

To Our Community Members:

**We strongly condemn the antisemitic comments made by a commissioner at the San Diego County Leon Williams Human Rights Commission (HRC) meeting on July 18.** Antisemitism has ramped up in the world, and in our own backyard, in just a matter of weeks.

At the July 18 meeting, these antisemitic remarks went mostly unchallenged by other commissioners (with gratitude to Commissioners Kate Clark and Nicole Murray Ramirez for their in-person statements), following a number of problematic comments in prior meetings. Collectively, these comments confirm the significant issues in the make-up and oversight of the County Human Relations Commission. The ADL, AJC, and Jewish Federation issued a joint response to those remarks [here](#).

**We all take the issue of bias on the HRC extremely seriously. We are paying attention and taking action.** A group of Jewish and non-Jewish leaders from several Jewish organizations, synagogues, and agencies have been meeting regularly and working together over the past few months behind the scenes, as well as publicly at HRC meetings, to raise our concerns and recommended actions with the commissioners, the County Supervisors, County staff, and others involved with the Commission.

We continue to [advocate](#) for more balanced representation on the commission, more education and anti-bias training including on antisemitism, stricter adherence to parliamentary procedures, affirmation of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors' Resolution on Antisemitism, and increased outreach to and engagement with the Jewish community.

**We are seeing the results of our efforts**, with increased Jewish representation on the Commission, along with other changes in the make-up of the Commission and [continued media attention](#). We have met with most of the Supervisors, as well as the Commission chair, and other key County staff, and all are paying attention to the issues we have raised.

**This is an evolving situation, and we will not let up nor will we stay silent.** This Commission was established expressly in the wake of the Chabad of Poway attack *"to promote positive human relations, respect and the integrity of every individual regardless of gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or citizenship status."*

The commissioner who made the egregious comment at the July meeting has resigned, and Supervisor Joel Anderson has publicly called the commissioner's remarks "hurtful" and "offensive." District Attorney Summer Stephan has also resigned from the Commission due to its ongoing issues and her continued commitment to prosecute hate crimes. She called the commissioner's comments "disparaging and dehumanizing." Sheriff Kelly A. Martinez has also resigned from the Commission.

**As we continue this critical work to hold the Commission to live up to its mission, your voice matters. You can take action by contacting your County Supervisor to ask them to publicly condemn the antisemitic statement made and reinforce the requests above.**

**There is no room for antisemitism – or hate speech of any kind – in San Diego.**

*Note: The official video recording of the Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission meeting on July 18, 2023 is available [here](#). The video is set to begin at 52:18 when the referenced statement is made.*

In solidarity,

Heidi Gantwerk, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of San Diego

Fabienne Perlov, Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League, San Diego and Imperial County

Sara E. Brown, PhD, Regional Director, American Jewish Committee

Rabbi Yael Ridberg, San Diego Rabbinic Association President, Congregation Dor Hadash

Michael Hopkins, CEO, Jewish Family Service of San Diego

Beth Sirull, President and Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego

Betzy Lynch, CEO, Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center

Karen Parry, Executive Director, Hillel San Diego

Charlene Seidle, Executive Vice President, Leichtag Foundation