



PRESS RELEASE
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Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report and Policy Brief Centered on Hate Crime in the State

The Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) has released its report, [*Rethinking Hate Crime Policy in Indiana*](#) examining the state's recent efforts to address hate crimes through data collection, enforcement and prosecutions, and training on how to identify a hate crime.

The Committee gathered testimony from subject-matter experts and stakeholders, including researchers, academics, advocates, government officials, and impacted individuals, through a series of public briefings conducted between the Summer and Fall of 2024. The Committee determined that Indiana's 2019 hate crime law is rarely invoked which raises concern about the gap between statutory intent and practical application; includes vague language that lacks explicit protections for gender; and causes uncertainty in the application of the law for other protected classes. Additionally, existing hate crime data does not accurately reflect the reality of bias-related acts in the state.

The report offers the [*Committee's recommendations*](#) for corrective action directed to stakeholders including the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Governor, and local and city and county governments in Indiana. The Committee offers the following recommendations: Congress must pass legislation aimed at ensuring that incidents in which hate is a contributing factor are recognized as hate crimes; U.S. Department of Justice must restore funds appropriated to the Community Relations Service and prioritize enforcement and prosecutions involving allegations of violation of federal hate crime statutes. The Committee also recommends that the Indiana General Assembly amend the 2019 Indiana's hate crime law to include sex, gender identity, and age as protected classes; expand the list of specified offenses; and give more evidentiary guidance empowering prosecutors where hate crime is involved. Finally, local city and county governments are encouraged to coordinate with local human rights councils and community organizations to prevent incidents of hate and promote non-carceral approaches.

The Committee Chair, Diane Clements-Boyd, said: "Our report analyzes the current hate crime statute and offers recommendations to strengthen the law to better protect and serve Hoosiers. The report provides constructive steps to improve hate crime policy in Indiana, and consequently, an environment that is just and equitable for everyone."

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).