

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 557 (Muratsuchi and Chiu)
As Amended March 25, 2021
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Attorney General (AG) to establish, maintain, and publicize a toll free public hotline telephone number, as specified.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the Attorney General to establish, maintain, and publicize a toll free public hotline telephone number for the following purposes:
 - a) Reporting hate crimes and connecting with local law enforcement agencies;
 - b) Connecting people who experienced or witnessed a hate crime or hate incident to other appropriate local resources;
 - c) The Attorney General may establish a list of community based organizations from which to provide referrals; and,
 - d) Disseminating information about the characteristics of hate crimes, and hate incidents, classes of individuals protected under California hate crimes law, civil remedies that may be available for victims of hate crimes, and reporting options.
- 2) Provides that the hotline shall be accessible to people with disabilities, and people who do not speak English.
- 3) Requires the hotline to operate Monday to Friday, inclusive, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except for federal and state holidays, or as otherwise posted on the Attorney General's Internet website. The hotline when not in operation, shall provide a recorded message directing callers to dial 9-1-1 in case of an emergency or otherwise to call their local police nonemergency dispatch number. This information shall also be posted on the Attorney General's Internet website.
- 4) States that callers to the website should be advised that the filing of a false police report is punishable as a misdemeanor, as specified. This information shall be posted on the Attorney General's Internet website.
- 5) Requires the Attorney General to post, maintain, and publicize a reporting form for hate crimes and hate incidents on their Internet website that can be completed and submitted online.
- 6) The Attorney General's Internet website shall provide the public with same resources and information as provided by the hate crimes toll free public hotline.

COMMENTS

According to the Author

"The 2001 final report of the California Civil Rights Commission on Hate Crimes recommended that the California DOJ 'should establish and publicize a toll-free hotline number for reporting hate incidents and hate crimes, and should post an incident reporting form on its Web site, which can be completed on-line.' The Commission believes that these reporting methods 'will help overcome the hesitancy of victims and witnesses who distrust or harbor fears of local school and local law enforcement officials."

Arguments in Support

According to the *Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee*, "AB 557 requires the California Department of Justice to establish a toll-free hotline in addition to an online reporting system for hate crimes will allow victims and witnesses to report a hate incident against any group in a safe, anonymous manner, particularly those who may face language or cultural barriers or are undocumented. This reflects the SBWPC Mission statement to 'take social action against discrimination based on gender, race and ethnicity' as well as our position on Anti-Racism 'to identify, confront and eliminate racism in all its forms – systemic, individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural – to achieve racial and equity and justice."

Arguments in Opposition

None.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, one-time and annual costs (General Fund (GF)), possibly in the mid-to-upper hundreds of thousands of dollars, to the DOJ in additional staff and infrastructure to create a toll free telephone number for reporting hate crimes and connecting victims of hate crimes with local law enforcement.

VOTES**ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 8-0-0**

YES: Jones-Sawyer, Lackey, Bauer-Kahan, Quirk, Santiago, Seyarto, Wicks, Lee

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 16-0-0

YES: Lorena Gonzalez, Bigelow, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Holden, Luz Rivas

UPDATED

VERSION: March 25, 2021

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