

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 78

WHEREAS, New Jersey is one of the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse states in the nation, and this diversity is one of our State's greatest strengths; and

WHEREAS, discrimination, prejudice, and bigotry have no place in New Jersey or anywhere else in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in addition to enforcing existing anti-discrimination laws and regulations, such as the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, our administration is committed to using all resources and tools available to end hate, bias, and intolerance in all its forms, especially among New Jersey's students and young adults, and to fostering learning environments where all students are welcome; and

WHEREAS, bias incidents, or suspected or confirmed crimes that are committed based on the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, or ethnicity, jeopardize our pursuit of freedom and opportunity, attack the identity and heritage of our residents, shake the foundations of our cultural and religious institutions, and strike at our efforts to build a stronger and fairer New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, bias in our educational institutions cannot be tolerated; and

WHEREAS, according to the latest data submitted to the New Jersey Uniform Crime Reporting System by every New Jersey law enforcement agency during 2017 and 2018, the number of reported bias incidents in New Jersey increased by 32% from 2016 to 2017, from 417 in 2016 to 549 in 2017, with this being the largest jump since at least 2006; and

WHEREAS, reported bias incidents increased by an additional four percent from 2017 to 2018, and the 569 reported bias incidents in 2018 was the highest total number since 2011; and

WHEREAS, over 25% of reported bias incidents in both 2017 and 2018 occurred at a college or university; and

WHEREAS, there were also 32 reported bias incidents that occurred at elementary and secondary schools in 2018; and

WHEREAS, 105 of the 227 known offenders in 2018 were minors, a 67% increase from the 63 known offenders who were minors in 2017; and

WHEREAS, between 2006 and 2018, nearly 29% of the victims of bias incidents were minors; and

WHEREAS, addressing the rise in reported bias incidents among students and young adults in New Jersey requires cooperation across government agencies to understand the root causes of bias incidents and determine the best path forward;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SHEILA Y. OLIVER, Acting Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby created the Interagency Task Force to Combat Youth Bias ("Interagency Task Force"), which shall be responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the Governor's Office, the Attorney General, and other Executive Branch departments and agencies on strategies and actions to reduce incidents of hate, bias, and intolerance involving students and young adults.

2. The objectives of the Interagency Task Force shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. Studying the root causes of hate, bias, and intolerance in New Jersey's schools and universities and among New Jersey's students and young adults;

b. Examining and evaluating existing programs and strategies that are administered by executive departments and

agencies to address hate, bias, and intolerance in schools and among New Jersey's students and young adults;

c. Reviewing existing law and applicable procedures related to bias in schools and among New Jersey's students and young adults;

d. Reviewing existing programs, curricula, and strategies that aim to address hate, bias, and intolerance among students and young adults and in schools by creating connections and breaking stereotypes;

e. Recommending any necessary changes to existing programs and strategies that are administered by executive departments and agencies and existing law and procedures; and

f. Recommending how executive departments, agencies, and schools should act to reduce hate, bias, and intolerance in schools and among New Jersey's students and young adults.

3. The Interagency Task Force shall consist of:

a. The Director of the Division on Civil Rights, within the Department of Law and Public Safety, who shall serve as Chair;

b. The Commissioner of the Department of Education, or his designee;

c. The Secretary of Higher Education, or her designee;

d. The Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families, or her designee;

e. The Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, or his designee;

f. The Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, or his designee;

g. The Director of the Division of Criminal Justice, within the Department of Law and Public Safety, or her designee; and

h. The Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission, within the Department of Law and Public Safety, or his designee.

4. All members and designees shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing department or agency and without compensation. The Governor may, as determined to be appropriate, appoint additional members to the Interagency Task Force, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

5. The Interagency Task Force shall ensure that there is robust engagement with stakeholders, including the communities that are most often the victims of bias crimes and incidents.

6. The Interagency Task Force shall be authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this State to supply it with information or other assistance as the Interagency Task Force determines to be necessary to discharge its duties under this Order.

7. Each Executive Branch department and agency is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law and consistent with budgetary constraints, to cooperate fully with the Interagency Task Force within the limits of its statutory authority and to furnish the Interagency Workgroup with such assistance on as timely a basis as is necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order. To the extent necessary, the Division on Civil Rights shall provide professional and clerical staff to the Interagency Task Force.

8. The Interagency Task Force may consult with experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector with respect to any aspect of its mission.

9. The Interagency Task Force shall organize and meet as soon as practicable to begin performing the charges set forth in this Order.

10. The Interagency Task Force, which shall be purely advisory in nature, shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Attorney General no later than six months after the effective date of this Order. The report shall be made available to the public at the same time. The Task Force shall expire upon the issuance of this report.

11. Nothing in this Order shall be construed to supersede any federal, State, or local law.

12. For purposes of this Order, "Executive Branch departments and agencies" shall mean any of the principal departments in the Executive Branch of State government and any agency, authority, board, bureau, commission, division, institution, office, or other instrumentality within or created by any such department, and any independent State authority, commission, instrumentality, or agency over which the Governor exercises executive authority, as determined by the Attorney General.

13. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
 7th day of August,
 Two Thousand and Nineteen,
 and of the Independence of
 the United States the Two
 Hundred and Forty-Fourth.

[seal]

/s/ Sheila Y. Oliver

Acting Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor