



County of Los Angeles
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

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July 6, 2023

Statement in Response to Sylmar Church Cross-Burning

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (LACCHR) envisions a County where freedom of religious expression enriches all aspects of our lives and everyone feels a sense of belonging. That shared vision unifies our diverse communities. Today, in response to the cross burning at Sylmar Christian Fellowship Church in Sylmar and the resulting trauma, we join together in expressing our solidarity with, and support for, this church community. We acknowledge the potential devastating impact on this predominately African American congregation and other community members as cross-burning has been a terrorizing tactic used by white supremacists in this country for more than a hundred years.

The LA vs Hate system, a program of the Commission on Human Relations, provides resources to help our communities support one another toward making our County an inclusive place for all populations. All are welcome to make use of these free resources by calling 2-1-1. LA vs Hate resources available to individuals calling 2-1-1 to report hate include services of a case manager; referrals to needed healing interventions such as mental health, health, and advocacy services; and assistance with accessing civil rights remedies through California's Civil Rights Department.

When incidents like this happen, LA vs Hate reaches out to those who are targeted and impacted members of our community to ensure that we all stand together during such trying times. Currently, LA vs Hate is working to support emerging social justice networks in areas impacted by hate acts such as Pasadena/Burbank and Santa Monica/Malibu.

In addition, LA vs Hate commissions art-led responses to hate, including posters, banners, and murals installed throughout the County. This summer, LA vs Hate is coordinating the LA vs Hate Summer of Solidarity. Beautiful community-led murals are planned for the Jewish community already unveiled at 9320 Pico Avenue, Los Angeles; LGBTQIA mural planned for Bixby Park Community Center, 130 Cherry Avenue Long Beach, opening August 5; African American commemoration mural in the Willowbrook area of South Los Angeles, planned for an August 19th opening; Indigenous people acknowledgement mural planned for the Antelope Valley area on September 9th and a Latinx community commemoration mural in the San Gabriel Valley, planned for September 30th.

The Summer of Solidarity also includes LA vs Hate pop ups at LA vs Hate x The Music Center DANCE DTLA events; LA vs Hate Signage at 40 Lifeguard towers, stretching from Zuma to Torrance Beach; Countywide Wellness Challenge Event, Saturday, July 15th, Dockweiler Youth Center and Beach, Playa

Statement in Response to Sylmar Church Cross-Burnings
Page 2 of 2
July 6, 2023

Del Rey • Marina For All, Saturday, July 15th, Marina del Rey harbor; and Grand Performances, at Grand Avenue downtown, July 29th and August 12th.

The need for these prevention and response efforts is well-supported by LACCHR's annual Hate Crime Report which documents that each year a disproportionate number of hate crimes target the African American community. For example, the 2021 report found that while the African American community comprises 9% of LA County's population, they represented 46% of all racial hate crime victims. Anti-Black hate crimes rose 30% from 169 to 219 in 2021.

Our many partners share our determination to collaborate in ensuring that hate has no home in LA County. Following is a statement from one of them in response to what occurred this morning. "We are sickened by this act of hatred targeting the Black Christian community. Burning crosses conjure painful memories of widespread discrimination against Black Americans and we must collectively condemn the evil symbolism of this act of vandalism," stated Jeffrey I. Abrams, Regional Director, ADL Los Angeles. "We thank LAPD and other law enforcement agencies involved for investigating this as a possible hate crime. ADL stands with Sylmar Christian Fellowship Church and the entire Black and Christian communities of Los Angeles and beyond."

The LACCHR is committed to our mission to promote better human relations and help build vibrant, thriving communities by working to transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace. Demonstrating community love and concern for each other, we stand in solidarity with all communities of Los Angeles County.

More information on the Commission and LA vs Hate resources can be found at hrc.lacounty.gov and [LA vs. Hate \(lavshate.org\)](http://lavshate.org).