

Press Releases

April 25, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN HATE CRIMES LAW PASSES ILLINOIS HOUSE***Madigan Applauds Support for Legislation Following Hate Crimes Summit with Civil Rights Leaders on Impact of Federal Immigration Executive Orders***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced the Illinois House passed legislation to strengthen Illinois' hate crimes law. House Bill 3711 would better protect Illinois residents from escalating incidents of hatred and bias.

House Bill 3711, sponsored by state Rep. Litesa Wallace, passed out of the House by a vote of 89 to 22 and will now be considered by the Senate. Madigan initiated the legislation in response to a national increase of crimes motivated by hatred based on religion, national origin, gender identity and sexual orientation since the 2016 election. The bill adds the crimes of cyberstalking, transmission of obscene messages and certain acts of intimidation to the list of crimes that can be prosecuted as hate crimes to address the increasing use of technology to attack victims. The legislation also ensures all victims of hate crimes are afforded the ability to file a civil cause of action in response to these incidents and imposes civil penalties.

"The rise in hate crimes around the country is deeply disturbing and does not reflect the founding principles of our country," Madigan said. "A threat against any person based on hate is a threat to our communities. Strengthening our law will enhance all people's safety."

"Illinois is a rich and diverse state, and we must take a stand against those who seek to divide us based on where we are from, who we love or how we worship," Rep. Wallace said. "I am proud to join with Attorney General Madigan in condemning hate in Illinois, and I encourage members of the Senate to join us."

Chicago Police Department data shows that hate crimes reached a five-year high in 2016 and are outpacing that level in 2017. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) also recently released a study showing a dramatic 85 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents, including assaults, vandalism and harassment, during the first quarter of 2017 compared to the same time period in 2016. The ADL also found that anti-Semitic incidents at non-Jewish elementary, middle and high schools increased 106 percent, and a new anti-Semitic message is posted on social media every 83 seconds.

HB 3711 strengthens the Illinois Hate Crimes Act by:

- **Expanding the reach of protection from hate crimes** to address perpetrators' increased use of technology to attack victims. The measure adds the existing crimes of intimidation, stalking, cyberstalking and transmission of obscene messages to the list of crimes that can be prosecuted as hate crimes.
- **Providing the Attorney General with civil enforcement authority** by giving the Attorney General's office authority to civilly enforce Illinois hate crime laws. Illinois would join at least six other states that have similar authority.
- **Ensuring all victims of hate crimes are afforded a civil remedy.** Offenses such as telephone harassment, harassment through electronic communications or disorderly conduct currently do not give rise to civil cause of action under Illinois' current hate crimes law. HB 3711 closes that gap.
- **Allowing judges to impose a civil penalty** of up to \$25,000 for each violation.

Sen. Omar Aquino will sponsor the measure in the Senate.

In February, Attorney General Madigan convened a summit with civil rights leaders to discuss the impact of federal Executive Orders on the nearly 2 million immigrants who live in Illinois. Madigan condemned the Executive Orders as unconstitutional, unlawful and un-American and filed amicus briefs in support of challenges to the executive actions.

In the wake of the executive orders, Madigan also called on Governor Rauner to refuse to deputize Illinois law enforcement to act as immigration officers and protect Illinois immigrants and refugees from discrimination and hate crimes. Madigan has also urged the Governor to restore the Illinois Hate Crimes Commission.

The Attorney General also issued advice about the possibility of scam artists and unscrupulous immigration services providers illegally posing as lawyers or demanding up-front fees for assistance in the wake of the executive actions.

Attorney General Madigan's [Civil Rights Bureau](#) protects the civil rights of all Illinois residents. The Bureau enforces civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination, works to strengthen the civil rights laws, and participates in community outreach programs. The Bureau also investigates complaints of patterns and practices of discrimination in housing, public accommodations, employment, and financial matters. Attorney General Madigan encourages individuals to contact her office to report instances of discrimination or harassment by calling her Civil Rights Hotline at 1-877-581-3692.

-30-

[Return to April 2017 Press Releases](#)

