


<div>California Department of Justice DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT Larry J. Wallace, Director</div> 		<b>INFORMATION BULLETIN</b>	
<i>Subject:</i> California criminal laws that prohibit hate crimes and/or provide enhanced penalties for specified hate-related acts		<i>No.</i> DLE-2016-02	<i>Contact for information:</i> Larry J. Wallace, Director Division of Law Enforcement (916) 319-8200
		<i>Date:</i> 11/10/2016	

**TO: ALL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, CHIEFS OF POLICE, SHERIFFS, AND STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

This bulletin is designed to ensure that state and local law enforcement officials across California have the necessary information and tools to continue to respond appropriately and swiftly to hate crime activity. While the total number of hate crime events has decreased 35.9 percent from 1,306 in 2006 to 837 in 2015, hate crimes and hate-related activity remain a significant problem. Hate crime events increased 10.4% from 758 in 2014 to 837 in 2015; the vast majority of this increase is attributed to an uptick in events involving religious bias. See Hate Crime in California Report (2015) (<http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/cjsc/publications/hatecrimes/hc15/hc15.pdf>). Such events are particularly damaging to our residents and communities when they involve threats of violence.

In the past several weeks, local California law enforcement agencies have reported an uptick in threats of hate crimes and other violent extremism. Hate crimes are serious crimes that may result in imprisonment or jail time for offenders. As such, after consultation with federal, state and local authorities, the California Department of Justice provides this summary and reminder to local law enforcement agencies about the multiple California criminal laws that prohibit hate crimes and/or provide enhanced penalties for specified hate-related acts. This bulletin also briefly summarizes the Ralph Civil Rights Act, which provides a civil remedy for certain hate crime activity in California. Further, this bulletin identifies experts in civil rights enforcement and hate crime investigation and prosecution at the California Department of Justice who are available to provide technical assistance in your effort to enforce these laws in your jurisdiction.

**California Penal Code Sections on Hate Crimes**

California law recognizes that certain crimes are more serious where a victim is singled out because of his or her disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. These offenses are commonly referred to as hate crimes, and can serve as a **standalone crime** under California Penal Code Section 422.6 (interfering with the civil rights of another), as an **aggravating factor** under § 422.7, or as an

**enhancement** under § 422.75.

**§ 422.55** – Defines “hate crime” as a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of one or more of the following actual or perceived characteristics of the victim: disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation; or because of the person’s association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

**§ 422.6** – Makes it a **standalone crime** to willfully interfere, by force or threat of violence, with someone else’s civil rights (§ 422.6, subds. (a), (c)), or knowingly damage or destroy their property (§ 422.6, subd. (b)), because of that person’s actual or perceived protected characteristic(s).

To prove interference with another’s civil rights *by force* (§ 422.6, subd. (a)), a prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant used force to willfully interfere with, injure, intimidate, or oppress, or threaten another person’s legally protected right or privilege.
2. The defendant did so in whole or in part because of the other person’s actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), or because of the other person’s association with a person or group having one or more of these characteristics.
3. The defendant intended to interfere with the person’s legally protected right.

To prove interference with another’s civil rights *by threat of violence* (§ 422.6, subds. (a), (c)), a prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant threatened physical violence against a specific person or group.
2. The threat would have caused a reasonable person to be afraid because the defendant appeared able to carry out the threat.
3. The defendant used the threat to willfully interfere with another person’s free exercise of a legally protected right.
4. The defendant did so in whole or in part because of the other person’s actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), or because of the other person’s association with a person or group having one or more of these characteristics.
5. The defendant intended to interfere with the person’s legally protected right.

To prove interference with another’s civil rights *by damaging or destroying their property* (§ 422.6, subd. (b)), a prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant knowingly damaged or destroyed someone else's real or personal property.
2. The defendant did so for the purpose of interfering with that person's civil rights.
3. The defendant did so in whole or in part because of the other person's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), or because of the other person's association with a person or group having one or more of these characteristics.
4. The defendant intended to interfere with the person's legally protected right.

A conviction for interfering with another person's civil rights under § 422.6 is a **misdemeanor** that can be punished by up to a year in jail, up to a \$5,000 fine, and up to 400 hours of community service. (§ 422.6, subd. (c).)

**§§ 422.7 and 422.75** – Provide that if a person commits a crime and is motivated in part by the fact that the victim has one or more of the protected characteristics in § 422.55, the criminal offense will be considered a “hate crime.”

**§ 422.7 (sentence enhancement)** – If the defendant is convicted of a misdemeanor that was motivated by bias and the misdemeanor caused the victim to suffer an injury, or the defendant had the ability to violently commit injury, or the misdemeanor caused property damage in excess of \$950, the prosecution may use this in aggravation and charge the misdemeanor as a felony. (Felony wobbler: 16 months, or two or three years in county jail and/or fine up to \$10,000; or one year in jail.)

A prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant committed the underlying crime intending to interfere with another person's legally protected rights or privilege.
2. The defendant did so in whole or in part because of the other person's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s).
3. The defendant caused physical injury or had the ability at that time to cause a violent injury; OR caused property damage in excess of \$950.

**§ 422.75 (felony enhancement)** – Provides for an enhanced sentence for any felony if the prosecutor can establish that it was committed as a hate crime.

A prosecutor must establish the following **element**:

1. The defendant committed the underlying crime in whole or in part because of the alleged victim's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s), or association with a person or group having one or more of these actual or

perceived characteristics.

A felony hate crime sentence enhancement can add an additional one, two, or three years in prison on top of to any other sentence the defendant receives for the underlying felony. (§ 422.75, subd. (a).) If convicted of acting in concert with another person to commit the felony hate crime, the felony hate crime sentence enhancement increases to two, three, or four years in prison. (§ 422.75, subd. (b).) If convicted of committing a felony hate crime while using a firearm, the court may lengthen the sentence at its discretion. (§ 422.75, subd. (c).) Prior felony hate crime convictions can add an additional one year in state prison for each prior conviction. (§ 422.75, subd. (d).)

### **Additional Crimes and Enhancements that Fall within the Hate Crimes Umbrella**

In addition to §§ 422.7 and 422.75, other hate crime-related statutes prohibit or provide enhanced penalties for specified hate-related acts.

**§ 190.2, subd. (a)(16)** (Special Circumstances) – Provides a death penalty or sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole for murder motivated by a victim's race, color, religion, nationality, or country of origin. A prosecutor must establish that the defendant intended to kill because of the deceased person's real or perceived protected characteristic(s).

**§ 190.03, subd. (a)** – Provides for life in prison without possibility of parole for first-degree murder motivated by a victim's protected characteristic(s). The prosecutor must prove the defendant committed the murder, in whole or in part, because of the deceased person's actual or perceived protected characteristic(s).

**§ 302** – Establishes a misdemeanor to intentionally disturb a group of people who have met to worship. (Penalty: up to one year in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine.)

**§ 594.3, subd. (b)** – Provides that it is a felony to knowingly vandalize a place of worship as a hate crime. (Penalty: 16 months, or two or three years in county jail.)

**§ 1170.8** – Provides as an aggravating factor the fact that a robbery, arson, or assault with a deadly weapon or by means of any force likely to produce great bodily injury was committed within a place of worship.

**§ 1170.85, subd. (b)** – Provides that age or disability of victim may be circumstances in aggravation.

**§ 11411, subds. (a), (b)** – Subdivision (a) provides that it is a misdemeanor to hang a noose, knowing it to be a symbol representing a threat to life, on the private property of another and on public property, without authorization, for the purpose of terrorizing the owner or occupant of that private property or in reckless disregard of the risk of terrorizing them. Subdivision (b) provides that it is a misdemeanor to cause a person to fear for his or her safety by displaying racist signs on the private property of another, without authorization, for the purpose of terrorizing the owner or occupant of that private property or in reckless disregard of the risk of terrorizing them. (Penalty: up to one year

in jail and/or a fine of up to \$5,000, with increased fine for subsequent convictions.)

A prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant placed or displayed a sign, mark, symbol, emblem, or physical impression on the private property of another person.
2. The defendant did not have authorization to place or display that item on the property.
3. The defendant intended to terrorize the owner or occupant of the property (or acted with reckless disregard of the risk of terrorizing the owner or occupant of the property).

**§ 11411, subd. (c)** – Provides that it is a misdemeanor or a felony to engage in a pattern of conduct for the purpose of terrorizing the owner or occupant of private property or in reckless disregard of terrorizing the owner or occupant of that private property by placing a racist symbol on that property on two or more occasions. (Felony wobbler: 16 months, or two or three years, and/or up to a \$10,000 fine; or one year in jail and/or up to a \$5,000 fine.)

**§ 11411, subd. (d)** – Provides that any person who burns or desecrates a cross or other religious symbol, knowing it to be a religious symbol, on the private property of another without authorization for the purpose of terrorizing the owner or occupant or in reckless disregard of terrorizing them, or who burns, desecrates or destroys a cross or other religious symbol, knowing it to be a religious symbol, on the property of a primary school, junior high school or high school, for the purpose of terrorizing any person who attends, works at or is otherwise associated with the school shall be guilty of a felony or misdemeanor. (Felony wobbler: 16 months, or two or three years in county jail, and/or up to a \$10,000 fine; or one year in jail and/or up to a \$5,000 fine, as well as increased fines for subsequent convictions.).

A prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant burned or desecrated a religious symbol on the private property of another; OR on the property of a school.
2. The defendant knew the object that s/he burned or desecrated was a religious symbol.
3. The defendant did not have authorization to burn or desecrate the religious symbol on the property.
4. The defendant intended (or acted with reckless disregard) to terrorize the owner or occupant of the property; OR intended to terrorize someone who attend the school, works at the school, or is associated with the school.

**§ 11412** – Provides that it is a felony to attempt to discourage religious activities by threats of violence. (Penalty: 16 months, or two or three years in state prison.)

A prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant caused or attempted to cause a person to refrain from exercising his or her religion (OR refrain from engaging in a religious service) by threatening injury upon that person or upon property.
2. The defendant directly communicated the threat to that person.
3. The person reasonably believed the threat could be carried out.
4. At the time the defendant made the threat, the defendant intended to cause the person to refrain from exercising his or her religion (OR refrain from engaging in a religious service).

**§ 11413, subds. (a), (b)(2), (b)(9)** – Provides that it is a felony to use a bomb against or to set on fire a place of worship or any private property if the property was targeted because of the protected characteristic(s) of the owner or occupant of the property and the purpose was to terrorize another or was in reckless disregard of terrorizing another. (Penalty: three, five, or seven years in state prison, and a fine of up to \$10,000.)

A prosecutor must establish the following **elements**:

1. The defendant exploded or ignited (or attempted to explode or ignite) a destructive device or explosive; OR committed arson.
2. The defendant used or attempted to use the destructive device or explosive; OR committed arson in or about a place of worship or private property.
3. The defendant committed these acts with the intent to terrorize or with reckless disregard of terrorizing someone else.

### **Miscellaneous Penal Code Provisions Relating to Hate Crimes**

**§ 136.2** – Protective Orders – Provides protection against further harm. Once criminal charges are filed under any criminal statute, hate crimes victims have the right to a court order prohibiting any additional harassment.

**§ 1547, subds. (a)(12) & (13)** – Authorizes the Governor to offer a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person who has committed certain hate crimes.

**§ 3053.4** – Requires that as a condition of parole following a hate crime sentence, defendant must refrain from further acts of violence, threats, stalking, or harassment of the victim or victim's family. "Stay away" conditions may also be imposed (additional requirement that you maintain a certain physical distance from victim).

**§ 11410** – States that the urging of violence where death or great bodily injury is likely to result is conduct not protected by the California Constitution; in this section the

Legislature finds that it is the right of every person, regardless of actual or perceived race or ethnicity, color, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with these actual or perceived characteristics, to be secure and protected from fear, intimidation and physical harm caused by the activities of violent groups and individuals.

**§ 13023** – Requires the Attorney General collect statistical information on hate crimes.

**§ 13519.6** – Requires Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission to offer training on hate crimes enforcement.

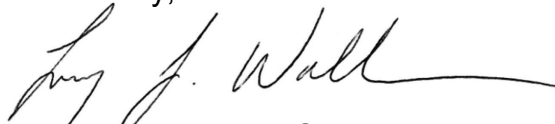
### **California Ralph Civil Rights Act**

The Ralph Civil Rights Act, Civil Code section 51.7, provides that it is the right of every person in California to be free from violence or the threat of violence against his or her person or property because of his or her actual or perceived sex, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or position in a labor dispute. These listed characteristics are merely examples and other bases for a discrimination claim under the Act are possible. Remedies for interference with a right secured by the federal or state constitution, or by statute (including hate crimes), include injunctive relief, equitable relief to secure constitutional rights, actual damages, exemplary or punitive damages, a civil penalty of \$25,000, and attorney's fees.

### **Contact Information**

The California Department of Justice takes great pride in assisting local law enforcement agencies in enforcing criminal and civil rights laws and protections. Should your agency or individual officers require technical assistance, please contact Division of Law Enforcement Director Larry Wallace at (916) 319-8200 or Senior Assistant Attorney General Angela Sierra, who leads the Department's Civil Rights Enforcement Section, at (213) 620-6312.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry J. Wallace", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

LARRY J. WALLACE, Director  
Division of Law Enforcement

For KAMALA D. HARRIS  
Attorney General