

REMARKS OF ST. REP. HAROLD JAMES
BEFORE THE
PUBLIC HEARING
ON
HATE CRIME, TERRORISM AND ARSON
SPECIAL TASK FORCE
OF THE
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1996

GOOD MORNING.

I THANK CHAIRMAN GANNON OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE FOR APPOINTING THIS TASK FORCE. ALSO, THE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN, MR. CALTAGIRONE WAS EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE IN MY QUEST FOR A PUBLIC HEARING.

CHAIRMAN SCHULLER, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THESE REMARKS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS.

I THANK THE MEMBERS OF THIS TASK FORCE, YOUR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE ALL THE RESIDENTS OF THIS FINE COMMONWEALTH BY DEVOTING YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS CRITICAL ISSUE IS TRULY VALUED.

THE EXPERT WITNESSES WHICH WILL TESTIFY TODAY WE BELIEVE WILL SET OUT THE FOLLOWING:

- (1) VICTIMS OF HATE, BE IT AN ACTIVITY OR A CRIMINAL OFFENSE, ARE DUAL VICTIMS. FIRST, THEY ARE VICTIMIZED BY AN OFFENDER, AND SECONDLY, THEY ARE OFTEN FEARFUL FOR VARIOUS REASONS, TO REPORT THE INCIDENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES.
- (2) HATE ACTIVITY AND CRIME VICTIMS EXIST THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH AND AFFECT ALL RACES.

(3) BASED ON THE PRECEDING FACTS, IT IS REASONABLE TO PRESUME THAT HATE ACTIVITY AND CRIME IS A NON-PARTISAN ISSUE. SIMPLY PUT, THE VICTIMS AND THE AGGRESSORS BELONG TO ANY POLITICAL PARTY - OR TO NONE AT ALL.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THERE TO EXIST A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AS TO EXACTLY WHAT CONSTITUTES A HATE ACTIVITY VERSUS A HATE CRIME.

FOR THE RECORD, I SUBMIT THE JULY 23, 1996 LETTER I SENT TO CHAIRMAN GANNON AND MR. CALTAGIRONE REQUESTING A SERIES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH. I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO PAGE ONE, PARAGRAPH 2, WHICH READS IN PERTINENT PART:

...HATE RELATED ACTIVITY, WHILE NOT ALWAYS ILLEGAL, CONSISTS OF THE INTIMIDATION AND/OR HARASSMENT OF A PERSON, PERSONS OR GROUP TOWARDS ANOTHER PERSON, PERSONS AND/OR GROUP OR PROPERTY. THESE ACTIVITIES CONSIST OF DEEDS THAT ARE ORAL, WRITTEN OR PHYSICAL DEMONSTRATIONS OF HOSTILITY....

FURTHERMORE, IT IS VITAL THAT PARTICULAR INFORMATION IS RELAYED AND MATERIALS ARE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD MR. SCHULER, OF WHICH I HAVE SEVERAL.

THE 1960'S KERNER COMMISSION ISSUED A REPORT ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS AND WHITES IN THE UNITED STATES. IN THAT REPORT, DANIEL PATRICK MOYNAHAN WROTE THAT THE NATION WAS MOVING TOWARD TWO SOCIETIES: ONE BLACK, ONE WHITE.

NEARLY THREE DECADES LATER, U.S. SEN. MOYNAHAN'S CONCLUSIONS ARE EVER MORE VISIBLE. THIS COUNTRY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE POLARIZED. NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE LIKE TO PRETEND THAT WE "ALL GET ALONG", THE DEMON OF HATE STILL EXISTS. THE FACT REMAINS, THAT WE DON'T ALL GET ALONG. TOO OFTEN I HAVE EXPERIENCED THAT DEMON OF HATE DIRECTED TOWARD MYSELF OR OTHER PEOPLE.

PENNSYLVANIA HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY PLAGUED BY HATE AS THE KEYSTONE STATE HAS THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF HATE GROUPS THAN ANY OTHER STATE IN THE COUNTRY ACCORDING TO THE 1992 STATISTICS OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER.

WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE KU KLUX KLAN, SKINHEADS, ARYAN NATION, WHITE ARYAN RESISTANCE AND THE CHRISTIAN POSSE COMITATUS, TO NAME A FEW, CALL THE GREAT COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA THEIR HOME.

FOR THE RECORD, I SUBMIT A CONDENSED VERSION OF THE 1995 LISTING OF PENNSYLVANIA HATE GROUPS AS PREPARED BY THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER'S KLANWATCH PROJECT.

WELL, I ALSO CALL PENNSYLVANIA HOME. I SERVED IN THE ARMY, THE PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT AND IN THIS LEGISLATIVE BODY AND IN EACH OF THESE INSTITUTIONS, I HAVE SWORN TO UP-HOLD THE RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND IN THIS COMMONWEALTH.

TODAY, I AM HERE TO PROCLAIM IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THAT RACISM IS NOT ACCEPTABLE NOR CAN IT CONTINUE TO BE TOLERATED. WE AS PUBLIC POLICY MAKERS MUST WORK COLLECTIVELY WITH PERTINENT AGENCIES AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITY. TOGETHER WE CAN PUT IN PLACE STRATEGIES AND/OR POLICIES WHICH WILL SERVE AS THE QUICKSAND UNDERNEATH HATE ACTIVITY.

TO OUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT HOUSE RESOLUTION 4-1-8 PUT US ON NOTICE THAT WE CAN NO LONGER CONTINUE PUBLICLY PRACTICING RACIAL INTOLERANCE, INDIFFERENCE AND INSENSITIVITY. MR. CHAIRMAN, I SUBMIT HOUSE RESOLUTION 4-1-8 FOR THE RECORD.

THE UNFORTUNATE REALITY IS THAT TOO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR NATION STILL BELIEVE RACISM IS AS TRADITIONAL AS BASEBALL, APPLE PIE. YET OTHERS IGNORE INCIDENTS OF HATE ACTIVITY. THEIR SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN. IT SERVES AS A QUIET AFFIRMATION OF DESPICABLE ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR.

WHEN WE LAUGH AT A RACIAL JOKE, WHEN WE ADOPT STEREOTYPES, WHEN WE GIVE IN TO IGNORANCE, WE ARE, AFFIRMING BIGOTRY AND RACISM - WE ARE PERMITTING RACIST BEHAVIOR, THOUGH WE MAY STATE WE CONDEMN SUCH WORDS AND DEEDS. IN FACT, IT SEEMS THAT THOSE WHO ALLOW THESE PRACTICES TO GO UNCHALLENGED ARE IN DENIAL THAT THEY EXIST. IF CONTINUED WITHOUT CHALLENGE, THEY BECOME SERIOUS, OR WILL LEAD TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

FREQUENTLY WHEN THE OCCURRENCE IS BROUGHT TO THEIR ATTENTION, THEY OFTEN FAIL TO SEE THAT THE SNICKERING AT A JOKE, THE DEROGATORY NAME CALLING, ARE IN DEED ACTS OF DENIAL. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DENIAL WILL NOT MAKE RACISM AND BIGOTRY DISAPPEAR. CONVERSELY, DENIAL IS THE FUEL FOR ENERGIZING RACISM.

RACISM, IS MUCH LIKE SEXISM. MANY REFUSE TO ACCEPT IT OR BELIEVE IT AND LEAST OF ALL ARE WILLING TO ACTIVELY WORK TOWARD STOPPING IT.

THE MOST DANGEROUS PEOPLE ARE THOSE WHO ACT OUT THEIR HATE. THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO INTIMIDATE, HARASS, VICTIMIZE, VIOLATE AND TORMENT OTHER HUMAN BEINGS OR THE PROPERTY OF ANOTHER BECAUSE OF PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES. THESE ACTS ARE TARGETED TOWARDS PERSONS OF A DIFFERENT RACE, RELIGION, DISABILITY AND YES, SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

THERE ARE THREE CLASSIFICATIONS OF HATE CRIME ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR JACK LEVIN, DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM FOR STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY IN BOSTON, AND CO-AUTHOR OF "HATE CRIMES: THE RISING TIDE OF BIGOTRY AND BLOODSHED". TO GIVE A BETTER PERSPECTIVE, HERE ARE THE DEFINITIONS FOLLOWED BY INCIDENTS OCCURRING DURING THE 1990s IN PENNSYLVANIA:

THRILL HATE CRIMES ARE COMMITTED BY OFFENDERS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR EXCITEMENT AND ATTACK THE VICTIMS FOR THE "FUN OF IT".

STATE SENATOR HANK SALVATORE'S PHILADELPHIA OFFICE WAS VANDALIZED WITH DEROGATORY EPITHETS. HE COMMENTED AS A FORMER MARINE, HE WOULD DEFEND ONE'S RIGHT TO DISAGREE, BUT THIS WAS A COWARDLY ACT.

THE MISSION HATE CRIME INVOLVES OFFENDERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEIR LIVES TO BIGOTRY AND ARE DEDICATED TO THEIR CAUSE.

FROM 1993 TO 1994 IN HONEY BROOK, PENNSYLVANIA, AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN SINGLE MOTHER AND HER THREE MINOR CHILDREN, WHO HAPPEN TO BE THE ONLY FAMILY OF THEIR RACIAL BACKGROUND IN HONEY BROOK, WERE CONTINUOUSLY HARASSED BY A GROUP OF RACIST THUGS. THERE WAS NO REGARD FOR THE BABIES. THERE WAS NO REGARD FOR THE SCARRING THAT OCCURRED TO THESE CHILDREN WHO WILL ONE DAY BE ADULTS IN OUR SOCIETY. THE MISSION WAS SIMPLE: THREATEN AND TORMENT THIS FAMILY BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRICAN-AMERICAN.

FORTUNATELY, THE COWARDS, 4 WHITE MALES AND 2 WHITE FEMALES WERE ARRESTED AND CONVICTED OF CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

DEFENSIVE HATE CRIMES INVOLVE OFFENDERS WHO PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS PROTECTING THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, THEIR WORK PLACE, OR THEIR COLLEGE CAMPUS FROM "OUTSIDERS".

AN ARTICLE LAST WEEK IN THE "PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS" ABOUT FLYERS DISTRIBUTED IN THE PREDOMINATELY WHITE COMMUNITY OF PORT RICHMOND, CAUGHT MY ATTENTION, AS ITS MESSAGE IS TIMELY FOR TODAY'S HEARING.

THE MESSAGE URGED THE COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN A DAY EARLY IN ORDER TO DISCOURAGE CHILDREN FROM OUTSIDE OF PORT RICHMOND FROM TRICK-OR-TREATING IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD WERE DISTRIBUTED. IT IS INTERESTING BECAUSE THE CHILDREN TO WHICH THE FLYERS IDENTIFY AS "OUTSIDERS" ARE AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND LATINO. A TRADITION AMONG MANY FAMILIES THROUGHOUT THIS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN SCARRED SIMPLY BECAUSE SOMEONE OR SOME PEOPLE THINK LESS OF THE CHILDREN OF OTHERS THAN THEY DO THEIR OWN.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AT THIS TIME I INTRODUCE FOR THE RECORD, A VIDEO FROM THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK, TITLED, THE NEW SKINHEADS. IN THIS VIDEO, THEY DESCRIBE HOW TO MAINSTREAM INTO SOCIETY. THEY ARE CLEAN-CUT. COLLEGE EDUCATED. THEIR MISSION IS TO LOOK LIKE YOU AND ME SO THAT WE DO NOT EASILY SUSPECT THEIR HATE INTENTION. THEY ARE ON THE INTERNET. SOME USE COLLEGE COMPUTERS TO COMMUNICATE THEIR MESSAGE OF HATE. EXCERPTED FROM THE AUGUST, 1996 ISSUE OF **EMERGE** MAGAZINE IS THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

THE KU KLUX KLAN USE TO TERRORIZE PEOPLE IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT WITH ROPES, TORCHES AND CROSS BURNINGS. NOW IT SNEAKS IN QUIETLY THROUGH HOME COMPUTERS TO DELIVER ITS PICTURES OF

HORROR AND HIGH-TECH MESSAGES OF HATE. IN NO TIME AT ALL, IT SEEMS, THE GLOBAL WEB OF COMPUTER NETWORKS KNOWN AS THE INTERNET HAS BECOME THE NEW FRONTIER FOR NEO-NAZIS, THE KLAN AND OTHER WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUPS. AND AMONG A NEW GENERATION OF ANGRY WHITE MALES AND A GROWING CLIMATE OF INTOLERANCE IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD, THE INTERNET, WITH ITS 24 MILLION USES, HAS BECOME FERTILE GROUND FOR RECRUITMENT.

THESE ARE THE NEW TERRORISTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES. THEY LOOK MUCH LIKE YOU AND ME. THEY WALK AMONG US DAILY. THEY OWN THE STORES WHERE WE SHOP. THEY ATTEND CHURCH WITH US. THEY ARE IN MANY INSTANCES OUR COLLEAGUES, SUCH AS ADMITTED RACIST, BIGOTED REMARKS BY ST. REP. MCGEEHAN, OR PERHAPS OUR CO-WORKERS. THEY ARE OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS. THEY ARE THOSE WHO SPEW HATRED AND RACISM.

WE MUST RE-EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITY, BEGINNING WITH RE-SHAPING OUR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS. THAT MEANS WE MUST LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER BASED ON OUR CHARACTER, NOT BASED ON SKIN COLOR, AGE, GENDER, DISABILITY OR SEXUAL PREFERENCE.

THIS HEARING ENABLES US TO GET TO THE CORE OF WHY THIS CLIMATE EXISTS. I OFFER FOR CONSIDERATION THAT PERHAPS THE ECONOMY, MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE CLIMB IN HATE ACTIVITY AND HATE CRIME. ANY OF THESE FACTORS, INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY COUPLED WITH IGNORANCE COULD PERHAPS EASILY SERVE AS A SPRINGBOARD OF HATE. WHEN CITIZENS MOVE INTO COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN LIMITED IN ETHNIC DIVERSITY, THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE TO LIVE IN FEAR. THEY TOO ARE PART OF THE INTEGRAL FABRIC OF THIS COUNTRY.

WE MUST APPLY THE TEACHING OF "IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD" PHILOSOPHY. MANY JUVENILES WHO BECOME ACTIVE IN HATE GROUPS DO SO BECAUSE THEY ARE DISENFRANCHISED FROM HOME, ARE NOT DOING WELL AT SCHOOL, AND HAVE LITTLE IN THE WAY OF POSITIVE ADULT MENTORING. 22 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PHILADELPHIA POLICE OFFICER TAUGHT ME THAT IF ONE MENTORS BY CULTIVATING AND PLANTING SEEDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND DIRECTION, THE HARVEST WILL RENDER A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF SOCIETY.

HATE CRIMES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENSES AFFECT EACH OF US. IT IS A PLAGUE WE MUST WORK TOGETHER IN DEVELOPING MORE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO FIND A CURE

HOWEVER, WE MUST FIRST ACKNOWLEDGE ITS EXISTENCE. SECONDLY, WE MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE A BI-PARTISAN COMMITMENT AS POLICY MAKERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF RACISM WITH THE SAME VIGOR THAT WE ADDRESS CRIME, MEDICAL RESEARCH, VOTING AND OTHER MATTERS.

ONCE WE HAVE MADE AND FOLLOWED-UP UPON THIS COMMITMENT THEN RACISM WILL NO LONGER SUCH A MAJOR PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY.

THIS PUBLIC HEARING IS A BEGINNING AND SHOULD NOT BE THE SOLE PUBLIC HEARING CONVENED BY THIS SPECIAL TASK FORCE ON THE ISSUE OF HATE ACTIVITY AND HATE CRIME IN THE COMMONWEALTH. WE SHOULD, IF EVIDENCED HERE, CONDUCT TRAVELING PUBLIC HEARINGS THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH. MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE, WE ARE ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION. NOT A POLITICAL AGENDA ACHIEVEMENT. WE MUST GIVE CREDIBILITY TO THAT WHICH WE HAVE BEGUN HERE TODAY AND LET OUR CITIZENS KNOW THAT WE ARE SINCERE IN OUR COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING POLICIES AND ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION WHICH WILL ENABLE OUR LAW

ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES, OUR EDUCATORS AND THOSE ON THE FRONT-LINE IN FIGHTING HATE ACTIVITY AND HATE CRIME.

WHILE I AM PLEASED THIS HEARING IS TAKING PLACE, I AM ALSO DISMAYED THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF HEARING IN 1996. I AM FURTHER SADDENED THAT FAR TOO MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS NEED FOR FACT-FINDING AND POLICY INITIATIVES REFUSE TO HONESTLY CONFRONT THE ISSUE OF HATE ACTIVITY AND RACIST BIGOTRY IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

I HOPE MY COLLEAGUES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THIS SPECIAL TASK FORCE LISTEN CAREFULLY AND WITH COMPASSION TO OUR SCHEDULED WITNESSES AND LEAVE THIS HEARING WITH A COMMITMENT TO ERADICATING HATE ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THIS COMMONWEALTH.

EXPANDING THE BASE FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ALLOWS FOR BETTER FACT-FINDING AND OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION. GEOGRAPHICALLY, HATE CRIMES AND RELATED ACTIVITY OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH. HATE CRIME IS A BI-PARTISAN ISSUE. IT CROSSES THROUGHOUT THIS VAST COMMONWEALTH AS A DISEASE. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THE CONVENING OF HATE CRIME HEARINGS IS A SURGICAL STEP TOWARDS REMOVING THIS DISEASE FROM PENNSYLVANIA.

I ESPECIALLY THANK THE EXPERT WITNESSES WHO WILL PRESENT TESTIMONY AND THOSE WHO HAVE SUBMITTED TESTIMONY. YOU ARE ON THE FRONT-LINE, AND WE LOOK TO YOU TO EDUCATE US TODAY. ALSO, MY APPRECIATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO HARRISBURG TO ATTEND THIS HEARING. I AM PLEASED SO MANY CAME - SURELY YOU KNOW THERE IS A PROBLEM WHICH NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED. I ASSURE YOU, MY PLEDGE TO ENDING HATE ACTIVITY AND HATE CRIME WILL NOT END BY THE CONCLUDING OF THIS HEARING, BUT WILL CONTINUE FROM THIS DAY FORWARD. AS A RESULT OF TWO SEPARATE FAMILIES IN MY DISTRICT BEING FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR

NEWLY ACQUIRED HOMES, I AM OUTLINING A PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS THE SERIOUSNESS OF HATE IN MY COMMUNITY OF SOUTH PHILADELPHIA. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THESE HEARINGS WILL HELP ME IN THAT REGARD.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

- (1) CONDENSED SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER'S KLANWATCH PROJECT 1995 LISTING OF HATE GROUP ACTIVITY IN PENNSYLVANIA;

(2) NEWSPAPER ARTICLES RELATING HATE ACTIVITY AND/OR CRIME IN THE COMMONWEALTH, ALL OF WHICH ARE FROM THE 1990s, AND SEVERAL AS RECENT AS YESTERDAY.

(3) A LISTING OF HATE GROUP EMBLEMS AND SYMBOLS

I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT AT OUR NEXT PUBLIC HEARING WE INCLUDE IN THIS DIALOGUE PARA-MILITARY GROUPS AS WELL.

IN CONCLUSION, I HOPE WE CAN MAKE THE WORDS OF PRESIDENT CLINTON A REALITY WHEN HE COMMENTED, ..."WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE STRONGER WHEN WE UNITE AROUND SHARED VALUES INSTEAD OF BEING DIVIDED BY OUR DIFFERENCES".... PRES. WM. J. CLINTON, 10-96

HATREMARKS

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER'S

KLANWATCH PROJECT

CONDENSED 1995 LISTING OF HATE GROUP ACTIVITY IN PENNSYLVANIA

KLAN

KEYSTONE KNIGHTS OF THE KKK	JOHNSTOWN
INVINCIBLE EMPIRE KNIGHTS OF THE KKK	GETTYSBURG
INTERNATIONAL KNIGHTS OF THE KKK	BOYERTOWN

NEO-NAZI

ARYAN RACIAL LOYALIST PARTY	WILKES-BARRE
NATIONAL ALLIANCE	ALLENTOWN
NATIONAL SOCIALIST IRISH WORKER'S PARTY	BETHLEHEM
NATIONAL SOCIALIST WHITE PEOPLES PARTY	PERKIOMENVILLE
WHITE HOUSE NETWORK	HARRISBURG
CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ISRAEL	ULYSSES
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WHITE PEOPLE	PHILADELPHIA
THE BLACK ARMY	MONTGOMERY COUNTY
ARYAN NATION	BOYERTOWN
CHRISTIAN POSSE COMITATUS	BOYERTOWN

SKINHEAD

EASTERN HAMMER SKINS	YORK, ALLENTOWN AND HARRISBURG
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

July 23, 1996

COMMITTEES

JUDICIARY, SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ON
CRIME & CORRECTIONS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
FINANCE
DEMOCRATIC POLICY

CHAIRMAN, PA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS

APPOINTMENTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, NATIONAL BLACK
CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS
VICE CHAIRMAN OF LAW & JUSTICE
AFI OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
STATE LEGISLATORS
LEGISLATIVE HOUSING CAUCUS
SUBSTANCE ABUSE CAUCUS

Rep. Thomas P. Gannon
Majority Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

VIA FAX No.: 610-461-6049

Rep. Thomas R. Caltagirone
Democratic Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

VIA FAX No.: 610-378-4406

RE: Request to Conduct Hearings on Hate Crimes

Dear Gentlemen:

In light of the substantial level of documented hate related activity in the Commonwealth, it is my considered opinion that the House Judiciary Committee should move swiftly by conducting public hearings on this subject.

As you are aware, hate related activity, while not always illegal, consists of the intimidation and/or harassment of a person, persons or group towards another person, persons and/or group or property. These activities consist of deeds that are oral, written or physical demonstrations of hostility. The climate both nationally and locally is moving towards the acceptance of public displays of race hatred. Perhaps most troubling is the increase in juvenile related hate activity.

Nationally, the climate of taking the liberty to desecrate, vandalize and burn a religious institution is an act of hate and disregard for religion. Because these churches are primarily comprised of African American congregants, it is even more alarming that a specific ethnic group is the target.

Rep. Thomas P. Gannon
Majority Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

VIA FAX No.: 610-461-6049

Rep. Thomas R. Caltagirone
Democratic Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
July 23, 1996
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VIA FAX No.: 610-378-4406

Throughout the Commonwealth there are numerous instances of hate related activity. One does not have to look deep into the past to review them. As recently as June, in Hollidaysburg, members of the Ku Klux Klan (dressed in their KKK apparel), held public rallies, spewing their distorted hate-mongering view. Reports of police brutality have increased in Pittsburgh, with charges of racism being the catalyst for the beatings, and in at least one instance in late 1995, for murder. In my own Legislative District in South Philadelphia, two African American families were subjected to intimidation, fear and their respective homes were vandalized with racial epithets. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission reports for the fiscal year 1994-1995, a 60% increase in the number of hate group activities reported to this government agency, overall generating a 12% increase.

These are disturbing events and statistics. It is, however with this information imperative that we as members of the House Judiciary Committee move swiftly to gather information and investigate this area of activity. This would place us in a pro-active mode, as opposed to reacting to a more serious incident such as a tragedy.

I strongly feel that conducting public hearings will serve to: (1) educate us as policy makers on the appropriate policies to implement and/or legislation to introduce; (2) allow the good citizens of the Commonwealth to testify on this subject, therefore, personalizing the issue; (3) hear testimony of experts in this field; (4) send a strong message to all the citizens of Pennsylvania that racism or racial violence will not be tolerated in the Commonwealth. Conducting public hearings grants the House of Representatives the venue to put into action the language of House Bill 418.

Finally, I recommend one-day hearings in the cities throughout the Commonwealth are convened (See Appendix III). Recognizing the time factor prior to adjournment of this Session, I feel strongly that the House Judiciary Committee move rapidly in the planning and announcing of Hate Crime Hearings. I and my staff are available to assist the Committee in obtaining this objective. The convening of Hate Crime Hearings by the House Judiciary Committee will serve as a strong bipartisan venture for all the fine citizens of the Commonwealth. Overall, I am anxious for the House Judiciary Committee to hold these hearings, and I look forward to discussing this serious issue in more detail.

Rep. Thomas P. Gannon
Majority Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

VIA FAX No.: 610-461-6049

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Democratic Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
July 23, 1996
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VIA FAX No.: 610-378-4406

The following three Appendices are provided to assist in your decision-making. Appendix I is a suggestive organizational list for developing an *Ad Hoc* Committee and/or Task Force. These entities, both government and private sector, are on the front-line in their respective efforts to prosecute, monitor, track, and re-educate the general public on hate related activity. Based on their resources and experience in this area, I strongly believe they can serve the House Judiciary Committee well by advising us on a format for: conducting these hearings; identification of expert witnesses; and any guidance as merited.

Appendix II is a sample synopsis of hate crime activity throughout the Commonwealth ranging from October, 1994 through June, 1996. These, along with the aforementioned instances personalize both the victim and the perpetrator, as references to both parties are included, were available.

Appendix III, identifies cities for suggested locales for conducting Hate Crime Hearings. Selection criterion consisted of geographic location, and hate crime activity in the respective area. For instance, Erie is perhaps the only major city in the Northeastern corridor, and is in reasonable proximity to Crawford and Mercer Counties. Crawford and Mercer counties have continuous histories of hate crime activity. Additionally, the city of Erie has a television market which serves 60 surrounding miles (including segments of Ohio). Furthermore, conducting a Hate Crime Hearing in Erie, which is located at the U.S. - Canadian border, would allow for interaction from Canadians (Note: Several U.S. based and international organizations include the U.S. - Canadian border as a hot-bed of hate crime activity.).

On the Upper Western side of Pennsylvania, the Scranton -Wilkes Barre area has rapidly changing demographics, and an increase in hate related activity has developed recently. Other suggested cities are listed as well on Appendix III.

Rep. Thomas P. Gannon
Majority Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

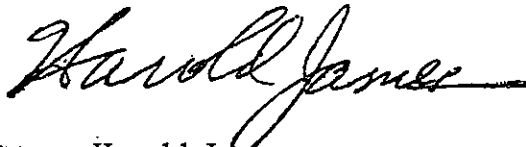
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VIA FAX No.: 610-378-4406

Expanding the base for collecting information allows for better fact-finding and opportunity for citizen participation. Geographically, hate crimes and related activity occur throughout the Commonwealth. Hate Crime is a bi-partisan issue. It crosses throughout this vast Commonwealth as a disease. I strongly believe the convening of Hate Crime Hearings is a surgical step towards removing this disease from Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



Harold James
186th Legislative District

HJ:du

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Matthew J. Ryan
The Honorable Wm. H. DeWeese
Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus

Suggestive Judiciary Committee Hate Crime Ad Hoc Committee

Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee

Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

Pennsylvania State Police

Pennsylvania State Corrections Institution

Pennsylvania N.A.A.C.P.

Pennsylvania Urban League

Amnesty International - York, Penn. Chapter

American Defense League

The Inter-agency Task Force On Civil Tension

The Federal Bureau of Investigation - Hbg. Office

U.S. Department of Justice - Community Relations Service

U.S. Marshall's Office

Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association

U.S. Army Garrison - Provost Marshal's Office

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Coalition to Counter Hate Groups

Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission

Synopsis of Hate Related Crime in the Commonwealth

October, 1994

Somerset County - the largest Klan rally in years included a three-day gathering.

January, 1995

Allentown - racist graffiti was painted on a high school during the weekend of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Bethlehem - two 14 year old males charged with disorderly conduct for burning a cross at the residence of two women.

July, 1995

Newburg - a church was spray-painted with "KKK" and other graffiti.

September, 1995

Easton - the words "white power" and a swastika were spray-painted on the office of a Jewish attorney.

Philadelphia -Joanne Roberts, age 42, used a baseball bat to attack her African-American neighbor, and was sentenced to 7 to 14 years.

Upper Frederick - an interracial couple experienced a cross-burning at their residence.

York - a boar's head was hung on a synagogue by 23 year old Mason E. Aldrich meted an eight-month minimum jail sentence.

October, 1995

Highland Park - a Jewish couple's residential door was spray-painted with anti-Semitic graffiti.

December, 1995

Allentown - three teenager Neo-Nazis participated in a triple slaying of the parents of two of the boys and their younger brother.

January, 1996

Harmony - swastikas, and "KKK" and sexual profanity were painted on a historic landmark.

February, 1996

Berwick - an African-American female driver's vehicle was repeatedly struck by Todd Ryan Harter, 28. The perpetrator continuedly yelled racial slurs including, threats to kill the driver and her son.

April, 1996

Berwick - Donald Robert Bogart, 21, was charged with stalking, and ethnic intimidation, among others, after assaulting a man and using anti-Semitic slurs.

June, 1996

Philadelphia - four white males between the ages of 17 and 20 were charged with ethnic intimidation, assault, conspiracy, among others against an African American teen.

Appendix III

Suggested Locales for Conducting Hate Crime Hearings

<u>Locale</u>	<u>Rationale for Location</u>
Harrisburg	Besides being the capitol, it is centralized for hate crime activity within Harrisburg, and the surrounding communities.
Pittsburgh	Hate crime activity is prevalent within and throughout this metropolitan city.
Philadelphia	As a major city, it's geographic location is ideal for conducting hearings.
Allentown-Bethlehem	Consists of high level of hate group activity. This is locale where approx. 2 years ago the two teenage sons murdered their parents. Also, an Aryan Nations compound exists in the Allentown suburb.
Johnstown	Residence of Barry Black, who is grand wizard of the Keystone Knights
Erie	Major city to both Mercer and Crawford Counties where a substantial quantity of hate related activity exists.
Scranton - Wilkes Barre	Demographics are rapidly changing wherein hostility is hereby on the upswing.