



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**Virginia Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces its Plans to Hold a Public Meeting: Hate Crimes in Virginia - Incidence and Response**

Washington, DC – In 2018, the 13–member Virginia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) will examine anti-bias incidents across the state. The examination will be open to the public.

Advisory Committee members, who reside throughout the state, will take testimony from panels of experts – including academics/researchers, government officials, representatives of advocacy/civil rights organizations and community members – about public/private entities that monitor anti-bias incidents, and what is being done at the federal, state and local levels to address and prevent anti-bias incidents. The Committee will submit a report to the Commission summarizing the results of its examination, including findings and recommendations. The timeline of the review will be publicized once finalized.

K. Shiek Pal, the Committee Chair, said that, “following the events in Charlottesville, VA in August, 2017, where violent confrontations between protestors and counter-protestors before and during a “Unite the Right” rally resulted in one fatality, Virginia became an impetus for a national discussion on hate groups.” This briefing is intended to provide a public forum for experts, stakeholders, and citizens of the Commonwealth to share their views and experiences in order to inform and craft a comprehensive report.

The Virginia State Police Report indicated that 155 hate crimes were reported in Virginia in 2015. Of particular interest to the Virginia Advisory Committee’s examination are:

- Is there reliable data on the number hate crimes and anti-bias incidents at the state or regional level?
- What are the types of hate crimes/anti-bias incidents and who are the affected/targeted groups?
- Are there reasons that prevent VA law enforcement from addressing/preventing hate crimes?
- What are other states doing to reduce/prevent hate crimes and anti-bias incidents?

In addition to the panel presentations, Committee members will hear short statements from members of the public who want to share their knowledge and personal experiences. Written

statements may be submitted to [ero@usccr.gov](mailto:ero@usccr.gov) or mailed to the Eastern Regional Office at the below address.

The Committee Chair urges community participation at this briefing. He said, “The tragic events in Charlottesville and elsewhere demonstrate the critical importance of appropriately identifying, addressing, and preventing hate crimes. The Committee will sponsor robust and informative panel discussions that will bring a wide range of views and experiences to bear, including the perspectives of citizens of the Commonwealth. I encourage all Virginians to follow the Advisory Committee’s examination of this most important issue.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).