



**House Public Safety & Violence Prevention Task Force
Subject Matter Hearing on Hate Crimes
Thursday, August 25, 2022, 10 am
Opening Statement
Julie Justicz, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**

Good morning, Co-chairs Ford and Hurley, Spokesperson Windhorst, and members of the Task Force. Thank you for your continued efforts to protect all residents of our diverse state from violence, and to address the issue of hate crime.

My name is Julie Justicz, and I am here this morning representing Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, an organization founded in 1969 during our nation's civil rights movement that fights for racial equity and economic justice for all. For more than thirty years, our Hate Crime Project has served as a comprehensive resource center in Illinois. We conduct community outreach and education, professional training, and legislative and policy advocacy. We work with a corps of volunteer attorneys to advocate for victims of hate crime in criminal court and to represent them in civil cases seeking damages. The importance of criminal conviction and civil legal verdicts against the perpetrators of hate crime is that they send a clear message: The State of Illinois reject acts of bigotry and violence.

Like all of you, Chicago Lawyers' Committee is deeply concerned about the enduring, and indeed, increasing problem of hate crime and hate incidents across our nation. Today, I am going to talk briefly about Illinois' robust hate crime law, about the reported numbers of hate crime nationally and in Illinois, and about the indisputable fact that real numbers are likely much higher than reported numbers. That is because fewer than 14 percent of law enforcement agencies actually reported hate incidents to the FBI in 2019. I want to touch on why that is and offer some information about best practices in addressing reporting barriers. Until we know true numbers, we cannot fully address the problem. My colleagues from the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes will later present some key recommendations based on best practices. Let me turn now to a few slides.

Julie E. Justicz
Chief Strategy Officer
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
jjusticz@clccrul.org
312-202-3663