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NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ANNOUNCES SUBWAY OUTREACH AND OTHER EFFORTS TO INFORM PEOPLE OF LEGAL PROTECTIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

NYC Commission on Human Rights, in conjunction with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Community Affairs Unit, Public Engagement Unit, the Department of Consumer Affairs, and elected officials, conducts a 5-borough subway outreach and launches digital and mobile transit app ads on December 20th to inform New Yorkers of legal protections against discrimination and harassment

Commission announces expanded Infoline at 718-722-3131 to field questions about discrimination and harassment

Commission creates “Bias Response Team” to monitor incidents of discriminatory harassment citywide and respond with resources for victim and affected communities

NEW YORK – The NYC Commission on Human Rights announces today a series of actions to provide New Yorkers with tools to report incidents of discrimination and harassment, as well as information for immigrant communities.

Following a spate of bias attacks near public transit, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, with support from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Community Affairs Unit, Public Engagement Unit, the Department of Consumer Affairs, are informing New Yorkers today about legal protections against religious discrimination and discriminatory harassment under the NYC Human Rights Law outside subway stations in all five boroughs. Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman and Council Members Brad Lander, Rosie Mendez, Annabel Palma, and Ydanis Rodriguez will also join in the outreach. The Commission, which has increased outreach to vulnerable communities since Election Day, will also run ads on social media, mobile apps, and ethnic newspapers to reinforce anti-discrimination protections under the Law.

The NYC Commission on Human Rights also announces today the expansion of its Infoline (718-722-3131), adding additional operators who can help victims of discrimination file claims, inform them of protections under the Law, and answer and refer questions on immigration matters following training from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. The Commission is also announcing a new “Bias Response Team” which is reaching out to victims of bias-based incidents to address the incidents, inform them of their rights, and provide affected communities with know-your-rights information and resources.

“New York City will not stand for discrimination or harassment of any kind,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “NYC has been and always will be a welcoming city for all, regardless of who you are or

what you believe and we intend to keep it that way. We will continue to fight hate and bigotry in all its forms and protect the most vulnerable among us, which is why we are reinforcing programs and support structures so everyone knows they are fully protected by New York City and knows what to do if they are the victims of hate or discrimination. NYC will not let bias-incidents and hate crimes go unaddressed and will continue to stand firm against those who would divide us.”

“No one in this city should feel unsafe or threatened for being who they are,” said **Commissioner and Chair of the NYC Commission on Human Rights Carmelyn P. Malalis**. “The NYC Commission on Human Rights is here to protect all New Yorkers from discrimination and harassment by enforcing the City’s Human Rights Law, one of the strongest anti-discrimination laws in the nation. We are using every resource at our disposal to inform people of their rights and encourage them to report acts of bias and discrimination. The Commission works every day to hold violators accountable and get justice for victims under the law. If anyone believes they have been the victim of discrimination, we urge them to call the Commission and report it.”

“The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs is pleased to partner with the Commission on Human Rights in a steadfast commitment to protecting the human rights of all New Yorkers,” said **Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Nisha Agarwal**. “While we are shocked by recent reports of bias and discrimination in our City, we will continue working with the Commission to double down on outreach efforts to impacted communities. Through a multitude of efforts such as the new expanded Infoline, bias response team and ongoing awareness-building, the City is putting action to words in fighting hate.”

“In a city where one in three of us were born in another country, it is our differences that make us stronger,” said **Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs Lorelei Salas**. “We cannot let anyone who believes otherwise divide us, which is why the Department of Consumer Affairs is proud to join the Commission to let New Yorkers and the world know that the City will serve, protect, and defend all New Yorkers. New York City has been and will continue to be a safe haven for all and a place where discrimination will not be tolerated.”

“It’s important that all New Yorkers feel safe in their communities and know how to access the resources that are in place to protect them,” said **Senior Advisor for the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit Regina Schwartz**. “That’s why we’re proud to be joining the NYC Commission on Human Rights for this Day of Action, engaging thousands of New Yorkers at subway stops across the city to provide information about how to report acts of bias and discrimination.”

Complaints of discrimination based on race, religion, national origin and citizenship and alienage status filed at the Commission have increased by more than 30 percent in 2016. In fact, Commission investigations into discrimination in these categories have more than doubled over the last two years. The Commission is currently investigating more than 400 complaints of discrimination in these areas.

Hate crimes, which are investigated by the New York Police Department, have also increased by more than 30 percent in 2016 according to the NYPD, particularly against Muslims, Jews, people of color, and LGBTQ communities.

Following the election, vulnerable communities continue to reach out to the City to report incidents of discrimination and bias. For example, one woman who was speaking Albanian to her friend while waiting for the bus in Staten Island was approached by a man who repeatedly shouted, “You illegal aliens, you should all go back to your own country!” Another woman with a Spanish accent was told over the phone by a service person, “I am sick of these stupid Mexicans. Trump is right to get them all out! They are a pile of garbage.” Members of the Muslim community have also expressed fears, including one woman who reported being afraid to walk outside in her hijab. Another person in the LGBT community asked, “Is it safe to go outside?”

These are just some of the reports the City is hearing from concerned community members. The NYC Commission on Human Rights is responding by taking several actions to inform people of their rights and get them the resources and information they need to address their fears and concerns.

Subway Outreach

Since many reports of discrimination and hate have occurred in or near transit stations, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, with support from the Mayor’s Offices of Immigrant Affairs, Community Affairs Unit, Public Engagement Unit, and the Department of Consumer Affairs, are distributing information on [religious protections](#) under the NYC Human Rights Law as well as a new bilingual English-Spanish fact sheet on [discriminatory harassment](#) at eight subway stations across all five boroughs on Tuesday, December 20, from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., including outside the Union Square and 168th Street stations in Manhattan, the Barclays Center station in Brooklyn, the 149th Street/Grand Concourse and Parkchester stations in the Bronx, the Jamaica Center and Roosevelt Avenue stations in Queens, and the St. George station on Staten Island. Staff will be joined by Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman, and Council Members Rosie Mendez, Brad Lander, Annabel Palma, and staff from Ydanis Rodriguez’s office.

The Commission is also launching today anti-discrimination ads on transit apps, such as Transit Tracker New York, MyTransit NYC, QuickStop NYC, NYC NextBus, TransitTracker MTA, NYC Maps, as well as Google and Facebook, urging people to contact the Commission if they witness or experience harassment in the subway, on the bus, at a bus shelter or any other public space. Additionally, the Commission will run multilingual ads in ethnic newspapers next month, including *Allewaa Alarabi*, *Weekly Bengalee*, *Queens Latino*, *Sing Tao Daily*, *Korean Central Daily News*, *News India Times* and *Haitian Times*.

Expanded Infoline

The NYC Commission on Human Rights, with the support of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, has also expanded staff and technology capacity of its existing Infoline (718-722-3131) to take reports and answer questions on discrimination and harassment as well to make

appropriate referrals regarding IDNYC, ThriveNYC, and notario fraud protections. The Commission typically receives 30-50 calls a day and has seen a slight uptick in calls following the election. People can also report discrimination on the Commission's website [here](#).

Bias Response Team

The NYC Commission on Human Rights also created a "Bias Response Team" with staff members who are responding to incidents of bias and discrimination across the city, receiving information from callers, reports/tips from advocates and city agencies, such as the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force, and from news media and social media reports. When a Bias Response Team member learns of a bias-related incident, they reach out to victims to address the incident and gather information and provide resources and know-your-rights information to affected communities so they know how to report discrimination and file a complaint. Bias Response Team members are stationed in every borough.

Additional Outreach Efforts

The Commission continues to strengthen additional outreach efforts to inform concerned communities about legal protections under the Law, including:

- **Hosting listening sessions (Dec. 12 to mid-January)** for community and legal advocates, including those that work with the LGBT and immigrant communities, racial justice groups, worker's rights groups, and interfaith leaders to understand their fears and concerns.
- **Launching a cultural sensitivity workshop called "Understanding Muslim Experiences and Combatting Islamophobia"** with community leaders and the Islamic Center at NYU to help City employees and public and private employers better understand the Islamic faith and dispel common myths. The NYC Commission on Human Rights will launch the program in the weeks ahead.
- **Developing a citywide anti-xenophobia media campaign** to launch in 2017 to educate New Yorkers on combatting xenophobia and embracing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.
- **Participating in "Know Your Rights" events** across the city, including Town Hall and public safety forums with elected officials and community members, so people understand their rights and know what to do if they are the victims of discrimination or harassment.
- **Participated in a "Know Your Rights" Phone-a-Thon (Dec. 6-8):** The Commission joined Univision New York, El Diario, Radio WADO, New York Immigration Coalition, Catholic Charities, the NY State Office for New Americans for a 3-day phone-a-thon to answer questions about issues impacting the city's diverse communities, especially immigrants, and inform concerned New Yorkers about their rights under the NYC Human Rights Law. More than 1,000 calls were received.

- **Created a new resource page** (www.nyc.gov/NYCVValues) for quick access to relevant information (in multiple languages) for vulnerable communities, including information on [religious protections](#), [immigration protections](#), [sexual orientation protections](#), and protections against [discriminatory harassment](#). People can also report discrimination on our website [here](#).
- **Launched a #IAMuslimNYC digital ad campaign** prior to the election to promote respect and understanding of the Muslim community and underscore anti-discrimination protections under the NYC Human Rights Law. Ads appeared on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and were seen by millions.

If you or someone you know is the victim of discrimination or bias, please call the 311 and ask for Human Rights or call the Commission’s expanded Infoline directly at 718-722-3131.

ABOUT THE NYC HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

The NYC Human Rights Law, one of the strongest laws of its kind in the nation, protects people from discrimination in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations across 22 broad categories, including race, color, religion/creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, gender (including sexual harassment), gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, marital status, and partnership status, among others.

The law also prohibits retaliation, bias-based profiling, and discriminatory harassment, which is defined as threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion or violence that interferes with a person’s civil or constitutional rights and is motivated in part by that person’s actual or perceived protected status such as race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or immigration status. Learn more about the Law [here](#).

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“What makes New York City great is its diversity,” said **Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman**. “No one should feel threatened because of who they are, which is why my office has partnered with the NYC Commission on Human Rights to help report and address instances of discrimination. We are a nation of immigrants, myself included and we must work together to keep New York safe.”

“These new outreach efforts will safeguard NYC's most vulnerable communities from hate," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm** (D-Jackson Heights, Elmhurst). “My district is home to one of the largest immigrant, LGBTQ, and Muslim populations in the state. I am pleased that the City is doubling down on its endeavors to protect these groups from harassment, discrimination, and violence. I will continue to work alongside the administration to ensure that NYC remains a safe haven for all people.”

“New York has a proud history of welcoming all. That’s not going away anytime soon, and we’re going to make sure every New Yorker knows it,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “We’ve got some of the strongest anti-discrimination and harassment laws in the country, and

some of the most dedicated public servants to enforce them. We're also doing all that we can in the City Council to strengthen and embolden these laws even further. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Malalis for standing strongly against discrimination and working to make sure every New Yorker knows they are fully protected."

"In New York City, we are proud of our multi-ethnic and multi-racial communities," said **Councilwoman Rosie Mendez, Chair of the NYC Council LGBT Caucus**. "Here, we embrace the characteristics that make individuals different, including our diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, religious beliefs, sexual orientations and gender identities. Since the presidential election, there has been a 115% increase in hate crimes in City of New York. Hate crimes and discrimination will not be tolerated in our great City. The NYC Commission on Human Rights continues to reach out to individuals who are subjected to discriminatory behavior or bias-related attacks. I will join the Commission in that outreach at the Union Square Subway Station in my district to inform New Yorkers of what to do when, and if, confronted with bias related incident either at the workplace and/or in their personal life. I am proud to be a part of this great City that will stand up against discrimination and harassment."

"New York City has long been a cosmopolitan haven for inclusion and diversity," said **Council Member Annabel Palma**. "That is why it is vital that incidents of discrimination and harassment based on perceived differences be vigilantly combated. As an ardent supporter of a culture of acceptance, I am wholly committed to backing the NYC Commission on Human Rights' initiative to expand their platform for outreach toward marginalized groups, such as immigrant communities. Only through a collective effort, can we strive to achieve a climate free of hate and bias."

"The uptick in hate crimes we've seen in New York City since election day are unacceptable and we as New Yorkers are better than that," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. "The important outreach underway by the NYC Commission on Human Rights reminds New Yorkers that if they ever feel under threat, there are places they can turn to for support. We are demonstrating our true New York values through these efforts, that we are one city, one nation, and we cannot be divided by hate."

"At time where there has been an uptick of hate crimes in our city, I applaud Commissioner Malalis and the Commission for Human Rights for their outreach and advocacy work from the subway ads to hate crime hotline to educate and protect the most vulnerable in our city," said **President of the Muslim Community Network Debbie Almontaser**.

"The New York City Anti-Violence Project applauds the New York City Commission on Human Rights on the steps they are taking to inform New Yorkers of legal protections against discrimination and harassment through their citywide subway outreach efforts," said **Shelby Chestnut, Director of Community Organizing and Public Advocacy at the New York City Anti-Violence Project**. "As this country grapples with responding to an increased visibility of violence and hate-speech targeting the most vulnerable populations, it is heartening to see the Commission take a stand to protect its diverse city, especially LGBTQ New Yorkers who are subject to violence on a continual basis for their actual or perceived gender identity and/or sexual orientation."

“We commend the Commission on Human Rights for stepping up efforts to ensure that New Yorkers are supported in the event of discriminatory harassment,” said **Steven Choi, executive director of New York Immigration Coalition**. “With the recent rise in hate crimes, the Commission's expanded hotline, Bias Response Team, and outreach efforts is an active commitment to our city's residents, including immigrants, that the City has their backs. We look forward to working with the Commission in the upcoming year to continue to protect our communities.”