

Media Advisory:

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**Coalition of Concerned Hoosiers Urges Lawmakers
to Approve Hate Crimes Law This Year**

(Indianapolis, Ind.) – A diverse, statewide coalition representing Hoosier communities and concerned residents are urging lawmakers to continue to work on hate crimes legislation this year. The comments came at a press conference held at the Indiana Statehouse this afternoon. Present at the event were representatives from many supporting organizations and their message was clear: The time is now, and the need is obvious.

David Sklar with the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council cited the recent threats and violence targeting the Jewish community in Indiana and nationwide as he called for action this year. “At a time of rising anti-Semitism in Indiana and across the country, my community is feeling anxiety like no time in recent memory,” Sklar commented. “Our ask of the General Assembly is simple, it is time to join the vast majority of the country and remove Indiana from the list of five states that do not have a hate crimes statute.”

Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry spoke today about how a hate crime provision in state law would help his office address potential bias-motivated crimes. “We believe that the explicit language is necessary in the statute so that prosecutors can appropriately argue, and the courts will consider, how bias motivation in a criminal act has a greater effect on the safety and wellbeing of the public at large,” Prosecutor Curry commented. He said the language proposed by the coalition would enable courts to increase an offender’s sentence for a crime if the prosecutor proved that it was motivated by bias.

While the original measure stalled in the Indiana Senate last month, the coalition believes there are still opportunities for the language to be revived in the House of Representatives during the second half of the 2017 legislative session. Indiana is one of only five states in the United States which does not have a hate crimes provision in statute.

The coalition encouraged Indiana residents to contact their representatives in the General Assembly now to urge that lawmakers take action this year to address hate crimes. Contact information for members of the Indiana General Assembly can be found on the state website at www.iga.in.gov.

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The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana is a member of this statewide coalition urging support of a hate crime law.