



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 238

Resolution calling upon the City University of New York to compile data on bias incidents and hate crimes reported in the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act into a single report, which should include greater specificity on bias classification, and to institute a campaign or initiative to educate students, faculty and staff about the rise of such incidents and how to report them.

By Council Members Dinowitz and Brewer

Whereas, The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires postsecondary institutions to report hate crime incidents, which the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines as “criminal offense[s] which [are] motivated, in whole or in part, by an offender’s bias(es) against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity”; and

Whereas, Hate does not always manifest as strictly criminal behavior and, as such, hate crimes statistics cannot fully capture the pervasiveness of hateful ideology on college campuses across the United States (U.S.); and

Whereas, A bias incident, per the U.S. Department of Justice, is “any hostile expression that may be motivated by another person’s race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity”; and

Whereas, In 2019, according to the latest available NCES data, there were 757 reported criminal incidents classified as hate crimes that occurred on the campuses of postsecondary institutions, which translates to an average of 5.1 hate crime incidents occurring per 100,000 full-time-equivalent students enrolled; and

Whereas, However, the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 2020 hate crime report cautions that the actual number is likely higher due to victims’ reluctance to report such incidents or ignorance of how to do so; and

Whereas, Over the past several years, bias incidents and hate crimes have been on the rise nationally,

emanating from groups and individuals engaged in an array of activities, including threatening local officials, funding terrorism, conducting cyber-attacks, organizing rallies, engaging in propaganda distributions and committing violence; and

Whereas, In 2021, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported a total of 4,851 bias incidents of racist, antisemitic and other hateful messages, which is the second-highest level of incidents since they began tracking such data, and which is nearly double the 2,724 cases that were reported in 2019; and

Whereas, According to ADL, throughout 2021, white supremacist propaganda was reported in every state except Hawaii, and the state of New York (“New York” or “State”) ranked seventh among states with the highest level of such activity; and

Whereas, New York leads the nation in antisemitic incidents; per ADL’s annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, the number of reported incidents increased 24 percent from 336 in 2020 to 416 in 2021, which includes 51 assaults motivated by anti-Jewish bias, the highest number ever recorded by ADL in the State; and

Whereas, In New York City (“NYC” or “City”), hate crimes have more than doubled since 2020; according to NYC Police Department (NYPD) data on confirmed incidents, hate crimes increased 196 percent, from 266 incidents in 2020 to 522 in 2021; and

Whereas, In both 2020 and 2021, per NYPD data, the four communities most targeted in hate crimes were the Jewish community, the Asian community, the LGBTQ+ community and the Black community; and

Whereas, NYPD data show that in 2020 and 2021, Jews were the most targeted group, with a total of 317 incidents against the Jewish community, accounting for 40 percent of the hate crimes reported in NYC during that period; and

Whereas, According to NYPD statistics, hate crimes against Asian New Yorkers have also been on the rise in the City over the past two years, having more than quadrupled from 28 incidents in 2020 to 131 in 2021, compared to just one in 2019; and

Whereas, Similarly, per NYPD statistics, reported incidents targeting the male LGBTQ+ community

increased 154 percent from 28 in 2020 to 71 in 2021, while reported incidents targeting the Black community increased 2.7 percent from 37 in 2020 to 38 in 2021; and

Whereas, The high incidence of antisemitic propaganda has continued in 2022; to-date, ADL's Tracker of Antisemitic Incidents ("Tracker") has counted 42 cases of anti-Jewish vandalism, harassment and assault in NYC; and

Whereas, For 2022, ADL's Tracker includes a swastika found drawn onto the scaffolding outside of the New York University Tisch School of the Arts building, as well as two instances of assault and antisemitic harassment by Yeshiva University's Zysman Hall building, that left one student with minor injuries; and

Whereas, Not included in ADL's Tracker, is a swastika and the words "KKK LIVES" that were found carved onto a public bulletin board in January of 2022 at Queens College at the City University of New York ("CUNY" or "University"); and

Whereas, CUNY is the largest urban public university in the U.S., serving more than 261,000 degree and non-degree seeking students, and offering adult and continuing education with over 185,000 course registrations at 25 colleges across the City's five boroughs; and

Whereas, While only 61 years old, the University's history dates back to 1847, when the Free Academy, which was renamed the City College of New York ("City College") in 1866, was founded by the president of the Board of Education, Townsend Harris, as the first publicly-financed institution of higher education in NYC; and

Whereas, In March of 1847, Harris shared his vision for free public college in a letter published in two NYC newspapers: "... open the doors to all - let the children of the rich and the poor take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct and intellect"; and

Whereas, A couple months later, the Free Academy received its charter from the State Legislature, with the mission to provide children of immigrants and the poor access to free higher education based on academic merit alone; and

Whereas, While William Hallett Greene, who went on to become the country's first Black meteorologist, became the first Black graduate of City College 35 years after the Free Academy's inaugural class in 1884, and women were not admitted until 1930, the Free Academy showed greater tolerance for diversity at the time in comparison to the private universities in NYC; and

Whereas, For example, in the early 1900s the then-City College president instituted a more secular orientation by abolishing mandatory chapel attendance at a time when an increasing number of Jewish students were enrolling; and

Whereas, Founded on the principles on which the Free Academy was established, CUNY's mission today remains the same: to be "of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the [City]... [to] remain responsive to the needs of its urban setting... [while ensuring] equal access and opportunity" to students, faculty and staff "from all ethnic and racial groups" and without regard to gender; and

Whereas, As such, it is imperative that the University uphold its commitment to equity and diversity by thoroughly addressing incidents of bias and hate that occur on CUNY campuses; and

Whereas, This should include promoting and engaging in a University-wide dialogue with campus and community partners around the rise of bias incidents and hate crimes on campuses, with an aim to cultivate a culture that is intolerant to such behavior; and

Whereas, In order to develop appropriate responses and ensure greater accuracy in reporting, this should also include educating students, faculty and staff on how bias incidents and hate crimes are defined and how to report them, as well as reporting greater specificity on bias motivation for each incident, whether it be antisemitic or biphobic, for example; and

Whereas, A commitment to fostering a welcoming community for all students, faculty and staff includes an informed awareness of the climate on campuses, which is essential to create a supportive academic environment for CUNY's diverse population; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the City University of New York to

compile data on bias incidents and hate crimes reported in the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act into a single report, which should include greater specificity on bias classification, and to institute a campaign or initiative to educate students, faculty and staff about the rise of such incidents and how to report them.

CGR  
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