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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Racial Hate Crimes Down, Homophobic and Religious Crimes Rise in 2008

Los Angeles County (November 19, 2009): The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (LACCHR) today released its annual Hate Crime Report for 2008, showing a slight 4% decline, from 763 to 729.

LACCHR Executive Director Robin Toma commented, "While any decline in hate crime is encouraging, I have to point out that this is still the second highest number reported since 2002." Commission President Dr. Sandra Thomas remarked: "Clearly, these recent horrific events are evidence of the major human relations challenges that we face. It is our hope that the knowledge disseminated by this report will assist all of us in meeting that challenge."

The majority of these crimes were racially-motivated (61%) but racial hate crimes declined 16%. By contrast, sexual orientation hate crimes rose 21%, a few of which were explicitly related to the Proposition 8 campaign last year. As in previous years, the same communities targeted most frequently were African Americans, Latinos, lesbians and gays, and Jews.

Hate crimes between African Americans and Latinos remained alarming high. Latinos were suspects in 69% of the anti-black crimes and blacks were suspects in 61% of the anti-Latino crimes. This phenomenon can be explained, in part, by racially-motivated gang violence between the two groups. Gang members were responsible for 22% of all racial hate crimes.

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White supremacist involvement in hate crime grew in 2008 from 17% to 20%. The victims in these crimes were diverse: 29% were Jewish, 28% were black and 12% were Latino.

There were marked differences in the rates of violence experienced by different groups. Once again, sexual orientation crimes had the highest rate of violence (73%), followed by racial crimes (68%), and religion (28%).

The largest numbers of hate crimes were concentrated in the San Fernando Valley, however if one accounts for population, the highest rate of hate crimes took place in the Antelope Valley.

About the Human Relations Commission

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations is one of the oldest and largest agencies of its kind in the United States. The Commission works to foster harmonious and equitable intergroup relations, empower communities and institutions, engage in non violent conflict resolution and promote an informed and inclusive multicultural society.

The Commission's hate crime report has received national recognition. The Commission has developed an array of programs and projects aimed at reducing hate crime, prejudice and gang/community violence, and building networks that can promote healthy intergroup relations. The focus is on our youth, schools ([www.zerohour.com/no haters here!](http://www.zerohour.com/no-haters-here!)) and communities facing high levels of interracial violence (Racialized Gang Violence Prevention Initiative). For more information on Commission programs, go to www.lahumanrelations.org.

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Hate Crime Report Errata:

On the pie chart on page 30 of the Hate Crime Report, the percentage of anti-Jewish crimes should be 65%, not 64%.