we'll meet, we'll talk more, and we want to expand these programs to make sure that we are giving every New Yorker who have an idea an opportunity to be part of the solution.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. I will be part of that. Thank you, Chair, for—

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: [interposing] Thank you—

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: spending that time.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Oh no, my pleasure. I think that this is important too, because oftentimes what we've been finding— I think this is probably throughout all of our districts— is that there's been a little bit of a mystification of how to get through the process. And so we want to make sure that those organizations that have been doing the work without being funded at least get the education that allows them to be able to apply and participate with regards to city funding.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: I mean, I'll add really quickly that just by the mere fact that after the first year we had a 600 percent

increase in applications, that means that we're making sure that every New Yorker we meet everywhere knows how to apply for these grants. And our office takes an extra role to make sure we educate even those who don't know how to apply. We have info sessions, say, here are the— how to break down the red tape and how you can apply for these seed grants, and also the community project grants. So it's ongoing every year.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. Council Member Carr?

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair. I have a couple of questions also for the Office of Prevention of Hate Crimes. Thank you for the report. I look forward to digging into that a bit more, but if you wouldn't mind just elaborating. You spoke in your testimony about efforts in the LGBTQ community. I'm wondering if you could elaborate a little bit more specifically about what efforts are being made to combat hate in that community specifically?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yeah, thank you for that question. And the LGBTQIA+ community we know have historically been the group who has always faced hate crime. While we've seen hate crime for

other groups fluctuate based on geopolitical activities, etc., one crime that we have seen consistently over time as the second most highest reported hate crimes, anti-male homosexual hate crimes. But we also know, Council Member, that not all hate crimes are reported. So we have to go places where we think they're happening, but also too, I always say part— my job, 99 percent of my job is to listen to the community. And we work very closely with the Anti-Violence Project of New York City, they call AVP. And they have been doing incredible work working with partners across the New York City, like Katalyn Lord [sic] and various under- various other community groups to make sure that we are educating New Yorkers about the needs, the likes, dislikes of this community, but also to resources. Hate prevention is not only standing up and saying, "We stand with you," but also care. Being there to show care and to provide the resources that these New Yorkers feel seen, heard, and supported as well. Additional to the PATH program that we have, these different partners, we also work closely by giving out seed grants to a different bunch- a bunch of different community partners to make sure that we are

making sure that the LGBT community is at the forefront. Part of the 7 on 7 initiative, when we do the LGBTQIA+ community, we highlighted the trans community because we know erasure has been at the forefront recently. So we— this program was centered in Roosevelt Avenue, exactly where a lot of profiling was happening towards the LGBTQIA+ community on Roosevelt Avenue. We have a lot of programming in Manhattan right now for the Pride Parade, Pride programs. And we are going to be amplifying that again with the new funding coming in. This mayor's commitment to prevention has been very clear, and he has made it very clear over and over that not by words, but by action and saying we're going to invest in 800 percent increase in your office to ensure that we can serve many more partners across New York City.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: You said you have to go where you think they're happening, and you mentioned, I think, Roosevelt Island example just there. How are you figuring out where they're happening? Is that—

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: [interposing] we're listening.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: data-driven? Are there— well, is it by data or reporting or just anecdotally you're hearing of it, or how does that work?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Right, so the fact that we know— let's underscore that question by saying not all hate crimes are reported. So if we go by the data alone, we're missing half of the whole picture. So we go with the data reporting and saying where the hate crimes happen. Mostly the hate crimes happen for the LGBTQIA+ community is on the trains. A lot of times we see them in public transportation, and we have programs across the city that we are in the trains, we're in the streets, but we also see them in schools as well. So part of the youth program that we have is working with the communities in the school to share about diversity, inclusion, equity, but also too, we are also listening to the community. So we have programs in schools, we have programs in senior centers. Just this past week, actually, we have a member who called us and asked, "Hey, I'm part of the LGBTQ+ community. How can I support your office? We are seeing hate crimes." And I'm proud to see my two interns who are here today, they are

working with him directly to plan a Breaking Bread, Building Bonds initiative in July. So the point is that we listen to the community, to what they tell us, and we go to where they need us to be in the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Oftentimes, you know, homophobia, transphobia can manifest in people's homes, like, not in public places among family members. So I'm wondering how you're thinking about combating LGBTQIA+ hate or violence or discrimination that's happening in folks' home and not in public places.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So we would not know what happens in the homes as— unless it's reported. And then once they're reported, we work with our partners who— the Anti-Violence Project of New York very closely to find out programming and the relevant partners within that community outreach to go in there and work with them. We have a group called Voces Latina who is under Hispanic Federation. So even though we have the Anti-Violence Project of New York, this portfolio is not only, you know, within that one organization. We have many groups who does LGBTQIA+ work. And Voces Latina works

specifically with our LGBTQIA+ community communities in Queens and across the city to ensure that their concerns that you mentioned are heard, but their services provided to support them as they need them. Next year we have a new group where we have LGBTQIA+ youths that we're working with them who may be experiencing the fears, the distress at home, but a way to overcome that through education as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: And I just have one more quick question, Chair. Just curious if there's any collaboration particularly with the LGBTQ hate prevention with the Mayor's new Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Absolutely. We have a project called Unity Grants that we work very closely with them. So this office works through our office to identify seven different LGBTQIA+ groups where we give $20,000 each. And this program has been ongoing for the past three, four years now. And every year we have groups— many applications coming in to make sure doing- to do this work in the community. And again, I want to reiterate, with the expanded funding, we can do more, and we thank Mayor Mamdani for that.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay, thank you.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. I just have a few more questions before we open it up to public testimony. So we know that the FY 2027 budget has not yet been finalized. The administration proposed that the— that historic increase, as you mentioned. My question is, what OPHC programming up until now has been the most successful that might be prioritized for scaling up if more resources in fact do become available?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So I would say all of our programs has been successful because they all reach different New Yorkers at different points in their lives and across the city. However, I would say the PATH initiative— we have trusted partners, again, these six anchor organizations, and on most of the sub-vendors who've been doing this work is definitely a place where we have to continue to support these trusted partners on the ground to make sure we increase their funding and give them the resources to serve New Yorkers in the most appropriate way, but to expand this outreach. I don't think the PATH program should only have 60

organizations that serve 8.5 million New Yorkers. We need to have an expanded part where we reach Canarsie, be in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and have more than one organization to meet the needs of New Yorkers across New York City. So that's one program. We also want to expand our youth initiatives by making sure we have the appropriate staff to mobilize and to include more programming for the youths in schools, but also to include programming that has justice-involved individuals who have committed hate crimes to have a pathway where they can be rehabilitated and understand the hurt they have caused through restorative justice before they re-enter the community.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Amidst an overall decrease in hate crimes across the city last year, we did see spikes in crimes against certain communities, including anti-Buddhist crimes and hate crimes against women. How does OPHC respond to this type of trend, and what does your work with community groups look like, and how does OPHC engage with other agencies?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Thank you for that question. Part of our initiative is exactly

those seed grants that I mentioned to you before. Those seed grants are specifically geared to meet the moment when we do see spikes of hate crimes across New York City. Just this past year, in the first quarter of this year, we saw an increase in Islamophobic hate crimes towards women, but interestingly committed by women against women. And immediately we sprung into action and we worked with a group called Bridging Cultures, Inc. Bridging Cultures Group Inc., who is led by Dr. Debbie Almontaser, and this program brings diverse females, any female-identifying person, into one room where we are building allyship, we're learning about leadership skills, and also inclusion and equity. These programs such as this one is how we meet the moment when hate crimes do fluctuate across communities. Additionally, we, as mentioned before, we're working with a group called Central Queens Against Hate, where we are providing community access and resources to meet the moment, the rise in hate crimes in Queens as well.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Moving to interagency collaborations and coordination. OPHC was recently relocated from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

to the Office of Community Safety. Does OPHC foresee any corresponding shifts in its approach to hate prevention? For example, Does that move reflect a shift in focus to engage with communities in a different way or strengthen your relationship with any particular city agencies?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: The shift— there's no shift. The shift has been— there's no shift. The point is that this work has always been central to New York City Office of Prevention Hate Crimes where we are focusing on all New Yorkers. OCS and going— moving to that office enables us to do more as a whole city approach where now we are working with four more other agencies to bring a holistic approach to hate crime prevention. And moving into this office now gives us much more lateral, you know, overview to make sure no communities are being missed, but also too we have governance to make sure that we are using resources widely to support New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Gotcha. OPHC oversees the Interagency Committee on Hate Crimes. Part of this work is advising the Mayor and implementing a unified citywide approach to hate crime prevention,

awareness, investigations, prosecution, and community impact. How often does the committee meet, and what are the primary topics addressed?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So the Interagency Committee on Hate Crimes, which I'm proud to say that our two partner agencies are part of. We meet on a quarterly basis and we have over 20-plus agencies who are part of that committee. When we meet together, we talk about hate, bias, discrimination, and where it's happening, but also to collectively as a city, how can we respond to them. Yeah.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: And also, how is— how often is the Mayor directly involved in the interagency committee's work?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: The mayor and his staff, they often comes to— different staff members from agencies come to our meetings, different commissioners come to the meeting, they share what their offices are doing, but also listen to what work is being done by agency- OPHC as well.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And moving to resources, we heard in the budget hearing that OPHC currently has three staffers. Are there plans to

increase that number of staff? I know you probably answered that before, but, like, how, how much—

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: [interposing] I want to answer that again, that's important. Yes, please. We want to be in Carnassie, we want to be in Bedford-Stuyvesant, but, you know, we can only do so much with what we have. I again want to reiterate, with the increased funding to our office and the commitment from this mayor and this administration to hate prevention, we definitely plan to increase our office's staff and to make sure we can, you know, do this work in a most coherent way. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: What are the civic— I'm sorry, what are the civil service titles of OPHC's current staff, and are there any you are looking to have added?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So at this point, you have myself, who's the Executive Director. You have a Deputy Executive Director, and you have a senior programs manager. We do plan to, you know, in collaboration and discussion with the new Office of Community Safety, to have borough-based liaisons and to have, you know— because again, this work cannot be

done from my office, it has to be done on the ground in the community. So we feel having more eyes and ears on the ground in each borough, we can meet the needs of New York City.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Are staff dedicated to specific initiatives, or do they work across multiple programs? For example, are there dedicated staffers for the PATH Forward that are different than those for 7 on 7 or the Youth Leadership Ambassador Program?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Yes, so we— the way how we organize the work in the office is, you know, the staff members have a portfolio of programs, but again, it's a holistic approach, so all of us know what's happening at all times across different programs.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And lastly, who from— who from OPHC sits on the Interagency Committee on Hate Crimes, and what are their titles?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: So interestingly, all my staff sits on that. We all sit there. Of course, I lead the meetings. My Deputy Director, Miss Erica Ware, she also is the one organizing the meetings and having different speakers

come to different meetings. But all our staff are part of those meetings.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. I'll pass it back to Council Member Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, I have just two questions. How- has OPHC ever been contacted for guidance or education specific— specifically in response to an incident at a school? Could you give me an example? Because I know one already. I just happened to be stopping into my precinct and I went in, I saw some young kids sitting there and I said hi. I didn't know them that well. Find out it was my staff children, and they were there because they were bullied, and the mother, she was on her way there to press charges. So an incident like that, how would your program work with the police department to give that data that we desperately need? You say that y'all work with the Police Department, so could y'all give me how it trickles down, or do they call you and tell you? I would love to know how this—

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: [interposing] Sure. So on our website, we have links that anyone who wants to request our office to come.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's the only way?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: That's not the only way. So again, we are at the schools as well, where we work with the New York City Public Schools to share out information across the whole city via the Respect for All liaisons, through the guidance counselors, to the district leaderships to all the schools that are in our offices. We also have the Heartwork Against Hate programs. So we try to make sure that a lot of schools and all schools know all the programs that our office offer and how they could get in touch with us. Again, we're doing this work based on capacity, and we plan to increase and continue to do this across the city in a larger, more direct way.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: But I want to answer this question to you. Any school can reach out to our office and we can get involved with them to do this.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So, it’s up to the schools. So how are you working with the Board of

Education to let them know that— shouldn't the principals report it?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: To NYPD, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes. And then— but sometimes the principals do not. If my staff didn't follow through with it, it would never have been a case. So it's up to the principals now to at least report it. So are you working with Board of Education to make sure— or maybe we got to put some legislation that it's a mandate that they report it, because we need this information with bullying, any other thing that is harmful regarding hate. So that's something I got to think about. And could— do you know that- it's kind of tension between people from— who have been living here all this time with the gentrifiers. So do you think you could start doing anything in regards to that? Because a lot of people feel they are being displaced. That's the issue. And you never know how many people feel put aside, upset, and sometimes biased. So therefore, have you ever thought about that hatred or putting something in place for that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Absolutely. You know, we're always— again, like I said-

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] Did you really know of it first?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Not specifically for gentrification, but again, we are in partnership with over 20+ agencies across New York City. We have the Hate Crimes Notification System, we have our Partners Against Hate, we have many programs across different levels. And again, anyone— 90 percent of my job is to listen to community. If we ever hear anything like that and we are called upon, we will go there and we will provide resources. We'll provide a way to listen, but also to say, here's how we can support you, work with my partner organizations, and go to the communities. Please, we'll meet. I'd love to hear more from you and ideas that you have.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Oh, it’s a lot.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: I will definitely make that happen.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RAMJATTAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: I'd just like to note that we have been joined by Council Member Pierina Sanchez as well. Like to thank the administrative—

administration for your testimony. It has been informative. And thank you. I now open this hearing for public testimony, and I want to remind members of the public that this is a formal government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As such, members of the public shall remain silent at all times. The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Furthermore, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony, but they may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the sergeant-at-arms and wait to be recognized. When you are recognized, you will have exactly three minutes to speak on today's hearing topic. If you have a written statement or additional witness— additional written testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and you may email written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov, which— within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be

accepted. For the first panel, we would like to call Julio Cesar Herrera, Scott Richman, and Anmol— I'm going to spell the last name— is A-U-L-A-K-H. You may begin in any order you like. You have– you have exactly two minutes. Sorry, three minutes.

SCOTT RICHMAN: Chair Salam and members of the Committee to Combat Hate, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Scott Richman, and I am honored to serve as the Regional Director for ADL New York— ADL's New York-New Jersey region. ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world, dedicated since 1913 to fighting antisemitism and securing justice and fair treatment to all. It is incumbent upon all of us to address and speak out on how we can collectively prevent and respond to hate in New York City. As an example of such hate, let me paint the picture when it comes to fighting hate against Jewish community. For nearly five decades, ADL has compiled an annual audit of antisemitic incidents. The audit is drawn from reports submitted by victims, community leaders, law enforcement partners, and media documentation. ADL tracks, verifies, and in many cases responds to these incidents. 2025 was the third-highest year for

antisemitic incidents since ADL began tracking data in 1979, nearly double pre-October 7th record highs. The reality is that Jewish Americans continue to be harassed, assaulted, and targeted an average of 17 times every day across this country. New York State is the epicenter of this crisis. In 2025, New York recorded 1,160 antisemitic incidents, more than any other state in the nation, accounting for nearly one in five of all incidents recorded across the United States, and 74 percent of those incidents occurred within the five boroughs of New York City. To respond to this surge in antisemitism and to all forms of hate and bias, ADL urges the Council to promote community-based education programs that ensure the safety, inclusion, and support of the Jewish community and all communities. Programs like ADL's No Place for Hate initiative offers such tools. No Place for Hate provides a framework for over 300 schools and over 200,000 students across New York and New Jersey to promote safe and inclusive school communities where every student can thrive. The program is free for the schools, dozens of which are currently using it in New York City. But we need help to get the word out about this effective means for

combating hate and bias. We also urge the Council to support educator training and resources that empower teachers to address antisemitism and all forms of hate with confidence and accuracy in their classrooms. To support this critical work, ADL has developed innovative tools like ADL Aura, our artificial intelligence-powered education assistant that provides K-12 educators and community members with instant access to trusted, expert-vetted lesson plans and teaching strategies on Jewish identity, antisemitism, and the Holocaust. ADL looks forward to continuing our partnership with this committee, the New York City Council, and with the communities it serves. We are grateful for your attention to this issue and stand ready to assist with data, resources, programs, and recommendations.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for your testimony.

JULIO CESAR HERRERA: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Good afternoon.

JULIO CESAR HERRERA: I'd like to extend my thanks to the Chair Yusef Salaam, and for the Committee to Combat Hate. My name is Julio Cesar Herrera. I am the— I serve as a government operations

director for Hispanic Federation, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering Latino— Latina communities through programs and advocacy. Our testimony reflects the collective insights and experiences of HF and more than 100 of New York City community-based partners involved in the city's Partners Against Hate Forward initiative. HF has proudly served as an anchor organization for PATH along— in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Prevention of Hate Crimes. Since 2021, this initiative has allowed us to fund, convene, and work alongside trusted CBOs that are helping New Yorkers understand, report, and prevent hate crimes and bias incidents. Through PATH, Hispanic Federation and its partners have reached out to residents who are too often vulnerable to harassment, discrimination, and targeted violence. Our partners consist of CBOs who intimately engage their own communities through culturally responsive anti-bias, anti-discrimination, anti-hate education across the five boroughs. To date, through this work, Hispanic Federation and our subgrantees have reached millions of individuals across New York City, and that reach reflects thousands of moments where community members were able to learn their rights,

ask questions, better understand available resources, and feel less alone. Despite the reach and measured deliverables of the PATH Initiative, this endeavor remains deeply vulnerable without sustained investment. If support is reduced or eliminated, many of our subgrantees carrying out this work will be forced to scale back programming, limit outreach, or suspend services altogether. For those organizations who already operate with limited resources, even a modest disruption in funding could have significant consequences. Hispanic Federation adamantly believes that combating hate is both a public safety responsibility and a statement of who we are as a city. We are deeply grateful to the Council for its continued leadership and for understanding how imperative PATH is to bolster the voices of the most marginalized members of our communities. We urge the Council to continue supporting this critical initiative and the community-based organizations who are the bedrock of this initiative and on the front lines of preventing hate, supporting victims, and building a safer, more inclusive New York City. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your ongoing commitment.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you as well.

ANMOL AULAKH: Good afternoon. My name is Anmol Aulakh, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Sikh Coalition in support of meaningful sustained investments in hate crime and violence prevention in New York City. The Sikh Coalition was founded in the aftermath of 9/11 when Sikh Americans, especially those who wear turbans and maintain articles of faith, were targeted with violence, discrimination, and profiling. National FBI data continues to indicate Sikhs as the third most targeted religious group, with many incidents remaining unreported, misclassified, or misunderstood. That is why the Sikh Coalition supports the proposed investments from the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes and the Office of Community Safety with these priorities. It should include community-based and better reporting pathways so people who experience hate, harassment, or bias can seek support without being forced into unfamiliar systems, especially for immigrants, workers, elders, and those with limited English proficiency. It should include additional funding for community organizations that have established trust in culturally competent ways, such as the Path

Forward Initiative. Organizations need full-time capacity and multilingual materials to respond to what impacted communities are experiencing. It should include proactive relationship building to fund and expand programs that promote mutual understanding and communities before tensions escalate. It should include anti-bias prevention education that accurately reflects the Sikh community, our articles of faith, and our history, where that lack of understanding can have real safety consequences. It should include rapid response and survivor support, so when a gurdwara sahib ji, small business, taxi driver, student, or family is targeted, they can receive language-accessible resources, legal referrals, mental health support, and clear communication from city agencies. We believe that all New Yorkers deserve to live without the fear of being targeted because of who they are or how they are perceived. We urge this committee to utilize this budget increase to support these investments in partnership with communities that are impacted the most. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for your testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Yes, thank you, Chair. I just— I want to say thank you for your testimony to all three of you, but a special shout out to Hispanic Federation for your partnership this weekend. There was a beautiful event that we held. I think that's a big part of the work, is just bringing the positive to our communities and bringing people together like that. So thank you for your partnership on the Bodega Festival.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. And also, I just have a question for the Hispanic Federation. Your work to reduce underreporting of hate crimes, what has your experiencing— your experience been?

JULIO CESAR HERRERA: In terms of? I'm sorry, if you could elaborate a little further.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: So the work, specifically your work, to reduce underreporting of the hate crimes that have been happening, right? I just wanted to know what, like, which— what your experience has been.

JULIO CESAR HERRERA: So, there are two approaches to that. The first is through our CBOs, who all— who intimately pack a lot of anti-bias work into a lot of the already ongoing curriculum that

they employ in their communities. Of course, even as an institution such as ours, everyone has blinders on. So we refer best to the organizations that are already based in the communities that we're looking to serve. And from HF standpoint, we've also reached out on several outreach campaigns, bilingual PSA campaigns, both in English and Spanish in key population junctions, as well as had several mentions of anti-bias, anti-discriminatory campaigns over the radio. And over— just to reference from 2023- I apologize. So in 2023, when we deployed 10 community canvassers and surveyed more than 10,000 New Yorkers, we saw that 31 percent didn't know what legally constituted a hate crime. And then after identifying which, 78 percent already experienced that. They had experienced one and never reported it. So with that, a lot of— I apologize, I'm just trying to get my words together- because it's a multi— so it's a multi-pronged approach. With that, we have seen that in the communities and the different populations that we affect, be that from different sexuality, race, creed, a lot of them start to realize the fact that they had already experienced a hate crime that they never really understood because of the banality of

it, how profound and how pervasive it can be on a day-to-day interaction. So that was something that, from our experience, is something that's far too prevalent, if that better answers your question.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: No, it definitely does. And, you know, thank you for describing it, because I know oftentimes those who've been close to the pain, you know, if they have a seat at the table, they can, you know, really, really do the best work, especially when it comes to fixing this issue. I just have one more. And this is— this is a question for all three of you about your work with different language communities. What are the challenges that you may have been encountering in working across different language communities? Go ahead.

JULIO CESAR HERRERA: I think just going back to CBO outreach, of course, we have different— we have over 100 partners spread out across the five boroughs. A lot of that includes in areas in Queens that might not be our specific, let's say, demographic, but for example, La Voces Unidas that was referenced before, they not only employ and identify safe spaces for LGBTQIA folks, other groups such as New Immigrant Community Empowerment focuses

on training undocumented day laborers based on workplace bias discrimination as packed into already existing Know Your Rights training. And that cuts across different languages, different ethnicities. So something that we rely heavily on the coalition of partners that we have that cut across different sectors of identities and better represent the mosaic of this city.

ANMOL AULAKH: From the work that I do as well, given that we work with the Sikh community, our community really needs bilingual materials and resources to effectively communicate their needs and to help understand what's going on within our community. And so we heavily work with, you know, Gurdwaras, which are Sikh houses of worship, who predominantly also speak in Punjabi as well. So we do our best to provide Know Your Rights resources as well, you know, provide presentations and make sure that they have all the information that they need to know how to access resources, legal referrals, mental health support, and various other components as well. So we really take pride in the fact that we do our best to make sure that our community's needs are

being heard while, you know, using our own capacity to translate their needs effectively as well.

SCOTT RICHMAN: I would just add in terms of our community, the Jewish community, the language that is a little bit more difficult to manage is Yiddish. There is a significant Yiddish-speaking population here in New York. Many of them speak English, but not all, or not so well, and reaching them in that language is important. And I can actually relate to the other question that you asked of my colleague here, that, you know, the issue of underreporting, a major way to combat underreporting is to build those relationships. So what we've done is we actually hired two people who are members of the Orthodox community. That was relatively new for us a few years ago, and it has been very, very important, very important both for reaching them because they are Yiddish speakers, but also for making sure that they— there's a trust that's developed, and when there's a trust that's developed, people report. So we were receiving very few reports from the Orthodox community just a few years ago, and that has changed tremendously, and it's changed tremendously because of that trust and the language

barriers broken. You know, very, very, very important to have that. And I will just add that Orthodox Jews in the city are disproportionately affected by such incidents because they are what we call visibly identifiable Jews. So very, very important. And that's why the organization made the commitment to hire people that could build that kind of trust and have those language skills.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. I appreciate it. I'd now I'd like to call the second panel, which consists of Sofia Tobia Gage, and Hillary Stutchin. And you each have three minutes and may begin in whichever order you'd like.

HILLARY STUCHIN: Alright. Hi there, Chair Salaam, members of the committee. Thank you so much for hosting this hearing today. I'm Hillary Stuchin, and I'm here on behalf of UJA Federation of New York. And thank you so much for providing the opportunity to testify. UJA supports nearly 100 nonprofit partners that serve New Yorkers of all backgrounds. We serve older adults, children, families, immigrants, survivors of trauma, people with disabilities, individuals facing poverty and food

insecurity, as well as isolation. We also work to strengthen Jewish life, combat antisemitism, and build bridges across communities throughout the five boroughs. We appreciate the Council's continued attention to the alarming rise in hate and bias incidents in the city, which harm more than just the targeted individual. These events send a message to communities that they may not be safe in their neighborhoods, schools, houses of worship, workplaces or public spaces. For Jewish New Yorkers in particular, this fear is not abstract. Antisemitic incidents, as you've heard, continue to represent a disproportionate share of reported hate crimes in New York City. And Jewish institutions on their end have operated at heightened vigilance since October 2023. So CBOs in this are essential to— are essential partners in both the prevention, education and response to hate and bias. They're trusted by their communities. They serve and can help people navigate trauma, access mental health support, social services, and understand the reporting options that they have to build a sense of safety. We asked the Council as well as the city to prioritize the following steps and actions. We appreciate the

proposed $29 million for the Office of Prevention Hate Crimes, and we urge the administration to invest those resources— excuse me— in effective programming that addresses the underlying causes of hate and bias, including antisemitism. The city should continue to improve reporting systems and outreach so New Yorkers know the difference between what a hate crime is, a bias incident, discrimination complaints, and emergencies, and know where to go for help in their preferred language. We also believe that the city should continue to invest in education and the means of prevention where schools and youth-serving programs are critical settings for addressing bias before it escalates to harm. It's similarly important to make sure that teachers are aware and informed so they can recognize these incidents. And we encourage the city to view educator preparedness as an essential component of this prevention strategy. CBOs- community-based prevention should include partnerships with organizations that equip teachers and schools with the resources and support necessary to foster understanding our differences. And I see I have 23 seconds left, so I'll just say thank you for

the opportunity to testify, and I will submit written testimony separately.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you as well.

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: Okay, good afternoon. The Council on American Islamic Relations New York would like to thank Chair Yusef Salaam and the entire Committee to Combat Hate for the opportunity to provide testimony here today. My name is Sofia Tobia Gage, and I'm speaking on behalf of CAIR New York. CAIR New York is the largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in New York State. Our mission is to protect the civil liberties, promote justice, and empower Muslim New Yorkers. We serve the 800,000 to 1 million Muslim New Yorkers from extremely diverse backgrounds, racial and ethnic origins, as well as non-Muslim communities that have long been among the primary targets of hate crimes in this city. As many of you know, Mayor Mamdani invested $26 million into the Department of Community Safety, which includes the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes. This investment is a meaningful step toward addressing the persistent and deeply harmful patterns of hate and violence our communities have faced, ensuring this city flourishes as a place for all who

live here. We urge the City Council to match the mayor's commitment and to ensure these resources reach the community-based organizations like CAIR New York that are on the front lines of this work. Since October 2023, CAIR New York witnessed a dramatic surge in reports of bias related to incidents in the subway, in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods where community is meant to gather and feel safe. These trends reveal that we are not dealing with isolated incidents of discrimination, of violence, or of harassment, but rather this is a true reflection of the broader climate of dehumanization of vulnerable communities. This requires urgency and coordination between the city and said community organizations. The numbers speak for themselves, right? Based on figures CAIR New York has carefully collected, hate crimes against Muslims has risen an alarming 130 percent between 2020 and 2025 nationally. This represents a small fraction of actual incidents, as our communities consistently under-report due to fear and distrust and a lack of accessible resources. In our Feeling the Hate report, we found that 64 percent of Muslims have experienced a hate crime, bias incident, or both, yet only four

percent of those who experienced a hate crime reported it to law enforcement because they either did not trust that or did not feel like a productive action to report to such agencies. And lastly, that 75 percent of Muslim women have experienced a hate crime, a bias incident, or both. In 2024, the NYPD only- recorded only 43 anti-Muslim hate crimes in New York City, yet CAIR— as I demonstrated, CAIR New York received significantly more reports from our community that same year. We are capturing more incidents than the official police data reflects, which means there is a persistent and troubling gap between official city— official data and the reality on the ground. On a statewide level, New York State— the New York State Comptroller reports that hate crimes against Muslim New Yorkers rose 106 percent between 2018 and 2023. These are not abstract data points. These are people. These are our entire communities. Community-based organizations have been leading hate-based— hate violence prevention efforts for years, fighting identity-based violence and trauma-informed support to hate crime survivors long before dedicated city funding existed for this purpose. CAIR New York is a direct— actually, okay.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: I do- I do have a question. Well, the time expired, but I do have a question. You said something about— and I just wanted to get the year right— up 130 percent nationally between which years was that?

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: Between the years 2020 and 2025.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Any drill down for New York City itself?

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: Say it one more time.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Any data that specifically deals towards New York City itself? I know that that's nationally, but—

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: [interposing] Yes. So, CAIR New York is— represents not just New York City but also New York State. So the data that we reflected in our Feeling the Hate report reflects the entire state. But in that report- sorry, give me one second. We have seen— yeah, I think so- sorry. I don't have the data specifically on the amount of reports, but that can be reflected in our larger— in our requests for assistance in case files and documents. But yeah.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Yeah, the previous panel, we discussed and asked them about also the underreporting based on language barriers and things of that nature. So I'm— I really want to ask that same question to both of you. Has there been any experience that you all have had as it relates to language barriers, underreporting. I know CAIR mentioned the data that they've collected that's not trying to find a better word than equal to what the NYPD has been collecting. But really, I just wanted to know from both of you, and we can start with you. What has the example— experience been in terms of the language barriers and underreporting and things of that nature?

HILLARY STUCHIN: Sure. No, so we work with a, you know, citywide group of over 100 nonprofits, or close to 100 nonprofits, dealing with all sorts of communities. But I will say, in addition to the Yiddish-speaking community, which is prominent, within Brooklyn and elsewhere. Also in South Brooklyn, the Russian-speaking community often needs resources in order to access various supports and understand, you know, where they can go should a bias incident or a hate incident occur.

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: At Care New York, many of the members of our education staff are bilingual and so are speaking the— speaking Arabic, which is the, like, Arabic and English are the main languages that our constituents are speaking. And then also, additionally with the partner organizations that we work with- we- there are often translators if, or- if, you know, if need be, but that hasn't been an issue necessarily.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: I'm curious to know as well- I'm trying to figure out how to, how to state this. What I'm curious to know is, has any of your data surrounded for the Jewish community, the Black Jewish community and any hate reporting? Because in my district, in District 9 in Harlem, we do have a Jewish community that is Black. And in addition to CAIR, anything dealing with, like, the- I mean, we have like a whole Little Africa community that involves all kinds of folks from the African diaspora. And I'm just wondering, has there been any information as it relates to people of- I don't want to just say African American descent because they've been categorized like that if they don't have their yamikah on or kufi on or something like that.

HILLARY STUCHIN: Yeah, no, so, I personally don't have that information available right now, but we're more than happy to follow up with your office and provide answers to any of these questions. I will say this, you know, we understand that we go back to the underreporting of it all, right? So, and what data is available to look back to. So I'll happily get that information for you.

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: Yeah, I'm also happy to get that information and send it at a later time, but I will say that the African and African American Muslim Communities are a large majority of our constituents and groups that we yeah, are very important that we work with often.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

SOFIA TOBIA GAGE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And now we have the third panel, Madison Mounty and Marisa Bearak. And we also have on Zoom Leslie Claire Allen. And thank you. You may begin in any order you'd like. You each have three minutes.

MADISON MOUNTY: Good afternoon, Chair Salaam and members of the committee. Thank you for

convening this critical hearing. My name is Madison Mounty, and I'm the Director of Government Relations and Advocacy for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. For decades, the SWC has fought antisemitism, hate, and bias by focusing on the most powerful tool for long-term prevention: education. We are at a defining moment in New York City. The data shows a sobering persistent rise in identity-based harassment and hate crimes. While reactive measures are necessary, true safety begins with proactive community prevention. We much— must reach people before bias takes root, especially our youth. I'm here to highlight the important work that we are doing locally across the five boroughs through two vital community-based initiatives. First, our Combating Hate in Digital Spaces workshops. In longstanding partnership with the City Council, SWC and our team of experienced educators have reached thousands of New York City public school students through our educational workshops. Combating Hate in Digital Spaces is a learning experience designed for grades 7 through 12 and offered in classrooms across the five boroughs with a focus on digital identity, AI, and civic responsibility. These workshops provide students with

an identity Venn diagram that supports reflection on how their digital selves are shaped, as well as the responsibilities and real-world consequences that accompany their online presence. Learners explore the formation of online identities and examine how the algorithm influences and manipulates individual actions in digital spaces. Second, our Mobile Museums of Tolerance. We know that access to high-quality immersive education shouldn't depend on a school's budget or zip code. Our MMOTs are a state-of-the-art traveling classroom that brings world-class human rights and anti-bias education directly to New York City neighborhoods through the support of New York State. Our two MMOTs bring immersive tolerance education directly to schools and communities across New York. We use cutting-edge digital storytelling to engage audiences in learning about the Holocaust, civil rights movement, digital literacy, antisemitism, racism, bullying, and social justice. These programs are not just concepts. They're operational blueprints for community-based prevention that build empathy and resilience directly inside our neighborhoods. To scale these efforts and meet the current and growing need, we cannot do it alone. We

urge the City Council to prioritize sustained investments in mobile accessible education and SWC's digital literacy workshops so we can reach every public school and community center in this city. Safety and dignity cannot be selective. We must protect every single New Yorker. We applaud this committee's ongoing leadership and stand ready to partner with you to expand these vital educational resources. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you.

MARISA BEARAK: Good afternoon, Chair Salaam. Thank you so much for your time. My name is Marisa Bearak, and I'm the Assistant Director of AJC New York, the New York City regional office of the American Jewish Committee, the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people since 1906. Before I begin, I want to provide a historical point regarding the definition of antisemitism. The term antisemitism was invented in 1879 specifically as a term for anti-Jewish hatred by a racist German pseudoscientist to legitimize hatred against Jews. Using it to cover other groups can accidentally erase the unique history of anti-Jewish bigotry and make it harder to precisely address. According to AJC's 2025

State of Antisemitism in America report, 56 percent of Jewish New Yorkers reported changing their behavior out of fear of antisemitism. More than half of Jewish New Yorkers aren't merely worried about antisemitism, they're changing how they live because of it. That's what fear looks like in practice. And if more than half of Jewish New Yorkers are changing their behavior because they're afraid, we should be asking whether the city's current approach to preventing hate and bias is adequately protecting a community that remains the target of more than half of all reported hate crimes in our city. If the city is serious about prevention, it has to acknowledge that antisemitism isn't fueled only by extremists. It's also fueled when public figures normalize rhetoric that casts Jews, Jewish institutions, or core aspects of Jewish identity as suspect, unwelcome, or uniquely deserving of scrutiny. As the Council evaluates the city's approach to hate and bias, AJC encourages a focus on the priorities outlined in our combating antisemitism playbook, including strengthening relationships between government and communities, improving education about contemporary manifestations of antisemitism,

increasing coordination across institutions, and ensuring that policymakers have the information they need to respond effectively. Thank you so much for your time and your consideration.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you both for your testimony. I do have a question for SWC. It feels like the internet and social media continue to grow as the epicenter of so much hate. Can you talk a bit more about SWC's experience in combating discrimination in digital spaces and how that work may be growing, if it is?

MADISON MOUNTY: Yeah, so something that our education team is constantly evaluating is updating our digital literacy workshops and meeting students where they are and meeting the moment. So something new for this year that we incorporated is background on the algorithm. And what we find is a lot of students walk away from our workshops having a better understanding of what is hate speech and bias online. They don't recognize a lot of these things initially, and that's something that we help them educate themselves on. And we also help them learn how what they interact with online can then further perpetuate what they see around mis- and

disinformation, hate speech, bias, and how sometimes what they interact with is constituted as bullying or a hate crime. And so I think we start as young as we can, and we're looking to start even younger than 7th grade, as early as 3rd grade elementary school. And we're also looking to expand into college campuses so that we can really reach students from the beginning and give them a better informed sense of an ethical online presence and really help promote tolerance and mutual respect over division and hate speech.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: One of the things that I've, I've been seeing as well- I mean, I have I have 10 children myself, the youngest is 10- is that oftentimes as parents or as educators and loved ones, we may be— and this is really for both of you— we may be engaged in activities like cooking or cleaning or something of that nature, and oftentimes our children might be on those digital spaces and digital, you know, doing things like on YouTube or whatever. And I'm just wondering, what that experience has been, because of course we know that 7th grade is really great, but we've been seeing trends that are going even further down, meaning attacking younger and younger individuals in order to try to make them into

a group of people that actually hate, you know, because hate is taught. And so, I'm just wondering what both of your experiences have been as it relates to really pulling in this conversation towards younger individuals.

MADISON MOUNTY: Yeah, uh, we're definitely seeing a greater need, like you said, for starting even younger than we currently do. And it's something that, again, our education team is working on developing because we have to modify the workshops that we provide based on the age group. What works for a 7th grader or a 5th grader is not necessarily going to work for a 2nd or 3rd grader. So we have to make the curriculum and the topics that we're discussing equally as impactful and effective, but also understandable for the age that they're at. And part of that is learning and adapting how we deliver that through digital literacy. You know, we're not trying to promote increased usage of of social media platforms or increase their time online even more than it already is, because that's already growing, but it's how to include what platforms they're already on or what they're being introduced to and making that the forefront and helping them recognize,

again, what's hate speech online, helping them be upstanders rather than bystanders in those efforts.

MARISA BEARAK: Thank you for your question, Council Member. It's, of course, important for parents to have honest conversations with their children about different manifestations of hate. And speaking specifically about hatred against Jews, about antisemitism, it's such a nuanced form of hate because of its history. And there are different manifestations of antisemitism, understanding Jewish peoplehood and Jewish history, Jewish American history is of course an important part of being able to understand and then counter and prevent antisemitism. Another aspect, however, is also the social media space, as you spoke of. Parents, I'm sure, would love to be able to prohibit as much of their children's time on social media as possible. That's not always the reality, and we need to be able to hold social media and tech companies accountable for the hate that permeates across their platforms.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Regarding intergovernmental coordination, do you have anything that you may want to elaborate regarding that space?

MARISA BEARAK: Regarding intergovernmental coordination?

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Yeah, in terms of working with them, what would you like to see more of preventing hate and things of that nature?

MARISA BEARAK: Certainly there should be more coordination amongst the different government agencies and institutions. We specifically would like to see them working more closely together on prevention and things like policy and education. I think that is a core piece that is important for a city like New York that has a mayoral administration and a co-equal branch that is the City Council.

MADISON MOUNTY: And for me, our programs, our classroom programs are supported, longstanding partnership through the City Council, and then our Mobile Museums of Tolerance are supported through the state. And as it relates to our classroom programming, we'd love to be able to partner with more council districts and bring our programs to as many public schools across the five boroughs as we possibly can.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

MARISA BEARAK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And on Zoom, if you are available, Leslie Claire Allen.

LESLIE CLAIRE ALLEN: Okay, but that's also different because some of them are- pardon.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You could begin.

LESLIE CLAIRE ALLEN: Hello, can everyone hear me?

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Yes.

LESLIE CLAIRE ALLEN: Thank you. I'm— first, I want to apologize for not being there in person. As you can hear from my voice, I'm very sick and I didn't want to get anyone else sick. But my name is Leslie Allen. I use pronouns she/her, and I'm the deputy— I'm the director of legal services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. The New York City Anti-Violence Project is one of the PATH— the PATH- Chairs, I'm so sorry, I'm really struggling today. We have been proudly working with PATH for the past five years, and I believe that our work is extremely meaningful in helping prevent LGBTQ communities from facing extreme violence. But in part of both the prevention of hate violence, there has to also be the structure there to help survivors of

violence who the hate has not been stopped and they've actually been harmed in the present. And AVP very proudly has a 24-hour/7-day-a-week crisis hotline where survivors can call who may be uninterested in calling the police, maybe attempted to call the police and didn't get the response that they wanted, or simply don't really even understand how to place context into whatever hate violence they experienced and don't know what they want to do next. AVP's long history of working with City Council to stop violence towards LGBTQ people is something that we're extremely proud of. We believe that the new investment from the Mamdani administration, what we hope will be seen from the City Council, will usher in a new bright era for New York City that really allows us to be a beacon of hope while nationally we're seeing unprecedented rise of anti-LGBTQ sentiment, especially towards the transgender communities and towards LGBTQ immigrants. Our hotline calls are up 35 percent, which is very significant because we already thought of our hotline as sort of reaching maximum volume. It's becoming harder and harder to meet the needs. We have an extensive waitlist for legal services, and we really need to

see this future investment into more organizations like AVP in order to help meet the people– it meets people's needs who are experiencing hate. And I'm so sorry– I'm going to let you go because I'm having such trouble talking, but thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you for your testimony, and hopefully you'll have a speedy recovery. And if you need to reach out to us and– to provide written testimony, that definitely is available to you at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you. I'd now like to call the last panel via Zoom, Glenn Belofsky, Jennifer Nicole Almeda, and Christopher Leon Johnson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Okay, I don't see them on Zoom. We will do a last call in the room. If anyone else wishes to testify, you may testify by filling out an appearance form with the Sergeant-at-Arms. Seeing none, that concludes today's business. Thank you for your testimony.

[gavel]

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 September 24, 2026