



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

"Enriching lives through effective and caring service"

April 28, 2023

MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMISSIONERS

FROM: Ilan Davidson, President

SUBJECT: Commission Meeting- Monday, May 1, 2023

Our Commission will meet on Monday, May 1, 2023 at 12:30 p.m., at 510 S. Vermont Ave., 9th Floor, Press Room, #9K02, Los Angeles, California.

You may also join meeting **Via Teams Calendar Invitation** [Click here to join the meeting](#). If you are unable to do so, you may Dial: [+1 213-204-2512](tel:+12132042512), [980587174#](tel:+1980587174)
Please Post Agenda in your location.

Parking is located at 523 Shatto Place. Please pull a ticket when entering the parking structure. Please take the elevator to the 9th floor and walk through the bridge, which is located towards the northwest corner of the parking structure, to reach Terrace (T) Level of the designated candidate waiting area. Prior to leaving the facility, please take your ticket to either security desk (Ground Level or Terrace Level) for validation. **Do not park at the 510 South Vermont Avenue structure. Violators may be towed at vehicle owner's expense.**

Attached is the Agenda, Draft Minutes of April 3rd and other pertinent information for your review and approval.

If you are unable to join the meeting, please call me at (213) 639-6089 no later than 9:00 a.m., Monday, May 1st.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Policing will meet at from 10:30-12:00 in person or [Via Microsoft Teams](#)

Grace Löwenberg
L.A. County Commission on Human Relations
Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors
510 S. Vermont Ave., 11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 639-6089

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, 510 S. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90020 – (213) 738-2788

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Ilan Davidson
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Isabelle Gunning, Esq.
Vice President/Secretary

Derric Johnson
Fredrick Sykes
Sandra E. Thomas, Ph.D.
Vice Presidents

Michael Gi-Hao Cheung
Helen L. Chin
Lisa Michelle Dabbs
Dandy De Paula
Azusena Favela
Kevork Keushkerian
Preeti P. Kulkarni
Guadalupe G. Montañó, Ed.D
Jeanette Ellis-Royston
Gay Q. Yuen, Ph.D.

Honorary Member
Philip R. Valera

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Robin S. Toma, Esq.
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Chief Executive Officer



Los Angeles County Commission on
Human Relations - 510 S. Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 738-2788

AGENDA
MEETING OF THE COMMISSION
Monday, May 1, 2023 – 12:30-2:00 pm
LA County Vermont Corridor Building - 510 S. Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90020 - Press Room on the Terrace Level #9K02
[Also via MS Teams Video and Audio Conferencing 213-204
2512,,980587174# [Click here to join the meeting](#)]

Our mission: to transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace

- 1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement (12:30)**
- 2. Review & Approval of April 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes***
- 3. President's Report (12:33)**
 - 3.1. Spotlight on a Commission Partner: David J. Carroll, Director, LA County's new Youth Development Department
 - 3.2. Commissioner Recognitions*
 - 3.3. IAOHRA Conference August 13-17, 2023, near Washington, D.C.*
- 4. Executive Director's Report (12:45)**
 - 4.1. Key Program Updates: LA vs Hate Dream Center opening at La Puente High*, Meeting on Needs of Hate Victims with DA Gascon*, Anti-Armenian Hate event*, national anti-Asian hate panel on Vincent Chin, new LA vs Hate training video for law enforcement, CA vs Hate, Anti-Semitism panel at JANM, training activities, etc.
 - 4.2. Key Administrative Developments: Office space, hiring new staff for programs and communications, etc.
- 5. Committee Reports (12:55)**
 - 5.1. Ad Hoc Committee on Policing and Human Relations* (Gunning)
 - 5.2. Policy and Advocacy (Legislation) Committee (Montaño)
 - 5.3. LA vs Hate Committee (Montaño)
 - 5.4. Nominations Committee* (Chin)
- 6. Public Comment (3 minutes per person) (1:05)**
- 7. Action/Discussion Items (1:10)**
 - 7.1. Presenting Slate of Candidates and Finalize Ballot for Elections at June meeting*
 - 7.2. Hate Crime Legislation (AB 1064)*
 - 7.3. HRC Offices' Location
- 8. Commissioner Announcements (2 minutes per Commissioner) (1:55)**
- 10. Adjournment in honor of Harry Belafonte, lifelong racial justice activist (2:00)**

For translation to other languages o para más información en español, call (213) 738-2788 or email us.

* Denotes that this agenda packet includes written material regarding this agenda item.

Meetings are held in English. If interpretation in other languages or accommodations for persons with disabilities are needed, please

contact the Commission at (213) 738-7288 at least 3 business days before the meeting. The meetings of the Human Relations Commission are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Note: The following Commissioners will be participating by conference telephone communication from the following locations: Helen Chin, 9770 Culver Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232; Dandy De Paula, 21815 Pioneer Blvd., Hawaiian Gardens, CA 90716; Sandra Thomas, 95 W. Calaveras St., Altadena, CA 91001.



Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

510 South Vermont Avenue, 11th floor
Los Angeles, California, 90020
www.lahumanrelations.org
(213) 738-2788

[PROPOSED] MINUTES
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
Meeting of April 3, 2023

In Person and via Microsoft Teams Video & Audio Conferencing

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| PRESENT: | Helen L. Chin | Derric Johnson |
| | Lisa Dabbs* | Kevork Keushkerian |
| | Ilan Davidson | Jeanette Ellis-Royston |
| | Dandy De Paula | Fredrick Sykes |
| | Asuzena Favela | Sandra E. Thomas |
| | Isabelle Gunning | Gay Yuen |
| | | |
| STAFF: | Pierre Arreola | Yadira Pineda-Siordia |
| | Valentina D’Alessandro | Robert Sowell |
| | April Johnson | Robin Toma |
| | Grace Lowenberg | Siranush Vardanyan |
| | | |
| GUEST: | Sophia Ventura-Cruess | |

- 1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples:** Commission President Ilan Davidson called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m. with a quorum in attendance, and recognized that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multi-generational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation, and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and San Fernando Band of Mission Indians. To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.

2. Review & Approval of March 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes: The motion to approve the minutes of the Commission meeting of March 6, 2023, as presented by Vice-President/Secretary (VP Sec.) Isabelle Gunning was made by Commissioner Fredrick Sykes, seconded by Commissioner Jeanette Ellis-Royston. The motion passed unanimously.

3. President's Report

3.1 Spotlight on Commission Partner, Sophia Ventura-Cruess, Smart Justice Training Coordinator for the Urban Peace Institute: President Davidson welcomed Sophia Ventura-Cruess, who spoke about the partnership between the Human Relations Commission and the Urban Peace Institute (UPI). As the Smart Justice Team Training Coordinator, Ms. Ventura-Cruess explained that the team focuses on establishing strong networks of community empowerment and development for young people who are recently released from juvenile facilities. Additionally, she works with the Safety Fellows Team at UPI to lead trainings and community violence intervention to help shape ongoing policy around public health and public safety. Ms. Ventura-Cruess thanked Robert Sowell on behalf of UPI for the training recently provided, noting that it was crucial for diversion providers in particular. She continued to explain that much of the work at UPI includes the core values and guiding principles that HRC provides trainings about, and hopes for more collaboration in the future. President Davidson thanked Ms. Ventura-Cruess for her time and for the work that she does. Executive Director Robin Toma also joined to thank her for her work and added that late HRC staff Tony Massengale was the first one who provided HRC training for the Advancement Project's Urban Peace Academy (UPI's predecessor), and he recognized how crucial they are to promoting peace and advocating for the rights of individuals in our communities. ED Toma asked for Ms. Ventura-Cruess' thoughts regarding the Commission's focus. She said that UPI is starting to see a greater political will to push forward models that are more rehabilitative, and showing up in those spaces is crucial. Pres. Davidson thanked her again.

3.2 Meeting with Sheriff Luna on March 24, 2023: President Davidson shared that there was a meeting of HRC with Sheriff Robert Luna on March 24th and it was enlightening, as Luna is trying to return a level of humanity to the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Sykes agreed, adding that Sheriff Luna's idea of collaboration and intention to be transparent and innovative with the Constitution was important (reestablishing the unit of constitutional policing). He continued to explain that Luna realizes he cannot do it all by himself and is willing to reach out to work with others, which is most important. Commissioner Yuen added that Sheriff Luna really welcomed the members of the Commission's policing committee when they shared the interest in visiting the jails, and how impressed she was with his openness. Committee chair Gunning agreed with the statements about Sheriff Luna's openness, and emphasized that his willingness to have an ongoing relationship with the Office of Constitutional Policing stood out. Lastly, in response to a question, ED Toma explained for attendees who were not part of the meeting with Sheriff Luna that the legislation Sheriff referenced during the meeting was the state law that realigns dollars from the state level to the counties to cut back on the state prison population and in effect move them to the county jails. President Davidson closed by expressing he feels an overwhelming sense of optimism and excitement about working together, while making sure there is responsibility and oversight.

3.3 Return to in-person Commission meetings: President Davidson noted that the Commission has returned to in-person Commission meetings and asked that Commissioners and attendees vocalize any miscommunications about virtual and in-person attendance. ED Toma reminded Commissioners that applicable laws require that if they plan to participate virtually (via Teams), they must provide their location address and be willing to allow any member of the public to participate there in the meeting.

3.4 IAOHRA Conference August 13-17, 2023, near Washington, D.C.: President Davidson shared that the IAOHRA conference will be August 13th to 17th at the Baltimore/Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area, hosted by the Montgomery County Human Rights Commission, and asked that Commissioners who are interested in attending should notify staff. Commissioner Gay Yuen shared her interest in participating and asked about her possibly being on a panel or being part of the conference. Additionally, President Davidson shared that the county supports Commissioners attending the conference and that funding is available for attendance this year.

4. Executive Director's Report

4.1 Select Program Updates: Recent Belonging Awards, IAOHRA meetings in DC, Sheriff Luna Meeting, Upcoming Anti-Black Hate Training Initiative, LA vs Hate Dream Center opening at La Puente High, National anti-Asian hate panel on Vincent Chin, LA Law Library Award to Isabelle Gunning*:

Executive Director (ED) Robin Toma began his report by sharing that Pepperdine Law School held its Belonging Awards, which was led by our partner with the United Against Hate Week, Chalak Richards, Associate Dean of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. Mr. Toma was the keynote speaker, and awardees included Capri Maddox, who leads the LA City Department of Civil and Human Rights.

Also, ED Toma reported that he was in Washington D.C last week for the IAOHRA Spring Board Retreat. He met with the head of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Programs for state and local agencies, and learned that Artificial Intelligence has become a national priority of the EEOC under the umbrella of race equity. Additionally, a new federal law called Pregnant Workers Fairness Act will begin being enforced on June 27th. He also met with the Director of Fair Housing for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department who shared that they restored the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing program, which was an innovation by the Obama Administration but was shut down during the Trump Administration. He added that its focus now is on racial bias in real estate appraisals. ED Toma shared that he had meetings with members of Congress and their staff, both in the House and Senate, and they are moving in the right direction with civil rights issues.

ED Toma moved on to say that there will be work done to follow up on the meeting with Sheriff Luna and expanding the ongoing engagement between the HRC and Sheriff Luna.

Also, ED Toma shared that he is excited to partner, fund and support the expansion of an anti-Black hate training initiative that includes potential development of a video curriculum.

ED Toma reminded commissioners of our Dream Resource Center opening at La Puente High School on April 12th and encouraged all to attend.

A national virtual event on anti-Asian hate and linked to the hate murder of Vincent Chin is being planned, in response to the initiative of the Chinese American Museum, ED Toma reported.

And lastly, ED Toma reminded commissioners about the upcoming LA Law Library's Beacon of Justice Award being presented to our Commissioner Gunning on April 26th.

4.2 Key Administrative Developments - Office space, hiring new staff for programs and communications, etc.: ED Toma shared the good news that the Public Information Associate job bulletin for the HRC has been posted, and reminded attendees that this position is open and competitive, encouraging attendees to share the information. ED Toma continued his update regarding office space and explained that the Executive Office team is still looking at new spaces and will give updates. Lastly, that there will be new hires and new staff for different programs, and the Commission will be notified as soon as these items have been cleared, giving the HRC 22 total staff, which is the largest number in a long time.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 Ad Hoc Committee on Policing & Human Relations: President Davidson asked for "Ad Hoc" to be removed from the Committee name because the Committee is not temporary, and is one of the priorities within the Commission. He explained that even if there isn't a re-evaluation of bylaws being changed, he suggested to remove the ad hoc for Commission meetings. ED Toma explained that the Committee on Policing and Human Relations was originally supposed to be temporary when it was created, however it has remained and suggested that the name be changed, as long as the Committee is willing to meet the requirements that they will meet in person, that they will comply with the Brown Act and post their address if needed. President Davidson recommended that the Committee takes this suggestion up instead of voting on it as a Commission. Committee Chair Gunning agreed and stated that they would discuss this with the Committee.

Committee Chair Gunning reported that the Committee met with two representatives from the Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional Inspections- Dr. Cheryl Grills and former HRC staff member Ray Regalado. She noted that Dr. Grills has been working on jail issues for decades, and they have heard some harrowing things about the conditions in the jail. Committee Chair Gunning reported that the Committee received interest from Dr. Grills to collaborate with the Committee and other County Commissions on issuing a joint statement regarding the need to improve conditions in the County's carceral facilities.

5.2 LA vs Hate Committee: Committee Chair Guadalupe Montañó is unable to attend so President Davidson gave the report as follows: on April 3rd LA vs Hate staff were invited to be a partner in the Interfaith Passover/Freedom Seder, a partnership between the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles and the 2nd District Racial Justice Learning Exchange initiative of the office of Supervisor Holly Mitchell.

He reminded attendees that on April 14th there is a media training for our LA vs Hate network partners provided by Task Force from 11 am to 12:30 pm, so please let staff Siranush Vardanyan know if you would like to attend as it is a virtual training.

He continued to share that on April 21st at 10 am to noon there is a listening session with District Attorney George Gascon in person at 510 N. Vermont on the 9th floor, and to also let Siranush know if you would like to join.

President Davidson continued to share that the first ever LA vs Hate Summer of Solidarity will begin on May 21st, which is World Cultural Diversity Day. Plans include murals to be done each month in different parts of the county, and look at the Commission Meeting Packet to find the overview of the Summer of Solidarity. Lastly, LA vs Hate is coordinating four special initiatives with one-time funding.

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Action/Discussion Items

7.1 Formation of Commission's Nominations Committee: President Davidson reported that it is time to put together a Nominations Committee, and suggested that each of the Vice Presidents from each district can continue or nominate someone else. The chair of the committee needs to be someone who is not interested in being considered for an executive or officer position. President Davidson asked if anyone is interested in being the Chair of the Nominations Committee; Commissioner Helen Chin volunteered. Commissioner Lisa Dabbs stated that she is willing to support Commissioner Chin. President Davidson suggested Commissioner Yuen to represent District 1, Commissioner Chin for District 2, Commissioner Montañó for District 3, Commissioner Dabbs for District 4, and Commissioner Keushkerian for District 5. A motion was made by Commissioner Gunning to form the Nominations Committee with the identified commissioners, seconded by Commissioner Ellis-Royston. The motion passed unanimously, with no opposition or abstentions.

7.2 Update on Location of Commission Offices: Previously discussed in item 3.2.

7.3 Hate Crime Legislation: ED Toma explained that there are two bills which would change the definition of hate crime in a way that remove the need to show proof of prejudice or animosity in some situations. ED Toma suggested Commissioner Montañó be a part of this due to her interest in state legislation and the committee she chairs. Pres. Davidson invited a motion to refer this item to the Committee for Policy and Advocacy and the LA vs Hate Committee, both led by Committee Chair Montañó, which was made by Commissioner Sykes, seconded by Commissioner Sandra Thomas. The motion passed unanimously, with no objections or abstentions.

7.4 Commissioner Participation in National IAOHRA Conference: Previously discussed in item 2.4.

8. Commissioner Announcements: President Davidson wished everyone a Happy Passover, Happy Easter for all that celebrate, and an easy fast for those who are fasting for Ramadan.

9. Adjournment: President Davidson invited a motion to adjourn the meeting in memory of Judy Heumann, Trailblazing Disability Rights Advocate. The motion was moved by Commissioner Yuen and seconded by Commissioner Gunning. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Isabelle Gunning
Commission Vice President-Secretary

Item 3.2

**The 2023 Beacon of Justice Award Gala will be held on
April 26, 2023 at 6:30 PM at the Los
Angeles County Law Library**

**Celebrate the Friends of the LA County Law Library's
20th Anniversary**

2023 Beacon of Justice Honorees



Professor Isabelle R. Gunning

Isabelle R. Gunning is the Mayor Tom Bradley Professor of Law at Southwestern Law School. Professor Gunning previously served as a criminal defense attorney with the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C., and as a human rights attorney with the Southern Africa Project of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She teaches in the area of conflict resolution/alternative dispute

resolution and Evidence. Her research interests are in multicultural and interfaith dialogue and the search for and creation of shared values in the context of racial and other socially defined power and hierarchy dynamics.

She practices as a mediator and an arbitrator, and works as a mediator/facilitator in support of resolving community conflicts and has been a facilitator of community hearings with Days of Dialogue and Trust Talks. In addition, she has over 15 years' experience serving as a labor arbitrator and hearing examiner in workplace disputes.

Professor Gunning also serves as a commissioner on the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. During her tenure as president of the LACCHR (May 2016-2018) she presided over the hearings which lead to the report and related video of the LACCHR *"Redefining Policing with our Community"* (2020). She is a board member on the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and has served as the Affiliate's president, as well as the Affiliate's representative to the National ACLU Board.



Judge Samantha Phillips Jessner

Judge Samantha Phillips Jessner is the Presiding Judge (2023-2024) of the Los Angeles Superior Court, where she has served as Assistant Presiding Judge, Supervising Judge of the Civil Division, Supervising Judge of the Mental Health court, and on many LASC committees. Judge Jessner is a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions, the Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee of the Judicial Council of California. For many years, she has taught New Judge Orientation and CJER Qualifying Ethics curriculum, in addition to teaching other subjects.

Judge Jessner is a founding member of the Association of African American California Judicial Officers and a member of the National Association of Women Judges. In addition, she is often asked to be a speaker or panelist for many organizations, including ABTL, CAALA, and LACBA, where she speaks on a variety of topics, including jury selection, trial advocacy, experts, mediation, court technology, civility, and informal discovery conferences.

Judge Jessner began her legal career as an associate at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton and then served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Criminal Division in the Central District of California until she was appointed to the Court in 2007.

Here is a link to the Beacon of Justice Awards Gala event page: <https://www.friendsoflacll.org/events/>

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3.2. Friends of the Los Angeles County Law Library

ACCESS TO JUSTICE = ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Friends provides financial support to the LA Law Library, a vital part of the justice system that delivers free and equal access to legal information, education, and resources to everyone.

The Law Library Provides Access to Justice as a Hub of Legal Resources and Information:

- Over 125,000 visits each year from people seeking legal information and resources
- Provides legal information, education, and support to those who cannot afford representation:
 - More than 80% of litigants in the courts fend for themselves, including in highstakes matters such as evictions, divorce, child custody and support proceedings, debt collection, immigration, among others
- Serves as a community resource hub:
 - Free resources and assistance to navigate our legal system: workshops, clinics, and consultations - see the Law Library website for more: <https://www.lalawlibrary.org/>
 - ongoing follow-up and self-help assistance available 6 days per week in-person, online, and over the phone
 - facilitates referrals by connecting service providers, legal and otherwise, to the public and each other
 - In 2022, the Library began its Community Connections program, hiring a Community Resources Specialist who connects people to resources in the areas of housing, food and meal programs, physical and mental health services and general support
- Training programs for law students/new lawyers/sole practitioners; MCLE classes for lawyers, as well as volunteer and pro bono opportunities
- Locations throughout LA County with free access to self-help legal resources and assistance, including 3 staffed locations, 3 ebranches and 7 partnerships in courthouses and public libraries

The Law Library Has Served as Important Safety Net During the Pandemic:

- Even when the Law Library had to close its doors to the public when stay-at-home orders were in effect, its dedicated staff was busier than ever meeting the unprecedented needs of the once-in-a-century crisis through inventive ways of providing legal information and support, via email, live chat, online classes, phone, and Zoom events as well as telephone consultations with attorneys – and all for free.
- Now, as the county has opened back up, the demand for the Law Library’s free legal assistance services is greater than ever before.

The Friends Supports the Law Library – a Unique and Valuable Institution:

- The LA Law Library is the largest in the United States other than the Library of Congress

- No other city, county or state has the depth of historical, California, or global materials publicly available at the LA Law Library
- Over 35 miles of shelving, including the laws of over 200 countries
- Founded in 1891, the Law Library has served lawyers, judges, academia, and the general public for over 130 years

For Agenda Item 3.2: Commissioner Recognitions

DERRIC JOHNSON shared that he was appointed the Inaugural Race and Justice Chair at Pitzer College.

This role will help advance student and alumni engagement by identifying/ activating support of the College's social justice programs and efforts. It will strategically align with the Melvin L. Oliver Racial Justice Initiative and Pitzer College's Justice Education program. Will have responsibility for supporting social justice campaigns and fostering greater inclusiveness/engagement of the Alumni community and the College holistically.

Item 3.2



The poster features a dark background with a pattern of gold hexagons on the right side. The text on the left reads: "2023 SCHOLARSHIP & AWARDS GALA", "APRIL 14, 2023", "THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN", "6:00 PM", "Cocktail Reception and Dinner Auction", "Supporting Scholarship and Student Success", "8:00 PM", "Music and Awards", "University of Texas at Austin".

2023 AWARDS AWARDS

CELEBRATION AWARD
Richard Engelbrecht '91
Chairman, UT Energy Services (Energy Services)



CELEBRATION AWARD
Ray Hunt PhD '61
Chairman, Hunt Energy Services (Energy Services)



WILLIAM A. WILSON AWARD
Thomas Hunt '91
Chairman, Hunt Energy Services (Energy Services)



WILLIAM A. WILSON AWARD
Sam Wang '91
Chairman, Wang Energy Services (Energy Services)



Ready to register by April 6, 2023

Register at <http://utexas.com/awardsgala>

3.3 IAOHRA CONFERENCE



Search Site

International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies

MEMBERS ONLY

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**IAOHRA 2023 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE
AUGUST 13-17**

**"Embracing Truth and Healing:
Securing Equity and Justice for All"**

Network with your colleagues, share experiences, and come away with ideas you can implement. Fast-Track your learning with informative sessions and exhilarating speakers.

Join your colleagues from across the country August 13- 17, to connect, collaborate and share best practices for how to address common human rights challenges. Featuring leading experts and invaluable information exchange on critical issues:

- Housing Discrimination
- Global Human Rights Issues
- Fair Employment Practices

- Innovative **DEi** Strategies

IAOHRA membership dues for this fiscal year 2022-23 must be current to receive the discounted Early-Bird rate of \$645 (\$745 for non-members.) Members not current in their dues should register at the non-member rate. For information regarding dues payment [click here](#).

Registration Fees - *Registration Opening Soon!*

REGISTRATION

Member Agency Registration- Early Bird Deadline is July 14			
Member Agency Registration - After July 14			
Non-Member Registration			
Daily Rate			
• Monday, August 14			
• Wednesday, August 16			
• Thursday, August 17			

Association of Official Human Rights Agencies

Association of Official Human Rights Agencies maintains this site to enhance access to information; we make no guarantees. We will make an effort to correct errors brought to our attention. Please be aware that we do not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of pointers to particular information does not constitute an endorsement or approval of the products or services offered by the author of the reference or the creator of the information.

As a service to our members, this is a service that is continually under development. We try to keep the information current and accurate. We try to keep the information current and accurate. We try to keep the information current and accurate.



HACIENDA LA PUENTE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2023

MEDIA CONTACTS: Andrea Torres
(909) 573-8137

Hacienda La Puente Unified High School Unveils New Dream Resource Center

CITY OF INDUSTRY – Hacienda La Puente Unified students, District officials and dignitaries celebrated the launch of the La Puente High School Dream Resource Center with an opening ceremony on April 12, unveiling a welcoming, safe space where students can create, relax and collaborate.

The center is funded by the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations' (LACCHR) community-centered program, LA vs. Hate. The nonprofit organization 211-LA and the Helpline Youth Counseling program also support the facility, which provides social, emotional and academic services, snacks, workshops and supplies for students experiencing bullying and exclusion.

The event included an exciting introduction by Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jiménez, followed by the presentation of colors led by Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets and performances led by La Puente High School's choir and dance team. During the ceremony, guests listened to touching speeches from students and honorary guests, including Board President Christine H. Salazar, Congresswoman Grace Napolitano and LACCHR Executive Director and lead for LA vs. Hate, Robin Toma, describing the importance and vast benefits of the new dream center.

"On behalf of the entire Board, I'd like to thank all our elected officials and representatives for coming out to celebrate this amazing resource center with our La Puente High School students and staff," Salazar said. "The free resources this center provides our students are making a long-lasting impact and will continue to support future generations of LPHS students and the greater community. Thank you to all our partners who made this center a dream come true."

Following the ceremony, guests heard student testimonials and toured the center, immersing themselves in a tranquil and welcoming room adorned with inspirational quotes, vision boards and tables topped with resources, games and calming activities. The center is complete with modernized furniture pieces designed to increase peace and provide spaces for meditation and studying.

"The Dream Resource Center is a sanctuary that provides an abundance of readily available resources, including snacks, social-emotional support and peer-to-peer counseling services for all students," junior Krystal Maldonado said. "The center has allowed me to share my dreams with my peers and mentors. Thank you to everyone that helped bring this safe haven to life."

The center and all its resources, including the support staff funded by 211-LA and the Helpline Youth Counseling Program, are available daily for all La Puente High School students.

MORE

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Nancy Loera
Member

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Member

Dr. Alfonso Jiménez
Superintendent



HACIENDA LA PUENTE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Our District is grateful to all our Dream Resource Center partners for working with us to make this center a reality for our La Puente High School community,” Jiménez said. “Thank you to all our student speakers for sharing their powerful and uplifting stories of the dream resource center with our guests of honor and for your continued efforts to encourage more students to visit the center, cultivate change and inspire one another to dream big.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

HLPUSD_DREAMRESOURCECENTER1:

HLPUSD_DREAMRESOURCECENTER2:

HLPUSD_DREAMRESOURCECENTER3:

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FORUM FOR HATE VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS

Friday, April 21, 2023 – 10 a.m. to 12 noon

LA County Commission on Human Relations & LA District Attorney George Gascon

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME – Robin Toma, Executive Director, LA County HRC** **10 a.m.**
- 2. BRIEF SELF-INTRODUCTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS** **10:05 a.m.**
- 3. OPENING REMARKS – George Gascon, District Attorney for LA County** **10:20 a.m.**
- 4. CONTEXT AND GOALS – Robin Toma** **10:30 a.m.**
- 5. BREAKOUT GROUPS – Robert Sowell** **10:40 a.m.**
- 6. REPORT BACK AND PLENARY DISCUSSION** **11:15 a.m.**
- 7. CLOSING REMARKS – DA Gascon** **11:50 a.m.**



FORUM FOR HATE VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS NOTES

WELCOME – ROBIN TOMA, EXEC DIRECTOR, LA COUNTY HRC

- Session is recorded.
- LA vs Hate was created for hate crimes to be reported even if it's not violent, and for them to get help.
- We are here to find the gaps in services and meet those needs.
- Help people move from being victims to being voices for change.
- Hate acts have been consistently rising.
- LA vs Hate is focused on building working relationships with partners to better respond to victim needs.
- LA vs Hate also provides services to family members and friends of victims who also may be impacted.
- The program is about providing advocacy to victims.

BRIEF SELF-INTRODUCTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

OPENING REMARKS – GEORGE GASCON, DA FOR LA COUNTY

- Hate crimes are growing because attitudes have increased in our communities that allow hate to flourish, starting at the white house in 2016.
- Hate crimes have increased for folks in AAPI, trans, POC, and immigrant communities.
- The tide can be turned if good people stand up and hold that a hate crime against one is a hate crime against all of us.

CONTEXT AND GOALS – ROBIN TOMA

- LA vs Hate is about building relationships between communities so we can respond to hate together as a group.
- Holding respect for the dead creates cooling-off periods that allow for reduced retaliation between groups committing hate crimes against each other.
- Brief reporting on survey results.
- Introduced breakout groups and the purpose.

BREAKOUT GROUPS – ROBERT SOWELL COORDINATED

Vital Research note takers were in two breakout groups. Two other breakout groups took place.

BREAKOUT ROOM #1

REPORTING HATE: What can we do to address the reasons most commonly heard as to why victims/survivors of hate do not report or are unwilling to report hate incidents and/or hate crimes? Expand on how LA vs Hate, the DA's office, or others could help.

- Reasons: retaliation, fear of retaliation, machismo, immigration status, trust (esp. Black and Brown people), police inaction may be frustrating/give up, cultural differences in submitting complaints, worry that it will complicate their lives
- Need empathy coming from folks receiving support.
- Outreach events are key.
 - o May be where some folks report initially, and the first place they get information/services.
 - o Direct outreach toward specific populations
 - e.g., mobile Spanish-speaking vendors may need services/outreach specific to their profession.
 - e.g., locations where there is a high concentration of hate crimes.
 - e.g., with specific months (e.g., June and LGBTQIA+) and awareness of potentially heightened focus and hate on those specific groups.
 - o Funding is needed to support more outreach (for manpower)
 - o Art is a powerful tool for outreach, helps to reach many communities (something LA vs Hate does well)
- Educating folks about hate incidents (what they are)
 - o And about where and how to report.
 - o The word “report” can make folks hesitate – worry about what will happen due to their reporting (esp. with regards to law enforcement).
 - o Take a culturally relevant approach.
 - Discussion within communities about their own values and potential obstacles.
 - For communities that are reluctant, teach that even if you don't want to do it for yourself, do it for your family/community.
 - Generational trauma creates a norm that reduces reporting.
 - Plant the seeds to move forward better together.
 - For immigrant communities, some may think hate is the price they pay for living here.
- Political issues
 - o If 45 gets back in office, it may turn to the wild west and people may begin protecting themselves in a deadly way.
 - o How to handle waves of hate and prepare before these issues happen.
 - o Police culture also impacts reporting and response to hate crimes.
 - Giving police the tools to help victims that they cannot handle themselves, could help them show empathy and care for the communities.

NEEDED RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS: What are the resources most needed by victims of hate, and what can we do to increase those resources? Build upon those answers already identified to give examples. For example, which particular types of services in which legal or multilingual services are needed? How can they be made more accessible by your organization or others?

- Police training

- Training on how to relieve/handle stress; trauma-informed practices.
- Helps them in their job, but also to empathize and help citizens.
- Mental health services
 - Can be tricky because when discrimination is distressing, MH providers cannot fix that, and they're also not wrong to be distressed by it.
- Government officials do PSAs in November, hate crime prevention week
 - Media blitz of PSAs about reporting resources
 - News, social media, athletes/sports
- Strengthening networks of service providers & officials
 - To support each other and refer clients as needed.
 - Virtual meetings or quarterly in person meetings.

BREAKOUT ROOM #2

REPORTING HATE: What can we do to address the reasons most commonly heard as to why victims/survivors of hate do not report or are unwilling to report hate incidents and/or hate crimes? Expand on how LA vs Hate, the DA's office, or others could help.

- Reasons: fear, afraid of retaliation, concerns about immigration status, race and ethnicity, and general frustration. At some moments, law enforcement can be discouraging to victims. Language barriers. Concerns about adequate follow up (what will happen? Will it be a waste of time to report?). "We hear about hate acts, but not so much consequences for perpetrators." Also, hate crimes are experienced daily by many and reporting may retraumatize victims. Misgendering is tough on the trans community and impacts individuals deeply; many victims are avoidant of reporting because they do not want to be misgendered. Some trans individuals don't feel as protected by law enforcement as cis individuals; feel there isn't equality in the quality of services/supports provided by law enforcement.
- Training and education is important
 - Law enforcement needs to take accountability and take more detailed reporting.
 - Victims are seeking support and help and sometimes law enforcement may not treat everyone the same.
- With the Jewish community, some victims turn inward to their social groups, become "insular"; may feel more comfortable taking "care of it" internally.
- Some don't know the difference between a crime and an incident.
 - Different law enforcement agencies also have different perspectives in what is considered a hate crime or incident. It really varies. Who has received which training? How can we standardize?
- Financial resources are needed to make sure there is training and education.
- Victims may file a hate incident and initiate a restraining order but it's hard to get that granted by a judge when there's no official police report or other "official" paperwork documenting the incident. Some judges are on the more conservative side.

NEEDED RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS: What are the resources most needed by victims of hate, and what can we do to increase those resources? Build upon those answers already identified to give examples. For example, which particular types of services in which legal or multilingual services are needed? How can they be made more accessible by your organization or others?

- Resources needed: additional training, education, and awareness on the ability to report hate.
 - Ideas

- Potentially make this additional training a requirement for all members of law enforcement agencies and maybe the incentive is salary bonus/points.
 - Train officials on gender language to reduce misgendering. This has a very negative impact on the trans community and can further traumatize victims.
 - Education and outreach to the public and law enforcement agencies
 - HRC is visible to communities. The DA's office and other law enforcement agencies should also engage with communities/do meet ups with communities.
- There's a lack of awareness sometimes that outreach is happening.
 - The challenge is also getting people to engage with outreach events. Need to be mindful about location and outreach time (not during normal working hours when people are working and not able to attend).
 - Marketing materials such as bumper stickers are great, but more resources are needed for individuals to understand what resources are available.
- Build capacity throughout communities
 - Law enforcement needs to build relationships with different communities
- Increased communication/visibility
 - Provide the LA vs Hate message all throughout news, media channels, commercials and share about the action that is being taken to address hate and the resources available
 - Hate crimes and incidents are "a visible secret"
- Language access
 - Get folks the assistance they need in the language they need quickly, as soon as they reach out. Otherwise, it's constantly repeating their story to different folks which may be traumatizing.
- Basic needs must first be met
 - Housing stability and resources are needed before people can even begin to process and heal from hate crimes and incidents
 - Food insecurity needs to be addressed as well as a general lack of resources
 - Mental health care - Everyone should have access to mental health care
 - Some communities are not engaging with reporting given they're so wrapped up with daily life concerns like housing, food insecurity, etc.
- Legal guidance and support is needed
 - Legal assistance for victims that need advocacy and advice
 - Offer these services pro-bono to low-income victims
 - "legal assistance is huge"
- Look into grants and funding opportunities
 - Officials should invest in communities

CLOSING REMARKS – DA GASCON

- Hate crimes/incidents are one of the most underreported events.
- Less than 100 hate crimes make it to the DA's office.
 - Officers need to understand that even if a crime did not occur, an incident did, and that needs some kind of response.
- Potential step could be to increase communication about prosecution of hate crimes from the DAs office.

- What about the other cases that have no consequences for perpetrators?
 - Non-carceral/punitive responses that can do a lot more to respond to hate and help reduce/stop hate.
- DA plans to meet with law enforcement officials in Santa Monica and Long Beach and outline a clear distinction of hate crimes, hate incidents, and prosecution process to ensure understanding
- Suggestions
 - DA sends out weekly newsletters to communities outlining the status of hate crimes so members feel informed and can see the follow up taking place when they report
 - DAs engagement and attendance to LA vs Hate outreach events, official's presence are highly influential

Truth And Accountability League 

STAND TALL TO HATE TOWN HALL

MODERATOR



Vic Gerami
TAAL Founder

WHAT

Truth And Accountability League (TAAL), in partnership with the LA County Commission on Human Relations' LA vs. Hate, will hold a Town Hall, 'Stand TAAL to hate,' with a panel discussion with elected officials, experts, and community leaders

WHY

Create awareness, educate the public & discuss solutions for the rising anti-Armenian racism, hate acts & defamation in LA County

PANELISTS



Daniel BROTMAN
Mayor
City of Glendale



Manuel CID
Police Chief
City of Glendale



Joseph F. INIGUEZ
Chief of Staff
L.A. District Attorney



Sam KBUSHYAN
State Commissioner
State of California



Robin S. TOMA
Executive Director
L.A. County
Commission on Human
Relations

WHEN

Thursday
May 4
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

RSVP

TAAL's Town Hall is open to the public,
but anyone who wishes to attend must
RSVP through Eventbrite

[TAALTownHall.Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/taal-town-hall-stand-tall-to-hate-tickets-35445781657)

WHERE

Glendale Central Library
222 East Harvard Street
Glendale, 91205



[TruthAndAccountabilityLeague.org](https://www.TruthAndAccountabilityLeague.org)

[HRC.LACounty.gov](https://www.HRC.LACounty.gov)





For Immediate Release

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Media Contact: Vic Gerami
310.880.8563
vic@thebluntpost.com

Truth And Accountability League (TAAL) Brings Elected Officials, Experts, and Community Leaders Together to Discuss Anti-Armenian Racist Flyers in Beverly Hills and Glendale

‘It’s unfathomable that on the heels of the *Armenian Genocide* anniversary on April 24, Armenians are terrorized by flyers around schools and churches that call for the extermination of Armenians’ — *Vic Gerami*, Founder, TAAL

Los Angeles — [Truth And Accountability League](#) (TAAL), in partnership with the [LA County Commission on Human Relations’ LA vs. Hate](#), will hold an in-person Town Hall, ‘*Stand Hall to Hate*,’ on Thursday, May 4, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This free event with RSVP is open to the public and is being held at the [Glendale Central Library](#), 222 East Harvard Street, Glendale, 91205. It will feature an open panel discussion with city officials, experts, and community leaders, including the Executive Director, L.A. County Commission on Human Relations *Robin S. Toma, Esq.*, *Glendale Mayor Daniel Brotman*, *Police Chief Manuel Cid*, Chief of Staff *Joseph F. Iniguez* from the LA County District Attorney’s Office, and *State Commissioner Sam Kbushtyan*.

Moderated by TAAL’s founder & Chair, [Vic Gerami](#), the goal of the meeting is to bring awareness, educate the public, and discuss solutions to the rising anti-Armenian racism, Armenophobia, and propaganda through questions and discussion with participants.

‘The recent anti-Armenian flyers posted around LA County, home to hundreds of thousands of Armenian-Americans, remind us that we must be vigilant about racism, hate acts, and propaganda. It’s unfathomable that on the heels of the Armenian Genocide anniversary, Armenians are terrorized by flyers around schools and churches that call for the extermination of Armenians,’ said *Vic Gerami*, founder of TAAL.

He added, ‘But we mustn’t allow the hate of a few to create division, pin us against each other, and get us stuck in the problem. The Truth And Accountability League is focused on the solution. We want to bring together, not only members of the Armenian community, but everyone to create awareness, educate, and find answers. Our panel of leaders and experts will discuss ways to handle malice that aims to victimize, dehumanize, and diminish us. Hate acts affect everyone, regardless of

ethnic background, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. TAAL's Town Hall is a forum to empower everyone.'

The two-hour event is a part of TAAL's comprehensive and integrated *Community Outreach Campaign* to address the [rise](#) in anti-Armenian hate crimes the last three years, including the [anti-Armenian flyers](#) posted in *Glendale on March 31 and similar ones in Beverly Hills* in January and that called for the massacre of Armenians.

'The Armenian American community is such an essential part of our L.A. County community, but the amount of discrimination and negative stereotyping they've experienced is too often understated because it is underreported,' said *Robin S. Toma*, Executive Director of the *L.A. County Commission on Human Relations*. 'I look forward to sharing the data we collect on acts of hate in our county, and most importantly, what we are doing with LA vs Hate to increase reporting and eradicate hate in all our cities and neighborhoods.'

'Stand TAAL to Hate' is a Town Hall to benefit every group that has experienced racism, been subject to hate crimes, and defamation, along with LA's Armenian community, which has been a target of such acts more frequently in recent years. With its nearly 40% Armenian community, *Glendale* is the perfect crossroad for such an event.

Glendale Mayor Daniel Brotman said, 'I am proud to be the Mayor of Glendale, a city rich with diversity, including one of the largest Armenian diaspora communities in the world. The Jewel City has zero tolerance for racism, hate acts, and defamation. I strongly condemn the recent anti-Armenian flyers and work with Glendale Police and community leaders to find the perpetrator.'

He continued, 'I'm honored to be a panelist for the Truth And Accountability League's Town Hall. I applaud Vic Gerami and his team for launching a community outreach campaign to create awareness, educate, and empower not only the residents of Glendale but all of LA County.'

We've also witnessed the former president of the LA City Council, Nury Martinez, make a [racist statement](#) about a colleague that was caught on tape. The prevalence of the problem led the *Burbank Board of Education* to [revise](#) its anti-racism statement and update the board policy to stand in solidarity with Armenians.

'I look forward to participating in the Truth and Accountability League Town Hall in May. Coming together to discuss hate, accountability, and transparency is a powerful act of solidarity and progress. This will be a great opportunity to educate our community on the efforts law enforcement is making to address these challenges, as well as to learn, share, and work together towards a more equitable future,' said *Manuel Cid*, Chief of Police, *Glendale Police Department*.

The audience will have a chance to submit questions in writing before the start of the town hall. RSVP is required and can be sent through Eventbrite: [TAALTownHall.Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/taal-town-hall-tickets-75298478872)

'As district attorney of Los Angeles County, home to more than 200,000 Armenians, I'm immensely proud to represent the largest Armenian population in the United States and the greatest number outside of Armenia itself,' *District Attorney George Gascón* said. 'Our Armenian community makes tremendous academic, artistic, altruistic, and many other contributions to our region.'

He continued, 'These hate-filled flyers that incite violence are abhorrent and must be condemned. My office takes hate crimes very seriously, filing 86 percent of the hate crime cases referred to us,

far above the statewide average of 54 percent. I commend TAAL for becoming an antidote for the poison that is racism and holding this important Town Hall to promote equality and protect human rights.’

CA State Commissioner Sam Kbushtyan, an Armenian-American, believes in tackling the problem head-on. He’s been a long-time community organizer and member of *Mayor Karen Bass’* Transition Team.

‘It’s been shocking to see anti-Armenian flyers advocating Genocide against Armenians in Glendale and across LA County. We must all condemn this bigotry in the strongest terms. While our families and loved ones in Armenia and Artsakh are under assault by Azerbaijan, LA County’s Armenian community is being terrorized by hate, defamation, and propaganda,’ said *State Commissioner Sam Kbushtyan*.

He added, ‘Vic Gerami and his team at the Truth And Accountability League have taken a proactive step in organizing a Town Hall in Glendale to create a safe place for the community to address this ongoing matter. I look forward to being on the panel and serving the greater LA community.’

Elected officials who would like to attend and have special requests and members of the media interested in interviews should contact Vic Gerami at 310.880.8563 (or) vic@thebluntpost.com. For additional information, visit TAAL’s website, TruthAndAccountabilityLeague.org.

Please click [here](#) for photos.

About TAAL

TAAL is a 501©3 non-profit advocacy organization founded in 2020 due to a significant increase in anti-Armenian racism, defamation, hate crimes, and Armenophobia. We monitor and confront bias, disinformation, propaganda, and slander of the Armenian people and culture at the media level, including social media, academics, intelligentsia, and public policy.

Our Mission

To protect human rights, promote equality, combat racism where it appears and exists, stop the defamation and threats of violence against people of Armenian ethnicity, educate the community about racism, bias, and discrimination, achieve worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and end the crime of Genocide for all people across the world.

About the LA County Commission on Human Relations

The [Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations](#) is dedicated to promoting positive human relations in our richly diverse, multicultural county. The Commission works to develop programs that proactively address racism, homophobia, religious prejudice, linguistic bias, anti-immigrant sentiment, and other divisive attitudes that can lead to intercultural tension, hate crimes, and related violence. Partnering with law enforcement, schools, cities, community-based organizations, youth, academics, policy makers, businesses, and other leaders, the Commission brings key players together to resolve immediate intercultural conflicts and to work toward the longer term aim of eradicating bias and prejudice.

LA County's Human Relations Commission has a legacy that dates back more than 75 years to shortly after the so-called "Zoot Suit Riots" displayed serious, long-standing human relations concerns. This incident, during which large numbers of mostly White young men in the military clashed with local young men of color for three days in the streets of LA, served as a wake-up call to county residents. In January, 1944, the County Board of Supervisors established a Committee for Interracial Progress. Two years later it was renamed the Committee for Human Relations. Following national recognition for its effective work to improve intergroup relations, the Committee became an official agency of County government in 1958 and was renamed the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. The Commission is among the oldest and largest of its kind in the U.S.

Each County Supervisor appoints three Commissioners who serve multi-year terms. The 15-member Commission meets each month. A staff of professional and support personnel in the County's Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services executes the Commission's programmatic work. The Commission's signature projects include the annual Hate Crime Report and the annual John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards which recognize exemplary practices and exceptional leadership in human relations work.

About Vic Gerami

[Vic Gerami](#) is an award-winning journalist and the editor + publisher of [The Blunt Post](#). Gerami is also the host and co-producer of the national headline news + politics program, [THE BLUNT POST with VIC](#) on [KPFK 90.7 FM \(Pacifica Network\)](#).

Most recently, Gerami wrote, directed, and produce the journalistic documentary feature film, '[Motherland](#),' about Azerbaijan's, Turkey's unprovoked genocidal attack on Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) in 2020 and the massacre of 5,000+ people, and the two nations' ongoing campaign of hate, violence, and disinformation against the indigenous Armenians. Here is a sneak peek at the film's 5-minute [sizzle](#).

Today reaching national and international audiences, Gerami first built a foundation of knowledge and skills by learning the media industry during his years at **Frontiers Magazine**, followed by positions at LA Weekly and **Voice Media Group**.

Gerami's radio program, TBPV, covers national, regional, and local headline news, politics, and current events, and Gerami offers analysis and commentary. He also interviews a high-profile member of Congress or other high-profile public figures on each show. His recent guests include [Congressman Adam Schiff](#), [Senator Bob Menendez](#), [Congresswoman Jackie Speier](#), [Governor Howard Dean](#), [Congresswoman Katie Porter](#), [Congressman Brad Sherman](#), [Congressman Mike Levin](#), [Congresswoman Maxine Waters](#), [Congresswoman Judy Chu](#), [LA District Attorney George Gascon](#), among many others. You can listen to all the interviews [here](#).

Gerami is also a contributor to some of the most prominent publications in the nation, including Windy City Times, Bay Area Reporter, Armenian Mirror-Spectator, The Advocate, The Immigrant Magazine, GoWeHo, Destination Luxury, OUT Traveler, The Fight, and among others.

The Wall Street Journal featured Gerami as a “[leading gay activist](#)” in its landmark 2008 coverage of opposition to **Proposition 8**, the ballot measure that for years denied same-sex couples in California the freedom to marry. In addition to his years of volunteer work as a leading advocate for marriage equality, Gerami served as a Planning Committee member for the historic [Resist March](#) in 2017.

In 2015, Gerami was referenced in the landmark Supreme Court civil rights case, [Obergefell v. Hodges](#), in which the Court held in a 5–4 decision that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process and the Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.



Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations
510 S. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 738-2788

MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON POLICING & HUMAN RELATIONS

Monday, May 1, 2023
10:30AM – 12:00PM

510 S. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020
9th Floor, Press Room (#9K02)

[Via Microsoft Teams](#)
Or Call In at +1 (213) 204-2512
Phone Conference ID: 493 941 340#

Parking is located at 523 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020. Please pull a ticket when entering the parking structure. Please take the elevator to the 9th floor and walk through the bridge, which is located towards the northwest corner of the parking structure, to reach Terrace (T) Level of the designated candidate waiting area. Prior to leaving the facility, please take your ticket to either security desk (Ground Level or Terrace Level) for validation. **Do not park at the 510 S. Vermont Avenue parking structure. Violators may be towed at vehicle owner's expense.**

Members: Commissioners Isabelle Gunning, Sandra Thomas, Preeti Kulkarni, Fredrick Sykes, Derric Johnson, Jeanette Ellis-Royston, Gay Yuen, Tonya McKenzie

Guests: HRC Commissioner Azusena Favela

Staff: Robin Toma, Robert Sowell, Pierre Arreola, Joshua Parr

AGENDA

- I. Discussion: Ad Hoc Committee Administration – 25 Minutes**
 - a. Committee & Team Name Change
 - b. Transition to Standing Committee
 - c. Follow-Up Action Items
- II. Discussion: United Nations EMLER Call for Inputs – 25 Minutes**
 - a. Committee Feedback
 - b. Follow-Up Action Items
- III. Discussion: Sheriff Accountability – 25 Minutes**
 - a. Custody Tour
 - b. Mental Health Challenges
 - c. Office of Constitutional Policing Partnership
 - d. Sybil Brand Commission Partnership
- IV. Discussion: Project Updates – 10 Minutes**
 - a. Regional Updates (SGV/SFV/LB)
- V. Discussion: County Updates – 5 Minutes**
 - a. Public Safety Cluster
 - b. Alternative Crisis Response Initiative
 - c. Care First Community Investment Initiative
 - d. Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee

7.1 Guidelines for Nominations Committee

GUIDANCE FOR THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

Creation of the Nominations Committee is the beginning of our process to elect the Commission's officers for each fiscal year (FY), which runs from July 1st to June 30th.

To create the Nominations Committee, **we seek one commissioner from each Supervisorial District (SD).** Typically, the commissioner representing her/his SD isn't running for office. (But historically this has sometimes not been feasible or impractical if, for example, a given SD has only one or two commissioners of that SD.)

Each of you is the commission officer from your SD*. As such, I'd like to ask if you can email/text/or call to the 1 or 2 fellow commissioners of your SD to decide who will be your SD's representative on the Nominations Committee. (The list of the other commissioners of your SD is below towards the end of this message.)

Here is key info and context:

1. The goal is for each of you to report at our upcoming Commission meeting who your SD representative member will be on the Nominations Committee. This will **hopefully avoid the problem in the past of a potential committee member not being present at the Commission meeting to accept or reject being placed on the committee,** which can delay the process.
2. Once the Commission votes to approve who will comprise the Nominations Committee, the committee will have the charge of meeting in May (which staff can facilitate) to discuss and return to the following Commission meeting in June with a slate of proposed

candidates for officers (President, Vice President (VP)/Secretary, plus 3 VPs).

3. To help you in deciding who should be on the Nominations committee, let me remind you a bit more **of the charge of the Nominations Committee**. The Nominations Committee is to consider – per the bylaws – who should be on the slate of nominees for Commission officer positions, **based in part on the nominee’s record of attendance to commission meetings (both full commission meetings and committee meetings and other events)**. Of course, the Nominations Committee has historically also evaluated the fitness of a candidate for the job and its duties as a relevant criterion.

Note that the Commission’s bylaws limit the President to two (2) consecutive terms (each term is one (1) year)

4. Also, keep in mind we will need at least 3 of the 5 Nominations Committee members to join a meeting to form a quorum so that the Nominations Committee can meet and take action in coming up with **a slate of candidates for the May meeting**. At that meeting, the floor is also opened to any commissioner to be nominated for an office, in addition to the slate.
5. **Per the bylaws, the following Commission meeting (usually June) is for the elections to actually be conducted**, taking into account the slate presented at the May meeting, and nominations from the floor received at the May meeting.
6. **The term of the new officers begins with the new Fiscal Year, July 1st through June 30th.**

(*)Current (FY 2023-24) Commission Officers:

President: Ilan Davidson (SD4)

Vice President (VP)/Secretary: Isabelle Gunning (SD3)

VP: Fredrick Sykes (SD1)

VP: Derric Johnson (SD2)

VP: Sandra Thomas (SD5)

Rest of Commissioners by Supervisorial District (SD):

SD1: Jeannette Ellis-Royston-Ellis and Gay Q. Yuen

SD2: Azusena Favela and Helen Chin

SD3: Preeti Kulkarni and Guadalupe Montaña

SD4: Lisa Michelle Dabbs and Dandy De Paula

SD5: Michael Gi-Hao Cheung and Kevork Keushkerian



Los Angeles County

Commission on Human Relations

510 S. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020

(213) 738-2788

5.4 NOMINATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 20, 2023

The meeting of the Commission's Nominations Committee was called to order at 2:01 p.m. on Thursday, April 20, 2023, Commissioner Helen Chin, presiding as chair.

In attendance were also Commissioners Gay Yuen, Lisa Dabbs, Guadalupe Montaña, and Kevork Keushkerian.

Exec. Dir. Robin Toma began by explaining the background for this meeting, and its charge, referring to the attached document which was shared on screen via Teams.

Next, Chair Chin led a discussion, with comments and questions by each of the commissioners regarding, but not limited to, the following subjects: the process, applicable provisions of the bylaws, the current officers, and indications by them of their willingness to continue serving.

After the discussion, Chair Chin invited a motion, which was made by Commissioner Yuen, seconded by Commissioner Montaña, to present (to the full Commission at its next meeting) the slate of officers which are currently serving: President: Ilan Davidson (SD4)
Vice President (VP)/Secretary: Isabelle Gunning (SD3)
VP: Fredrick Sykes (SD1)
VP: Derric Johnson (SD2)
VP: Sandra Thomas (SD5)

Without any objection to close discussion and move to a vote, Chair Chin asked for votes in favor of and against the motion, and any abstentions. All votes were in favor of the motion, thereby passing unanimously.

Executive Director Toma indicated that the committee had fulfilled its charge, and thanked the commissioners for their time.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Robin S. Toma, Esq.
(he, him)

Executive Director, L.A. County Commission on Human Relations

Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles (213)
639-6089
<https://hrc.lacounty.gov/>
www.LAvsHate.org

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 23, 2023

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 14, 2023

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2023–24 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1064

Introduced by Assembly Member Low

February 15, 2023

An act to amend Sections 422.55 and 422.56 of the Penal Code, relating to hate crimes.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1064, as amended, Low. Hate crimes.

Existing law defines “hate crime” as a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of actual or perceived characteristics of the victim, including, among other things, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

This bill would, instead, define a hate crime as a criminal act that is motivated in whole or in part by a bias against one or more of the protected characteristics. The bill would define “bias against” and would specify that evidence of bias ~~against a perceived characteristic of the victim~~ *motivation* may ~~include~~ *include, among other things*, instances when the person has ~~taken specified actions, including using a slur based on the actual or perceived characteristic of the victim, vandalizing property using words or symbols commonly associated with a hate group or that show bias motivation based on the actual or perceived characteristic of the victim, selectively targeting victims based on the actual or perceived characteristic of the victim, or posting on social media or other media blaming persons with the same actual or perceived characteristic as the victim for a societal problem.~~ *selectively targeted*

the victim based on the actual or perceived characteristic of the victim.
By changing the definition of a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 422.55 of the Penal Code is amended to
2 read:

3 422.55. For purposes of this title, and for purposes of all other
4 state law unless an explicit provision of law or the context clearly
5 requires a different meaning, the following shall apply:

6 (a) "Hate crime" means a criminal act that is motivated in whole
7 or in part by a bias against one or more of the following actual or
8 perceived characteristics of the victim:

- 9 (1) Disability.
- 10 (2) Gender.
- 11 (3) Nationality.
- 12 (4) Race or ethnicity.
- 13 (5) Religion.
- 14 (6) Sexual orientation.
- 15 (7) Association with a person or group with one or more of these
16 actual or perceived characteristics.

17 (b) "Hate crime" includes, but is not limited to, a violation of
18 Section 422.6.

19 SEC. 2. Section 422.56 of the Penal Code is amended to read:
20 422.56. For purposes of this title, the following definitions
21 shall apply:

22 (a) "Association with a person or group with one or more of
23 these actual or perceived characteristics" includes advocacy for,
24 identification with, or being on the premises owned or rented by,
25 or adjacent to, any of the following: a community center,
26 educational facility, family, individual, office, meeting hall, place
27 of worship, private institution, public agency, library, or other

1 entity, group, or person that has, or is identified with people who
2 have, one or more of the characteristics listed in the definition of
3 “hate crime” under paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive, of subdivision
4 (a) of Section 422.55.

5 (b) ~~(1)~~—A “bias against” means a negative attitude toward actual
6 or perceived characteristics of the victim listed in the definition
7 of “hate crime” in subdivision (a) of Section 422.55. Depending
8 on the circumstances of each case, *evidence of bias* motivation
9 may include, but is not limited to, hatred, animosity, resentment,
10 revulsion, contempt, unreasonable fear, paranoia, callousness,
11 thrill-seeking, desire for social dominance, desire for social bonding
12 with those of one’s “own kind,” ~~or a perception of the vulnerability~~
13 of the victim due to the victim being perceived as being weak,
14 worthless, or fair ~~game game, or the selective targeting of the~~
15 *victim* because of an actual or perceived characteristic of the victim.

16 ~~(2) Evidence of bias against an actual or perceived characteristic~~
17 ~~of the victim may be determined by the actions of the person who~~
18 ~~committed a crime that include, but are not limited to, instances~~
19 ~~in which the person:~~

20 ~~(A) Used a slur based on the actual or perceived characteristic~~
21 ~~of the victim.~~

22 ~~(B) Vandalized property using words or symbols commonly~~
23 ~~associated with a hate group or that show bias motivation based~~
24 ~~on the actual or perceived characteristic of the victim.~~

25 ~~(C) Selectively targeted victims based on their actual or~~
26 ~~perceived characteristic.~~

27 ~~(D) Posted on social media or other media blaming persons with~~
28 ~~the same actual or perceived characteristic as the victim for a~~
29 ~~societal problem, including, but not limited to, causing illness,~~
30 ~~crime, or economic harm.~~

31 (c) “Disability” includes mental disability and physical
32 disability, as defined in Section 12926 of the Government Code,
33 regardless of whether those disabilities are temporary, permanent,
34 congenital, or acquired by heredity, accident, injury, advanced
35 age, or illness. This definition is declaratory of existing law.

36 (d) “Gender” means sex, and includes a person’s gender identity
37 and gender expression. “Gender expression” means a person’s
38 gender-related appearance and behavior regardless of whether it
39 is stereotypically associated with the person’s assigned sex at birth.

1 (e) “In whole or in part by” means that the bias motivation must
 2 be a cause in fact of the offense, whether or not other causes also
 3 exist. When multiple concurrent motives exist, the prohibited bias
 4 must be a substantial factor in bringing about the particular result.
 5 There is no requirement that the bias be a main factor, or that the
 6 crime would not have been committed but for the actual or
 7 perceived characteristic. This subdivision does not constitute a
 8 change in, but is declaratory of, existing law under *In re M.S.*
 9 (1995) 10 Cal.4th 698 and *People v. Superior Court (Aishman)*
 10 (1995) 10 Cal.4th 735.

11 (f) “Nationality” means country of origin, immigration status,
 12 including citizenship, and national origin. This definition is
 13 declaratory of existing law.

14 (g) “Race or ethnicity” includes ancestry, color, and ethnic
 15 background.

16 (h) “Religion” includes all aspects of religious belief,
 17 observance, and practice and includes agnosticism and atheism.

18 (i) “Sexual orientation” means heterosexuality, homosexuality,
 19 or bisexuality.

20 (j) “Victim” includes, but is not limited to, a community center,
 21 educational facility, entity, family, group, individual, office,
 22 meeting hall, person, place of worship, private institution, public
 23 agency, library, or other victim or intended victim of the offense.

24 SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
 25 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because
 26 the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school
 27 district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
 28 infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
 29 for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
 30 the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
 31 the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
 32 Constitution.

O

From: Toma, Robin <RToma@hrc.lacounty.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 10:25 AM
To: Guadalupe G. Montano <guadalupegmontano@gmail.com>; cantor@bethelsp.org; Gay Yuen <ggyuen@sbcglobal.net>; Derrick Johnson (djermaine@gmail.com) <djermaine@gmail.com>
Cc: Sowell, Robert <RSowell@hrc.lacounty.gov>; Lowenberg, Grace <GLowenberg@hrc.lacounty.gov>; Vardanyan, Siranush <SiVardanyan@hrc.lacounty.gov>
Subject: Arguments in favor and against AB 1064

Dear Commissioners:

Here is some useful information about AB 1064, provided by the County CEO's Office of Legislative affairs, for you to consider.

No County position has been taken thus far.

I'm still hoping to find out from key community partners – ADL, NAACP of Cal, AJSocal, CHIRLA, AAPI Equity Alliance, etc., about their position, if any.

AB 1064 is supported by the California District Attorneys Association, and **opposed** by the California Public Defenders Association.

Here are the arguments in favor and against this measure according to the latest committee analysis.

- **Argument in Support:** According to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO, "Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, AAPI community members continue to experience hate at alarming levels. Stop AAPI Hate reporting center has received 11,467 reported incidents of anti-Asian attacks and discrimination. Almost 48% of these incidents occurred here in California, and around 40% of the incidents took place in public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, roads, and parks. Also, the rise of LGBTQ+ targeted hate crimes are also on the rise. According to the FBI Hate Crime Statistics Report, 24% or almost 1 in 4 hate crimes reported in California between 2016 and 2021 are anti-LGBTQ+ motivated while anti-Black hate crimes in California are at 28% over the same period.
"While current law provides the appropriate guidelines when it comes to prosecution of those who clearly state their intent to target an individual of a protected class, the guidelines for defining what constitutes a bias against an individual protected class is not. AB 1064 would change the definition of a hate crime to a criminal act that is motivated in whole or in part by a 'bias against' one or more of these characteristics.
"AB 1064 clarifies bias motivation to address the purposeful targeting of victims due to bias motivations and makes the prosecution of hate crimes easier for law enforcement and brings justice for their victims."
- **Argument in Opposition:** According to the California Public Defenders Association (CPDA), "Proposed Penal Code Section 422.56(b) would define 'bias motivation'. This definition adds both 'discriminatory selection' which is separately defined and motivations which range from 'hatred' to 'thrill-seeking' to 'desire for social bonding with those of one's "own kind"' to 'the victim being perceived as weak, worthless, or fair game because of a protected characteristic, including, not limited to, disability or gender. [...] "A few examples, illustrate the myriad problems with this overbroad definition of 'bias motivation'. "If the Crips, a primarily Black gang, attacked the Nortenos, a primarily Hispanic gang, using the definition of 'bias motivation' as a

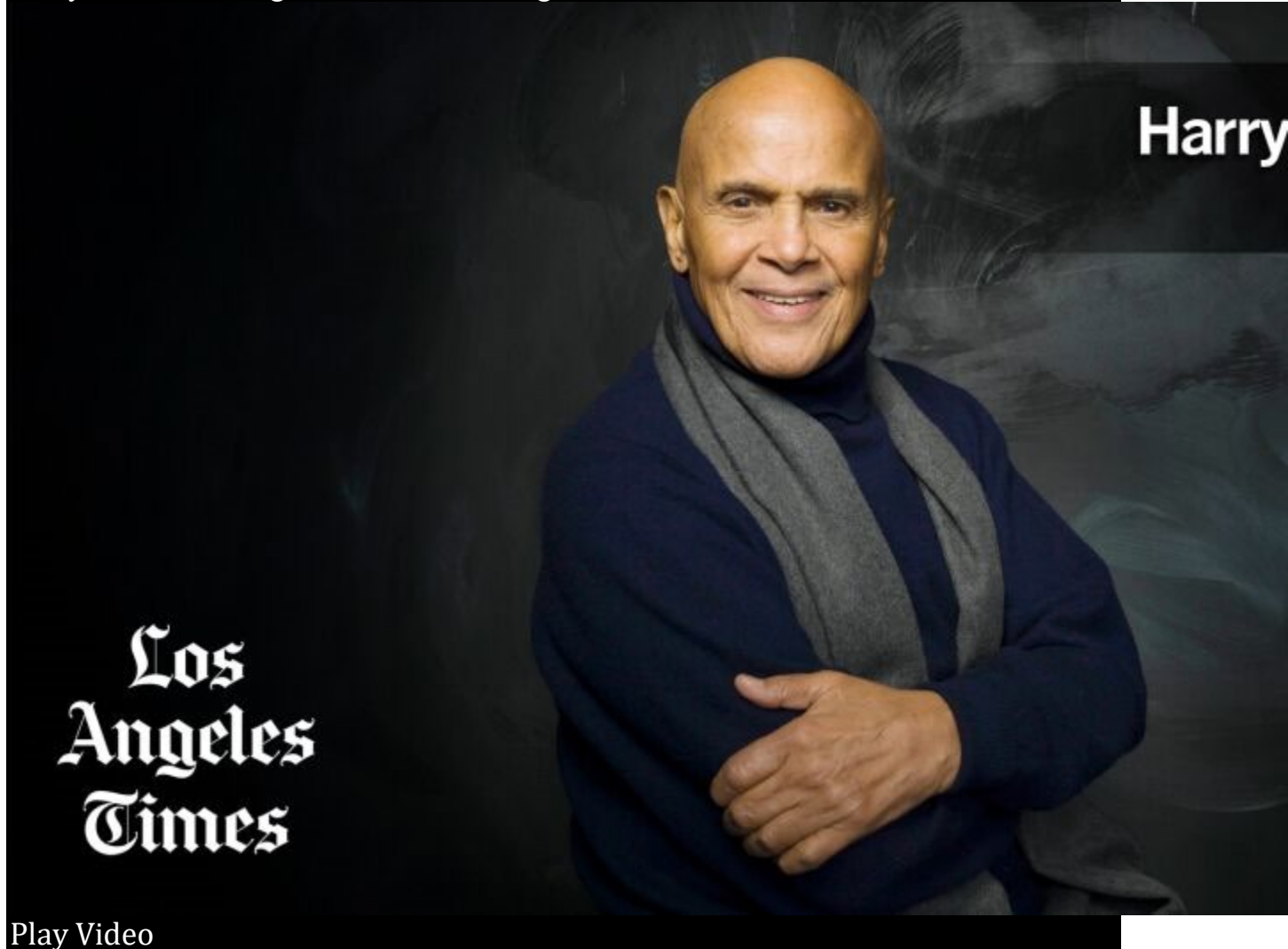
'desire for social bonding with those of one's "own kind"' it could be prosecuted as a hate crime. "Similarly, under the definition of 'the victim being perceived as weak, worthless, or fair game because of a protected characteristic, including, not limited to, disability or gender...,' almost any robbery or rape of most women could be charged as a hate crime. [...] "CPDA stands in solidarity with the protected groups. Many of us and our clients are members of those groups. AB 1064, although well intended, would weaken the fight against bias and prejudice by potentially making every crime a hate crime."

OBITUARIES

Harry Belafonte, singer, actor and civil rights activist, dies at 96 - April 25, 2023

VIDEO | 02:18

Harry Belafonte, singer, actor and civil rights activist, dies at 96



Singer, actor and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte dies at 96. He was the first Black man to win an Emmy and a Tony.

BY DENNIS MCLELLAN

Segregation was rampant, doors were closed and, in 1950s America, the odds of a Black entertainer ascending to the Broadway stage, concert venues and screens large and small seemed impossibly long.

Yet with cool confidence, a magnetic charm and an armload of wistful Caribbean folk songs, Harry Belafonte beat the odds in a historic rise to stardom — the first Black man to win a Tony, the first Black man to win an Emmy, the first artist to record an album that sold 1 million copies.

Well aware of the battles still to be fought, Belafonte also became a civil rights activist, a confidant to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a friend of the marginalized and a globe-trotting humanitarian.

ADVERTISING

“I’ve got to be a part of whatever the rebellion is that tries to change all this,” he told the New York Times in 2001. “The anger is a necessary fuel. Rebellion is healthy.”

Long a symbol of what was right and decent in the world, Belafonte died Tuesday at his home in New York of congestive heart failure with his wife, Pamela, at his side, his longtime spokesman Ken Sunshine said. Belafonte was 96.

Belafonte, who fueled an international calypso craze in the 1950s with his addictive version of the “Banana Boat Song,” squeezed so much into his decades-long career that it was difficult to fathom it all.



PAID CONTENT

The Impact of Dental Implants

By [4M Dental](#)

4M Dental can repair teeth – and lives – with their All-on-X® procedure.

Described in Look magazine in 1957 as the first Black matinee idol in entertainment history, the tall, trim and smoothly handsome singer amassed an impressive string of early accolades in an era when Black actors were mostly cast as maids, domestic helpers and laborers.

In 1954, he won a Tony Award for best featured actor in a musical for his performance in the Broadway revue “John Murray Anderson’s Almanac” and six years later won an Emmy for his performance in “The Revlon Revue: Tonight With Belafonte.”

His 1956 album “Calypso,” which included “Jamaica Farewell” and “Day-O,” his version of the “Banana Boat Song,” charted at No. 1 for a staggering 31 weeks.



[AWARDS](#)

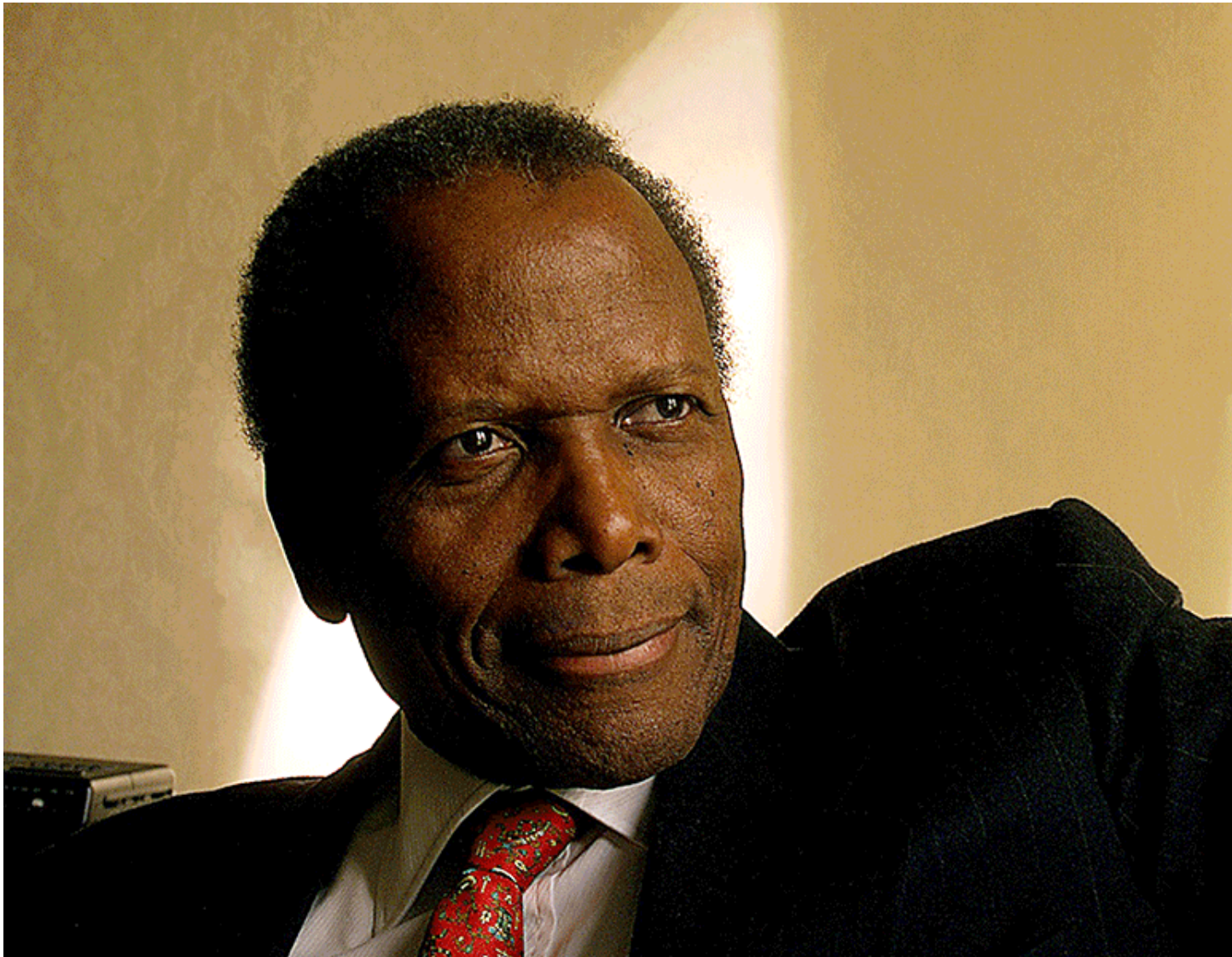
[Harry Belafonte: Singer, activist and first Black Emmy winner](#)

July 6, 2022

With his signature stage attire of a partially opened tailored cotton shirt and tight black slacks, Belafonte captivated audiences. A 1959 Time magazine cover story called his act “a brilliantly planned and executed combination of artistry and showmanship.”

Belafonte’s emergence as a hugely popular entertainer with both Black and white audiences arrived during a post-World War II era when the civil rights movement was just coming into focus and attitudes were slowly shifting

“As far as Black entertainers were concerned, Belafonte in many ways seemed to be a startling new kind of figure,” said Donald Bogle, a culture critic and author of numerous books on Black Americans in film and television. “There hadn’t been somebody quite like him on the scene.”



OBITUARIES

[Sidney Poitier, trailblazing star who helped break down Hollywood color barriers, dies at 94](#)

Jan. 7, 2022

And television, which was becoming a potent cultural force in America at the time, helped make Belafonte and his music popular with a vast audience “because people could see him, and his look was very important,” said Bogle.

Through television, “you got a sense of his sex appeal,” said Bogle. “Women loved him and men felt comfortable with Belafonte as well.”

Belafonte was one of a number of popular Black entertainers and actors, including Sammy Davis Jr., Eartha Kitt, Dorothy Dandridge and Sidney Poitier, who emerged at the time.

Belafonte, whom singer and actress [Diahann Carroll](#) described to Time as “the most beautiful man I ever set eyes on,” was also visible on the big screen in a handful of movies during the '50s, a time when few Black performers were offered prominent film roles.

After making his movie debut in 1953 as a Southern school principal opposite Dandridge’s teacher in “Bright Road,” Belafonte starred with the actress in the hit 1954 musical “Carmen Jones.”

In 1957, Belafonte broke another color barrier — and stirred controversy — when he became the first Black American actor to play a romantic lead in a feature movie opposite a white leading lady ([Joan Fontaine](#)) in the Caribbean-set film “Island in the Sun.”

But, as Bogle observed, “the filmmakers would not allow Belafonte and Fontaine to kiss, nor was their relationship fully explored.”

In 1959, Belafonte starred in two films, “The World, the Flesh and the Devil” and “Odds Against Tomorrow.”

But, Bogle said, “Belafonte in movies was never what he was on television in terms of his impact, in part because of the compromises of the scripts and his own persona. He didn’t have that kind of magnetism on the big screen.”

Belafonte, whose later film credits included “Buck and the Preacher,” “Uptown Saturday Night” and “Kansas City,” established one of the first all-Black music publishing companies in the late '50s.

It was part of Belafonte Enterprises, whose subsidiaries included a film production company called HarBel Productions. Other business units handled the singer's concert tours and backed Broadway plays, including Lorraine Hansberry's acclaimed "A Raisin in the Sun."

A supporter of Sen. John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign, Belafonte sang at Kennedy's inaugural gala and was named "cultural advisor" to the then-newly created Peace Corps.

As his fame and fortune grew in the 1950s, the singer-actor devoted increasing amounts of his time and money to supporting the emerging civil rights movement.

Belafonte already was politically active when King called him in 1956 to ask the entertainer to meet with him at a Baptist church in Harlem while he was on a fundraising swing for the group running the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala.

The two men had a long, private meeting in a Sunday school classroom in the church basement.

"It was a life-changing moment," Belafonte recalled in a 2007 interview with the Guardian. "From then on, I was in his service and in his world of planning, strategy and thinking. We became very close immediately."

Belafonte's friendship with King included holding a "secret" fundraiser in his Manhattan apartment to help raise bail money for King's Birmingham campaign in 1963, knowing that some of the civil rights leader's supporters would likely be arrested. Belafonte also rounded up a contingent of stars to appear onstage with King at the Lincoln Memorial during the historic March on Washington a few months later.

Belafonte, who helped launch one of the first voter registration drives in Mississippi and provided financing for the Freedom Riders, also served as a middle man between King and Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Decades later, Belafonte's social activism took a high-profile twist.

Inspired by Irish singer-songwriter Bob Geldof's Band Aid charity super-group, whose single "Do They Know It's Christmas?" raised money for famine relief in Ethiopia, Belafonte contacted talent manager [Ken Kragen](#) and proposed doing a similar project in the United States.

The result was the star-studded “We Are the World” recording that raised millions for famine relief in Africa in 1985.

Belafonte, who was appointed a UNICEF goodwill ambassador in 1987, was a 1989 recipient of a Kennedy Center Honor.

In a toast to Belafonte during the black-tie tribute, [then-Sen. Edward Kennedy](#) (D-Mass.) said the entertainer “has given nobly and unselfishly to the cause of making our country a better place and our planet a better world. Many great artists have a conscience too, but none greater than his.

“He has two qualities that describe the brilliance of his life: courage and excellence,” Kennedy said.

Belafonte also was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1994. And in 2000, the two-time Grammy winner received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Throughout his long career, Belafonte continued to sing “Day-O,” which he once described as having become, “an established part of American folk culture.”

He wouldn’t think of doing a concert without performing it, he told The Times in 2000.

“I enjoy doing it very much,” he said, “and audiences enjoy it more than I do because they sing along with me — and they do it with gusto.”

Explaining the original “Banana Boat Song” in a 1993 interview with the New York Times, he said: “That song is a way of life. It’s a song about my father, my mother, my uncles, the men and women who toil in the banana fields, the cane fields of Jamaica. It’s a classic work song.”

He was born Harold George Bellanfanti Jr. in New York City on March 1, 1927. His mother was a domestic worker; his father, a violence-prone alcoholic at the time, was a cook who most often worked on United Fruit Co. boats between New York and Caribbean and South American ports.

“I was born into poverty, grew up in poverty, and for a long time, poverty was all I thought I’d know,” Belafonte wrote in his 2011 memoir “Harry Belafonte: My Song.”

He made a number of visits to Jamaica when he was young. And in 1936, when he was 9, his mother took him and his 5-year-old brother Dennis to Jamaica to live full

time to get away from what he later said were the dangers and temptations of living in Harlem.

When their mother was unable to find a job in Jamaica, she returned to New York and left her two sons behind to attend school. Belafonte's parents were legally separated by 1940 and his mother brought him and his brother back to New York to live with her.

Belafonte, who later discovered he was dyslexic, dropped out of school midway through the ninth grade and worked a series of odd jobs before enlisting in the Navy shortly after turning 17 in 1944. He was stationed at Port Chicago outside San Francisco, where he loaded military ships bound for the Pacific theater in the final months of World War II.

Returning to Harlem after his discharge in December 1945, he got a job working as a janitor's assistant in an apartment building.

That January, he hung Venetian blinds for a tenant, an actress, who as a tip gave him two tickets to a play at the American Negro Theatre in Harlem.

The play, about Black servicemen returning home to Harlem, was the first he'd ever seen, and it changed his life.

“That play didn't just speak to me. It mesmerized me. This was a whole new world — an exhilarating world,” he wrote on his memoir.

He had no intention of becoming an actor at the time, but just to get close to this wonderful new world, he volunteered to be a stagehand at the theater.



MOVIES

[Sidney Poitier was more than a symbol. He was one of the great movie stars, full stop](#)

Jan. 8, 2022

He soon was asked to read for a small role in a comedy. That led to a larger role in another play. By July 1946, Belafonte was playing a leading role in the American Negro Theatre's production of "Juno and the Paycock."

Belafonte, who became close friends with another fledgling young actor at the theater, Sidney Poitier, began attending the Dramatic Workshop of the New School for Social Research on the GI Bill.

A break in landing a role in an off-Broadway production of "Sojourner Truth" in 1948, however, did not immediately lead to more acting jobs for the 21-year-old Belafonte.

Newly married to his first wife Marguerite, he began working full time pushing clothes racks in the Garment District.

Then an unexpected break came: The manager of the Royal Roost, a top New York City jazz club, who had heard Belafonte sing in a play, offered him a job singing during intermissions.

Before long, Belafonte was packing the club, and he went from making \$70 a week to \$200 a week.

“It was breathtaking,” Belafonte recalled. “I went from being a nobody who didn’t think he could sing to walking on stage at Carnegie Hall, one night that spring, to accept a plaque from the Pittsburgh Courier, an African American newspaper, as the most promising new singer in the country.”

Twice divorced, Belafonte had four children, Adrienne and Shari with his first wife, and David and Gina with his second wife, Julie. He is also survived by his wife, Pamela Frank, and eight grandchildren.

McLellan is a former Times staff writer.