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**TESTIMONY OF DAVID PRICE, DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY  
AB 3121 TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND DEVELOP REPARATIONS PROPOSALS FOR  
AFRICAN AMERICANS**

March 30, 2022

Good afternoon Madam Chair and esteemed members of the Task Force. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's discussion.

My name is David Price and I serve as Director of Racial Equity for the Los Angeles Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department. Our department's mission is to maintain and strengthen the city's diversity, equity, and accountability. We are focused on reducing bias and injustices while leveling the playing field through community engagement, equity initiatives, and upward mobility programming.

Prior to joining LA Civil Rights, I served as Senior Area Representative for Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. I oversaw the Mayor's Interfaith Collective and Mayor's Youth Council, as well as organized and delivered City resources to underserved communities. I worked directly with community leaders and community based organizations to create a more equitable and inclusive Los Angeles.

I am a native of South Central L.A. and hold a bachelor's degree in Government with minors in African American Studies and Theology from Georgetown University. I also received a Master of Divinity, with a concentration in Religion, Ethics, and Politics, from Harvard University.

In my testimony today, I will first discuss biases and the impact it has on Black Angelenos, then I will focus on the contextual factors that contribute to the Black community being egregiously overrepresented each year as victims of racial hate incidents and hate crimes. Finally, I will highlight the work that LA Civil Rights has pursued in collaboration with community partners to eliminate hate and bias.

As many of you know, Los Angeles is one of the most diverse cities on Earth. We have a population of over 4 million people from more than 140 countries, speaking 224 different identified languages.

As such, race biases in the City have historically been overt, intentional and highly visible and unfortunately, we still see these disparities in every sector today.

According to Timothy Wilson, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, we are confronted with about 11 million pieces of information at any given moment. However, our brains can only process about 40 pieces of information at one time. In order to compensate for this discrepancy, our brains compress the decision-making process, which means we make under informed choices based on imperfect information and over time, the result is bias. While bias is a necessary survival trait, it's also ingrained into our interactions with others, which as we know, can quickly lead to lack of diversity, single-minded thinking, discrimination and hate crimes.

Today, we see the lingering negative effects of bias and discrimination against the Black community in too many sectors.

In education, the graduation equity gap for students of color has grown to 12.4%; meanwhile, 17 historically Black colleges and universities face bomb threats.

In the media, Black creators have to constantly fight for visibility and credit while they witness their non-Black counterparts skyrocket to popularity by copying their work. Artificial intelligence software even is labeling Black men as "primates."

When it comes to employment, close to 70% of Black workers who lost their jobs during the pandemic have yet to be called back to work and 90% of Black women surveyed reported that their employers were inflexible when it came to accommodating their at-home needs.

The unhoused youth in our communities are more likely to be Black (38%) and although government agencies do not collect demographic data on the people forced from their homes, research shows that nearly two-thirds of housing displacement, as a result of government approved construction projects, disproportionately affected Black families.

In June 2021, the California Department of Justice released data showing that California hate crimes reached their highest level in a decade – 1,300 hate crimes were reported in 2020. Hate crimes rose against many communities, including Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and transgender Californians. However, by far and away, hate crimes against Black Californians were the highest - increasing 87.7% in 2020 to 456 crimes targeting the Black community.

Data out of Los Angeles mirrors this trend. A recent report by California State University San Bernardino showed Los Angeles recorded the most hate crimes among large U.S. cities in 2021. Black Angelenos were the most targeted group, rising 91% in 2021 over 2020, which was already a record high. This amounts to 148 alleged hate crimes in 2021 against the Black community in Los Angeles, triple their share of the population.

Attorney General Rob Bonta was correct when he called hate a “crisis” across the state of California. In Los Angeles, we are fighting this crisis using a multi-layered, victim and community centered approach that includes education, outreach, prevention and resilience. The LA Civil Rights Department launched the LA for All campaign in 2021 to promote the resources for reporting hate and the L.A. values of inclusion, belonging and solidarity.

This has become the L.A. city government’s largest anti-hate PSA campaign, running in 18 languages and in over 4,200 ad spaces across LA. Just last week we welcomed LA Unified Schools into the campaign with banners up at 70 schools.

Hate crime reporting options included law enforcement and non-law enforcement options. As a part of this campaign, we worked with the city’s 311 call center to work with 211, the countywide services hotline, to begin intaking hate crime and hate incident reports.

Historically, 311 is used by residents to report potholes, debris, or other issues the city can handle. Now, you can call 311 to report a hate act in multiple languages, choose whether or not you want to report to law enforcement, and be connected with culturally appropriate services from partner organizations, like the NAACP of Los Angeles. This is essential for better tracking of hate in LA, as well as greater access to resources from the public.

It is important to note that LA for All does not focus on one community targeted by hate, nor does it center hate as the subject of the campaign. Instead, it counters hate through positive messages of belonging, like “LA is for Everyone,” “I belong. You belong. We belong.” and “LA is our home.”

Another key aspect to education is ensuring that people understand the problem. This is especially crucial when it comes to African-Americans, who, despite making up the vast majority of victims, are often portrayed as perpetrators of hate crimes. To counter this, our department has hosted live televised discussions like “Standing Up to Anti-Black Hate,” which aired in February of this year, and community dialogues among diverse AAPI and Black communities of Los Angeles to build solidarity against hate.

We recognize that as we continue to share resources to report hate, the numbers are going to rise - this is not necessarily because more crimes are occurring, but that more people feel comfortable and know how to report them. However, preventing these acts in the first place is an essential part of this work. This includes our bystander intervention training series, which is six virtual trainings with diverse audiences around how to stand up to hate when they see it in their schools, workplaces or communities.

We recognize that the hate we are seeing is a global problem, and is not going away any time soon. So what we also try to do is build inter-community resilience so no one person or community feels like they are alone when facing the threat of hate. This can include dinner dialogues, community clean-ups, youth events, cultural & artistic events, and televised


programming on this topic, one of which featured Attorney General Rob Bonta (“*The Future of Hate Prevention,*” on October 21, 2021).

The work of this taskforce is essential in the development of a reparations program because our State must work to:

1. Repair the harms of past biases against the Black community;
2. Reshape the public’s perception and consciousness through education, prevention, and response that centers the victim and targeted community; and
3. Recruit community partners to align resources and programs to begin peacebuilding and healing.

It is essential in LA and in California to make it clear that Black communities are the *victims of hate* far more than they are the perpetrators - and that this hate has a common thread in racism, othering, and xenophobia. Therefore, responding to hate requires solidarity, mutual support and resiliency not just within communities, but among communities, if we are to build an empowered multicultural, multiethnic society that everyone can call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David D. Price". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

David Price  
Director of Racial Equity