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Operator: Good day and welcome to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I would like to turn the conference over to Director Phil Keith. Please go ahead, sir.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Brian and good afternoon all. Thank you for joining us today. I call the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice to order and on behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank you for joining us today for this important Commission teleconference meeting.

The focus of today's hearings will focus on faith leaders and community engagement. We look forward to hearing from these exceptional and remarkable leaders today. At this point, excuse me, at this time I'd ask our executive director Dean Kueter to conduct the roll call of commissioners.

Dean Kueter: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and before I start the roll call I would just like to remind everybody that today's event is open to the press. And for any members of the media on the call, if you have any questions or need clarifications on anything, please contact Kristina Mastropasqua in the Justice Department's Office of Public Affairs.

And with that, I will call the roll, Commissioner Bowdich. Commissioner Clemmons.

James Clemmons: Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Evans.

Christopher Evans: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Frazier.

Frederick Frazier: I'm present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Gualtieri.

Robert Gualtieri: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Hawkins.

Gina Hawkins: Present, thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Lombardo.

Regina Lombardo: Here. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commission MacDonald.

Erica MacDonald: Present. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Moody

Richard Martin: This is Richard Martin, the Chief of Staff for Commissioner Moody attending on her behalf.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Parr.

Nancy Parr: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Price. Commissioner Ramsay.

Gordon Ramsay: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Rausch.

David Rausch: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Samaniego.

John Samaniego: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Smallwood. Vice-Chair Sullivan.

Katharine Sullivan: Here. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: And Commissioner Washington. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the roll call.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Dean, and Commissioner Price will be joining us within the next few minutes. Any other announcements today?

Dean Kueter: No sir, we are good to go.

Phil Keith: We again want to acknowledge the continuing commitment of the Commissioners, the working groups, certainly our witnesses here today, and those that appeared before the Commission before,

and the federal staff supporting this Commission and meeting the goals of this historic Commission. On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank each of you.

As noted on previous calls, we encourage Commissioners to take notes during the testimony of the panelists. We will then open for questions from the Commissioners after the last witness.

Our first distinguished panelists today is Mr. Jeff Ballabon, who is the chief executive officer for B2 Strategic in Washington, D.C. He has over 20 years of experience leading and counseling corporations. advising elected officials on public policy and perception, , managing high-risk stakes, and sensitive complex government relations, public relations, as well as crisis communications and litigation.

A graduate of the Yale Law School, he was counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and counsel to U.S. Senator Tom Danforth. Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Ballabon. You are recognized.

Jeffrey Ballabon: Thank you very much. Good afternoon Director Keith, Vice-Chair Sullivan, and distinguished Commissioners. My name is Jeffrey Ballabon. I've been affiliated with a number of policy and institutional think tanks and together with Dr. Bruce Abramson recently founded the American Restoration Institute dedicated to American exceptionalism and the restoration of foundational American values.

As discussed, I was a graduate of Yeshiva University, the Ner Israel Rabbinical College, and Yale Law School. I have a diverse background in law policy and communications, but will highlight a few examples of relevant experience in addressing this distinguished Commission.

I worked with Attorney General Reno's office on behalf of the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing and with senior management of a company providing training and education for law enforcement

and emergency first responders nationally. I've represented American victims of terror in Washington in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

I was designated by Attorney General Ashcroft to be the point of contact between the Federal Government and the American Jewish community in the event of credible threats against Jewish targets. I'm a father and a grandfather of American Jews and a son and grandson of European Holocaust victims and survivors.

I'm deeply concerned by the renewed mainstreaming of classic anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and have dedicated a good portion of the last several years focused on the alarming rise of antisemitism in America. Compound that with broad assaults on the integrity of law enforcement and current attempts to weaken police culture and funding and we are at the most dangerous moments for Jews in this country and arguably for the country as a whole in living memory.

Last year, a multi-ethnic group of well-known organizations held a conference dedicated to combatting hate in America. It focused on racism against people of color, anti-immigrant sentiment, Islamophobia, and homophobia, but conspicuously excluded antisemitism. When asked why, one of the organizers explained because Jews aren't a minority.

While it was pointed out that not only are Jews a minority but according to FBI statistics, the minority most targeted for hate crimes, the dismissive response was yes, but Jews get along well with the police. Painfully, that argument was made by someone at the leadership in a major American Jewish organization.

I'm here to talk about two points, both perfectly illustrated by that story, and to make two related recommendations. The first point is that Jews, and particularly Orthodox Jews, have worked diligently to develop overall excellent relationships with local law enforcement. We're not just differentiated by our ethnicity, we live in close interaction with many other communities while

leading a unique lifestyle, synced to a unique calendar with daily practices and lifecycle events that are not familiar to outsiders, including many Orthodox Jews.

Instead of these differences creating barriers, we found that welcoming law enforcement, helping them learn about our culture, and being genuinely interested in understanding their culture has become what might be seen as a model for best practices. It turns out that law enforcement also is a unique culture existing in close interaction with many others, but not well understood by outsiders.

Of course, there will be moments of friction and frustration, but Orthodox Jews overwhelmingly perceive law enforcement as the good guys. We're grateful to them in part perhaps because we so vitally need their protection. I think local law enforcement also perceive us as overwhelmingly supportive and grateful.

While efforts were made before, this concerted focus on building the relationship ratcheted up in the aftermath of the deadly 1991 Crown Heights riots, where Orthodox Jews observed a horrifying amount of violence and law enforcement was not as helpful as they could have been. A major part of the problem was the mayor's office, but some in the community realized that building mutual relationships and education with police at the community level would change that dynamic, and it has.

Simultaneously, our community, which is keenly aware of the abuses Jews have suffered from authorities in other countries, goes out of its way to teach our children gratitude for the police here. Is it a model that can be adapted to other communities? Perhaps some aspects can, and there are a number of individuals who would be willing to help either way. It's a successful model not widely known but worthy of comprehensive study.

The second point is that Jews generally, and most prominently Orthodox Jews because we are so visible, we frequent synagogues multiple times daily, our clothing mark us as we walk down the

street, etc., Orthodox Jews are under increasing harassment and violent attack. And while we're confident law enforcement would be prepared to work with us to help, there remains too much confusion and lack of reliable data about the nature of the threat and what constitutes imminent danger.

One of the first acts of infamous terror in the United States, the deadly shooting of a van carrying Orthodox teenagers on the Brooklyn Bridge, ,would not ever have been acknowledged as either an antisemitic attack or a crime of terrorism by federal or state law enforcement, but for the relentless struggle of a Hasidic woman, a murdered boy's mother, who dedicated years of her life to fighting and educating the system. The attack was finally reclassified seven years later as a terrorist incident, three days before 9/11.

Today, we have rising antisemitism and violence again, from spontaneous street attacks to meticulously planned mass murders and we have a complex set of political narratives that deny antisemitism where it exists, claim it exists where it doesn't, and create endless distortions and justifications that generally amount to blaming the victims, especially when they're Orthodox.

However, we also have two resources that we lacked even 10 years ago, but which have not yet been deployed. I think it's necessary to deploy to them now. First, we now have a widely accepted definition of what constitutes antisemitism. That definition has been ratified by the United States and applied to federal law by both President Obama and President Trump. It is accepted by Israel, by the United Nations, and by dozens of countries.

Second, we now have technology capable of tracking sentiment data, beliefs, trends, and ideas, and their linkage to violence against Jews. My colleagues and I work on what is essentially an epidemiological map of antisemitism because the transmission of antisemitism bears astonishing resemblance to disease. It passes from person to person within a community or across communities. There is silent, asymptomatic spread. There are super spreaders and coinfections

and there are nodes of infection which move across borders and oceans literally within fractions of a second thanks to social media.

And is it is definitely dangerous, not only to the Jews but to the hosts of societies it infects. We now have the capacity to track the spread of various strains, mutations, and metastases, identifying and quantifying risk factors, immunity rating factors, possible prophylactic measures, etc. to do it in real-time on scales from local to global with hourly updates and complete privacy-compliant technologies.

Rather than view hate crimes solely from the existing perspective as a tool for prosecution and punishment, I propose that such data be used to assist policymakers and law enforcement with preemption, with protection and prevention. We will have an epidemiological map. We will better understand the threat of antisemitism before it turns deadly. We will know who is vulnerable and when and where to deploy police resources.

Yes, Jews do to tend to get along with the police thanks to goodwill and hard work by both sides, but that does not mean that we're not dangerously at risk and increasingly so. Let's give law enforcement the tools to deal with anti-Jewish violence and perhaps if this approach is executed successfully, it could be adapted to help law enforcement deal with other forms of violent hate in other communities. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Mr. Ballabon, for your testimony and certainly for your service to our country. Our next distinguished panelist today is Rabbi Jack Moline, who is the executive director of the Interfaith Alliance in Washington, D. C. Interfaith Alliance is a First Amendment advocacy organization seeking common ground among people of faith and adherents of philosophies in protecting faith and freedom.

Rabbi Moline serves as an adjunct faculty member of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Virginia Theological Seminary. He has authored two books and has contributed to many other publications, both in print and web-based, and he's a popular speaker and featured by many organizations on radio and television broadcasts and in governmental gatherings in Christian churches, Muslim societies, synagogues, and Jewish community centers across the United States and Canada. Thank you for joining us today, Rabbi Moline. You are now recognized.

Jack Moline: Thank you, Director Keith, Vice-Chair Sullivan, honorable Commissioners. My name is Jack Moline and I am a rabbi and president of Interfaith Alliance. Interfaith Alliance was founded in 1994 with the mission to defend the Constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience for the individual and to safeguard the independence of government from religion and religion from government.

Unlike many of the allied organizations we admire and join in coalition, our commitment to true religious freedom is both faith-based and Constitutionally based. That is, the personal religious and philosophical commitments of our members who identify with more than 75 faiths and philosophies, impel them to support the Constitution as the law of the land.

And the uniform devotion of our members to the Constitution as the law of the land impels them to protect the faith and freedom of every American. I'm honored to be able to offer this testimony to the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration in my organizational capacity.

But like everyone who comes before you to testify, I have a story that brings me here today in response to your kind invitation. I've had the blessing all of my life of living in communities that were quietly secure. As a kid growing up in suburban Chicago, I moved freely in my neighborhood in and out of my friends' houses.

What passed for crime in our neighborhood were illicit firecrackers on the Fourth of July or toilet paper hung on someone's tree. One of my neighbors in fact was Officer Dyer, who served our local

police department. We felt safe. I have a public school education and I attended religious instruction through high school and obviously seminary. I was active in my denomination’s youth group.

I attended college during a tumultuous time in the United States' history when respect for law enforcement was not popular until you needed a cop and to be honest, I never did. All of which is to say, Commissioners I lived pretty much the American Dream. I was a second-generation middle-class privileged educated nice Jewish boy.

But let me tell you about the day that dream became a nightmare. I was 37 years old. The Northern Virginia Jewish community where I served at the time as Rabbi Agudas Achim congregation in Alexandria, had just completed the dedication of a new Jewish community center. The governor of the Commonwealth had celebrated its opening with us and our members of Congress were in attendance.

In that week, somebody spray painted swastikas and hateful messages on the pristine brick. As I said, I'm an educated Jew so I was not entirely shocked. A couple of nights later, the Jewish and non-Jewish communities gathered in support of each other. My family came with me to the rally confident of our security and of course the same morons who defaced the building called in a bomb threat and I was evacuated along with my eight- and five-year-old daughters.

We walked to our car under the direction of the local police and I buckled my kids in the back and headed for home. I was five minutes into the 20-minute trip traveling 55 miles per hour on the outer loop of the Washington Beltway when my 5-year-old burst into hysterical tears and said seven words that taught me a lesson I am sharing with you 30 years later.

She sobbed, "Why would anyone want to hurt us?" At that moment, I came to understand that the difference between the American Dream and the American Nightmare is the parent who has to answer that question for their child.

And Commissioners, that story from someone like me, a member of a minority well-integrated in American culture and society, is part of the story of faith communities and ethnic communities in the United States who bring with them histories they learn in a Black church and Islamic school and Hindu instruction and Sikh school. They are white kids who had a great uncle who made the mistake of attending a communist meeting in the 1950s.

They speak Spanish at home taught them by parents and abuelas who left insecurity behind but never forgot it. They're the children of refugees welcomed to this country from Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia or the Persian Gulf. They are most certainly African-American citizens of this country, men and women whose ancestors were torn from their roots and grafted onto America who cannot afford to wait until their children, uncomprehending, say those seven words.

Commissioners, law enforcement in this country is not responsible for the stories of Nazis and Khmer Rouge and Sabac and Hutus and slave traders that have followed this nation of immigrants. Not the FBI, not the state troopers, not the county police, and not Officer Dyer from my suburban village.

But the agents, trooper, or officer who enters an interaction with a citizen unaware that their personal history can be triggered by a uniform. Unaware that a crime is not just the breaking of the law, even when the individual is the suspected perpetrator, the trooper, agent, or officer who does not know that is unequipped to do the job.

All of my adult life I've made it my business to learn about the faith and culture of my neighbors. And when I didn't have a neighbor of particular faith and culture, I sought them out. My children were raised in a traditional and observant Jewish household. And so my wife and I went out of our way to be sure that they were exposed to and friendly with people unlike them. And to be honest, we went out of our way to be sure our neighbors knew about us.

It is not hard to learn about other communities and their values and their traditions - that is unless you don't and then it becomes impossible. It also creates the inevitability of validating the suspicion of vulnerable people who sense a hostility that is likely not there because an officer does not know enough to say, *shokran* or *namaste* or *abi gezunt* when investigating the business of the community.

In the testimony I submitted to this Commission, I took a much more measured tone and tried to present this same material with endnotes and reports and material that your staff will comb through for its evidenced-based recommendations and I thank you and them for taking that time.

But I'm here to speak to your hearts as well and that does not translate onto paper with quite the same effect. When you enforce the law in a nation of laws, then you are the United States of America. The pride with which you rightly wear a uniform or carry a badge is understood by every citizen to whom the blessings of liberty have been secured. Like me, they want to do their civic duty and support law enforcement officers in general and in every instant case.

But those who feel vulnerable, whether they've heard an elected official describe them as bad guys and criminals, or whether they've had to worry about a knock on the door in the middle of the night or whether they have a concern about ever seeing their family from abroad again, or whether they've been pressured into betraying their sisters and brothers in faith, or whether a broken window in their store takes them back to 1939. They need to be reassured that you are on their side.

At every level of law enforcement, officer training in cultural literacy is as important as in the techniques of investigation and enforcement. People need to know even when you do not believe there is an element of racial, religious, or ethnic bigotry involved, that you nonetheless will not claim that there are fine people on both sides.

You are the United States of America. That 5-year-old girl is a grown woman now and she, like you, is a public servant. Those seven words she spoke never left her. She is infuriated when innocent people suffer. Quite obviously, those words she spoke never left me either. When my baby's innocence was taken, I was powerless to stop in that moment and comfort her.

But I will tell you that after learning about and listening to Christians and Muslims and Buddhists and Sikhs and Hindus and Jains and Baha'is and Zoroastrians)and Unitarian Universalist and secularists and atheists, my little girl's seven words are the ones on their hearts when you encounter them in the course of your duties. Why would anyone want to hurt us? I appreciate your attention.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Rabbi Moline for your valued testimony today and your service to mankind. Our next distinguished panelist is Imam Dr. Talib Shareef, President of the Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque.

Imam Shareef is a retired U.S. Air Force member with 30 plus years of service. He has both a doctorate degree and MBA and served as the Imam in five U.S. cities and seven military locations around the world. He was sponsored by the United States State Department in Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to speak in several cities and meet with various local, national, and international leaders in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He held an opening prayer on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's March on Washington. Thank you for joining us today, Imam Shareef. You are now recognized.

Talib Shareef: Thank you. Good afternoon. I'm honored, humbled, and grateful for the invitation and the opportunity to testify before this distinguished and important Commission. The organization that I lead, as mentioned Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque, dates back to the mid-1930s and is

representative of the oldest Muslim community in not only our nation's capital, but in America, and it was established by American citizens of African descent, although we are a very diverse community today with members from over 40 nations.

We established not the first mosque built in America, but the first mosque built in America by 100% American citizens and we dedicated that mosque on December the 10th, which was the date the United Nations issued the Declaration of Human Rights. It is vital that the voice of the Islamic community be welcomed and I believe we, as Muslim and African-American citizens, bring a unique perspective to any study of this type that this Commission is entrusted to.

I'm going to be presenting some details from a successful program we initiated that I believe can be abstracted from or serve as a template to help bring about some necessary change. I also present the philosophy highlighting the foundation of our law and justice that was at basis of our success that I think is relevant for this testimony. And lastly, I'll provide some specific recommendations.

I want to begin by stating that the Masjid Muhammad has had a long history of engaging law enforcement. You heard about my 30 years in the Air Force. I was also the first Muslim to serve as a chaplain for the FBI and of course, the previous Imam served as a chaplain for the D.C. Metropolitan Police for many years and we have - our membership has been involved and engaged in policing thoughout Maryland, Virginia, and D.C Several members are involved.

In fact, several made the ultimate sacrifice. In fact in 2018, the year we launched the program that I'm going to be highlighting, one of those members, I just want to say his name, Cpl. Mujahid Ramzziddin, a PG police officer, he valiantly lost his life. He was off duty responding to a domestic situation. So we know good policing is integral to this effort.

I want to talk about this initiative. In 2018, the Masjid Muhammad launched the AMATE Initiative. That's the American Muslims Against Terrorism and Extremism Initiative, and it was based on being awarded a grant from the Department of Homeland Security. Our selection was rooted in the fact that since its inception, the longest and most comprehensive deradicalization program in the U.S. has largely gone unnoticed and forgotten.

The Islamic community of the late Imam W. Deen Mohammed who picked up physically the American flag has been quietly implementing an incredibly effective counter-radicalization program for over four decades.

The African-American Muslim story contains a wealth of untapped information and problem-solving experience that has the potential to create effective and successful countering, preventing, and deradicalization violent extremism policy specific to the U.S., the unique conditions and necessities. There is a detailed report of our methodology and the success in the study that is attached to this testimony.

The FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and The White House have highlighted our national community as healthy citizens with absolutely no cases or tendencies towards terrorism or violent extremism - essentially zero cases of radicalization. As a result of this natural success, we were given an opportunity to package elements of that success in a program again that we called AMATE, American Muslims Against Terrorism and Extremism, and that’s what I refer to as AMATE.

Under the grant, we were responsible for producing one of the most progressive, informational online social media campaigns challenging the narrative. Challenging the narrative that for most extremist ideology and violence throughout the world. Statistics show that a significant number of individuals are recruited to join extremist factions via online channels, through YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and elsewhere.

Our job was to distribute counter messages that show the true nature of Islam, the religion of peace, in opposition to those messages misusing Islamic text as a way of drawing recruits into their violent way of life. We produce a national communication multimedia platform that educates Americans and others around the world about radicalization actually combats the spread of violence through positive counter-narratives.

We partnered with the United States Institute of Peace and we organized a symposium that was entitled, "Sanitizing the Hate, Corroding the Beauty of Islam" and it brought some of the top and brightest most notable Islamic and also I would say CVE experts to the table to discuss this particular topic.

We produced four short promotional videos that we used to promote the unveiling of a full-length documentary. The documentary dove deeper into the realities of being a Muslim in America and the dark corners awaiting those who are vulnerable online. In the documentary, Congressman Andre Carson of Indiana, you know he's a Muslim former law enforcement officer himself, he spoke about the necessity for good policing and for the community to have a good relationship with the officers assigned to watch over them.

I'm very proud to say that this body of work has left an incredible mark on the discourse about what the Islamic community that looks like in America and I'm confident that elements of this approach to changing the conversation about policing and the police culture can be just as effective. The documentary is included in the attached PowerPoint and for details about the video that we had in the campaign and more information about AMATE, the website is www.amateinitiative.com.

Now AMATE, it used geotargeting to mobile devices with social media outreach. The main ones were Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Now we resulted in selecting 129 zip code pickups with the potential audience of 134 million-plus. Eighty-seven countries weighed in with users. We ended

up getting more than 705 different hits reached and that was broken down by men, women, various ages as well and I've listed that in the report.

And the project was executed in collaboration with community partners to include different mosques and cultural centers across the DMV area. We had experts - counterterrorism experts and we used Greenstreet Communications, it is a full-service communications office. We convened focus groups similar to what this Commission is doing right now, just to get information, feedback to ensure all messaging was sensitive and effective.

We conducted photoshoots to capture authentic images of Muslims at worship here in the D. C. area and other places, images of Muslims serving the community, attending universities, and fellowshipping with those of various religious backgrounds. We launched a multimedia website that was filled with informational articles, video clips, and high-quality posters, and other graphics which were used to plug social channels with these kinds of messages.

Just as was the case leading up to in 2018, the time that has seen previous years marred by reports of one violent action after another by those posing in the name of Islam. We know law enforcement is facing a similar challenge. We do not believe that all officers intend to harm the residents in the communities they police any more than we would like anyone else to believe that all Muslims are bad. This Commission is testament that the conversation must shift. What law enforcement and the community need to do is challenge the narrative, a chance to see law enforcement in another light, the light of genuine positive interactions.

Our efforts continue to spur conversations about new, unique ways to engage with the community. And we are confident that this model will help in changing the discourse about community policing. We stand ready to assist with our expertise if we are called upon.

Our team has been called upon numerous times by DHS to provide strategic insights to various universities. We've been featured speakers at conferences in Ireland, Denmark, Germany, South Korea, Nigeria, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines. And in addition we've also hosted delegations from Egypt, Germany, and France as well.

Furthermore, the 2011 White House counter violent extremism strategy report explicitly stated that credible, authentic, and constructive Muslim voices was one of the most beneficial tools to help address and combat extremism. The same rings true here. To address issues that exist as it relates to law enforcement, the voice of those impacted must be out front.

And the real reality for decades, the African-American Muslim voice has been removed from the conversation. Our audience work with DHS shows that without a question. Having the necessary credible, authentic voices will help bring about sustainable change.

Now the Carnegie Corporation published a study in 1944 that was reprinted in 1996 entitled An American Dilemma. It served to crystalize the emerging awareness that racial discrimination and legal segregation could not endure in the United States. It's a moral wakeup call for Americans to live up to the Democratic ideas of the American creed. That became a powerful justification that united the major groups responsible for the Civil Rights Movement.

It has been one of the most important works of social science of the 20th Century. Never has such a comprehensive and wide ranging study of the state of Black Americans and interracial relations been carried out. Now I've attached a copy of that study to this testimony as well.

That American creed, as embedded in the Constitution, it defines as we know the principle organs of government and the basic rights of citizens. This is one of the resources used, and one of the reasons why our program was successful.

We were successful in showing that our form of democracy is not something that Muslims have to be afraid of. In fact, it may be closer to what we have as Islamic justice for society than any other political ideology existing in the world today. Justice as an ideal.

The Constitution is based upon an idea that Muslims can accept. It is well documented that Thomas Jefferson and others, those who designed our Constitution, were acquainted with the Quran and the process of life. In the language of the founding fathers, we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator.

Here is the language of the founding fathers recognizing God, recognizing the creator, and recognizing all men as having inalienable rights that the government cannot give to them. All were created with those rights, inalienable rights, among these we know, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Now this is truly a statement of strong faith and allegiance to God and country. The writers of this language were building an idea that would tie man to God and would insist government recognize that tie between man and God, a tie the government didn't make, a tie the government cannot break.

The government has to recognize that tie and treat all citizens as the creation of God and that God gave them certain rights that man, the world, or the government cannot take away from them. So this, as we know, is the beauty, the beauty of that ideal. And this is what makes for a true democracy.

A true democracy must recognize that there is an authority higher than man, and people are accountable to their creator, the one that designed and gave them their life. The creator puts a high value on life and saving life saying, it says, if anyone saves a life, it's as if he saved the whole of humanity. Now that's a quote from the Quran.

God introduced himself to the Prophet Muhammad firstly as creator just like in our precious documents, not by the name Allah as he's known by in Islam. That's the precious idea that this did not happen accidentally, that there is a designer for the course of matter in the skies and that designer has designed a course for man's life.

And that same God has also created and designed human life to follow laws, to follow definite patterns of behavior, definite patterns of discipline or behavior so that the life will continue and make progress. So America recognizes that. The government does and should recognize that.

That is the strength of our Constitution. That is the strongest glue or adhesive matter holding together the idea we call western democracy. Those in government and those trusted, entrusted to uphold the laws of our government, must understand the serious sacred regard of the intent of sacred documents upon which this country was founded.

This experiment must prove itself to be sound and continue to exponentially excel in excellence towards a more perfect union exemplified in that which ensures domestic tranquility, provides for security, and promotes the general well-being of all of its citizens. The logic is clear. Let us have the courage to follow the logic to its logical conclusion.

And I basically just say just some of these recommendations, I won't go into detail, but one of those, we have to recognize that tie between man and God and treat all citizens as the creation of God. Be transparent as much as possible so that the public can have faith and confidence.

Some of the things I'm giving you that came out of our program because Muslims were skeptical. They were very skeptical of CVE, African Americans were. So we have both populations were kind of skeptical. But this program really helped bring the walls down.

And they didn’ trust the FBI, didn't trust police, but that began to change with the campaign that we began to put out. So we've got to cultivate trust and understand that sensitivities are steered by fear, love, and faith resulting from trust. Whatever we have faith in is because in having a relationship with that personal thing we have found we can trust it.

So implement geotargeting campaigns, some of this stuff we've used, initiate aggressive geotargeting campaigns showing law enforcement officers engaging with communities, as members of the community, as allies to ensure their safety, security, and comfort as opposed to in a more defensive posture.

Show sound bites from officers talking about their connection to the communities that they serve and why they care about the communities that they serve. Establish a multimedia website with information showcasing law enforcement at work in their communities and those who have been aided by officers.

The other thing is our partnering with the community when they have parties and those kind of things, get into the community, barbecues, et cetera. We have reconstruct training. We know we have a lot on that. Implement new legislation and there's a lot that's been said on that. Increase the availability of assessments of mental health issues and work forward with the committee on that.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a recommend a reading of a book by one of my partners in this work, *America's Other Muslims: Imam W D Mohammed, Islamic Reform, and The Making of American Islam* by Muhammad Fraser-Rahim.

Additionally, I have attached three supporting documents to this testimony: an AMATE PowerPoint, the Carnegie Report, An American Dilemma, and Transforming the Hate that Hate Produced, which is a policy report that looks at real and/or perceived grievances in African-American and Muslim

communities and it addresses issues and interaction with law enforcement and how a community was able to be critical of the state, of the USA, and get past injustices via the legal system.

So thank you for the invitation and the time. That concludes my testimony.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Imam Shareef, for your testimony today and certainly your service to our great country. Commissioners, we are now open for questions to the witnesses. Commissioners with questions, please state your name prior to your question and direct the question to a specific panelist or to the entire panel.

Just a reminder to the Commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. With that, Commissioners, we're open for questions.

Katharine Sullivan: Chairman Keith, this is Vice-Chair Sullivan.

Phil Keith: Madam Vice Chair, you're recognized.

Katharine Sullivan: Thank you. And I guess I'll open this up to all three panelists. In my experience as a judge, I saw juries and oftentimes law enforcement really struggling with hate crimes - and prosecutors - struggling with hate crimes, you know, charging hate crimes, not charging hate crimes.

Mr. Ballabon, you talked about, you know, mapping and figuring out where things happen, you know, more or less in the United States and how that might be valuable to different groups going forward. Rabbi, I know you speak a lot about the First Amendment.

And I'm wondering, first of all, what you think the relationship is between the First Amendment and hate crimes. So that's a fine line, I think, that police, prosecutors, the criminal justice system struggles with.

And then secondly, Mr. Ballabon, specifically to you, how much bias might there be in a mapping project like that because what one community sees as a hate crime another community does not?

I was wondering how that could be overlaid across the country and for different purposes potentially. And maybe go in order.

Jeffrey Ballabon: When you say in order, do you mean Rabbi Moline and then me - this is Jeff Ballabon - or me and then Rabbi Moline?

Katharine Sullivan: Yes, No, then you and the Rabbi, yes, in order from the testimony would be helpful. Thank you.

Jeff Ballabon: Thank you, Vice-Chair Sullivan. All right. First of all you asked extremely perceptive questions. Given the time limitations, I didn't go into it as much in spoken testimony. I am, however, submitting to the Commission for your review points that address exactly this. I'll address them briefly now.

People of goodwill generally rally around the idea of hate crimes laws. Obviously it sounds like a terrible thing, hate. And terrible crimes have been committed due to hate. So it’s hard to be critical of them.

You raise very important issues not only the First Amendment problem but the lurking danger underlying the idea of saying government can prosecute or punish ideas or thoughts no matter how ugly they are. Meaning if someone walks up to me on the street, and this has happened many more

times than once in my life, and cursed me out or yelled at me for being a Jew, that's fine, that's not illegal. But if someone punches me, that is.

Now the crime there is hurting me. And I'm satisfied with that being a crime. I'm less comfortable with the idea that his intent should be something which should be prosecuted and punished. I didn't come today to criticize the notion of hate crimes as they currently exist but to at least add a much healthier way to look at them.

Jewish history teaches us over and over that instrumentalities of law can easily be turned against us. And it’s easy, as we see today, to castrate any unpopular belief or any opposing beliefs as evil or hateful. We see it all the time. People charge each other with being hateful and it doesn't seem hateful to those people at all. Frequently it's not.

So sooner or later someone of less goodwill or someone of a completely different idea can use hate crimes to prosecute or punish individuals with whom they simply disagree. Again as a minority community who knows what that's like when the law is turned against us, that's very dangerous.

However, the reason I didn't recommend epidemiology as a matter for all hate crimes but to start with antisemitism is because, as I said, we have two things we didn't have before. One is technology. The other, which we now have a broad consensus definition of what constitutes antisemitism, it's the IHRA definition, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition. It's adopted by the State Department, by the Department of Education, I believe by the Department of Justice. Israel accepted it, the United Nations. Democrats and Republicans have applied it under the administration.

So we actually have a functioning definition. We don't have one for hate. If we were to undertake an epidemiological study of antisemitism, we could actually use that definition to test out where it exists.

If it's successful, what I'm suggesting is maybe then the process of trying to identify and determine whether there is a consensus definition of hate could be undertaken. Absent that, absent the consensus agreed upon definition, then it's a simply a tool or a weapon by which to hurt people.

Which is why I'm saying for now, aside from prosecution and punishment, which is solely the way it's used, we should also look at keeping hate crimes statistics and understanding the notion of hate as a way for police, for law enforcement, to deploy police resources preventatively, preemptively. What I'm saying is, to be alliterative here, instead of prosecution and punishment, think about it for policing and protection. Thank you.

Jack Moline: Vice-Chair Sullivan, this is Rabbi Moline. As Mr. Ballabon said, it was a very wise question to ask. I think sometimes the mistake we make about the law is to assume that it is something that is fixed. But we know both from the process of legislation and from the process of adjudication that the law is constantly in a process of refinement. And sometimes we do well with that and sometimes we don't.

The fact that something is difficult doesn't mean that it isn't worthwhile. And in fact, you know, my mind goes back to President Kennedy who said we do things because they are hard. That's our nature as Americans.

The First Amendment has a lot of different parts to it. I presume in your question you're referring to freedom of speech. But the other rights in the First Amendment have to be protected as well.

And while I don't have specific language, I wouldn't presume to step into Mr. Ballabon's expertise here, I think that we are obligated to continue the efforts to be certain that there are not people in our country or elsewhere in the world who will exploit the rights and privileges that are granted to

us by one part of the Constitution to limit or negate the rights and privileges of other parts of the Constitution.

Talib Shareef: Thank you. I certainly appreciate that question, Vice-Chair Sullivan. And I second some of what was said by Mr. Ballabon. There are some comments I want to make.

But I would just say also, we do give an example when we look at a person and we say that someone does not have the right to shout fire in a crowded theater when there's no fire. Okay? So there's a logic there when that's inciting something and that also brings about some endangerment, so incitement and endangerment.

We need to look at that language in terms of hate speech. Really, they say it crosses the line when it becomes an action, attack, or to some degree even a threat. But we have to review that because of the dynamics of what we are seeing and what we have seen transpire in our country because of hate speech.

So, again, like Jack Moline, of course, not our area of expertise but just looking at it as a citizen and then looking at our precious documents and some of the guidance that we've given, how to check certain things without violating freedom of speech, I think that should be what we're saying should be considered.

Phil Keith: Thank you, panelists. Other Commissioners with questions? Other Commissioners with questions?

David Rausch: Yes. Mr. Chair, David Rausch.

Phil Keith: Yes, Commissioner, you're recognized.

David Rausch: Thanks. Thanks to each of these panelists for their presentations. I think what they do is they bring us a wider breadth and understanding of the challenges that we face as we work to build community trust with law enforcement.

And I thought there were a couple of strong messages to take away. But I'd like to hear more from the panelists in terms of suggestions on how we go forward with one, engagement and two, with educating law enforcement with the importance and the necessity of understanding the differences that we have in our communities that we police.

Phil Keith: That was for all the panelists, Commissioner?

David Rausch: Yes, please.

Phil Keith: Okay. If we could start with Mr. Ballabon.

Jeff Ballabon: Certainly. I would say that in my recommendations, what I've offered in the written testimony and what I'm offering more is I deal with more national policy. This issue is in our communities - meaning our local orthodox communities - really grew up as an organic expression of the feeling of being embattled and the need for protection.

And so we grew up with the idea that we recognize that we're different. We recognize that most people simply don't have any visibility into us. And so it's really important that we come to the police. We come to law enforcement and try to integrate them. Come and observe our festivals, our holidays, our life cycles. This is what our schedule looks like, our calendar looks like.

You know, by the way we know sometimes this is going to be arduous for you. For example, you know, years ago it wasn't necessary, but for the last decade or more, most significant size

synagogues have had to some kind of law enforcement presence outside them just to protect the people.

It's unfortunate that it's happening in America. It used to happen only in Europe and other countries, but now it's happening here. So we recognize that we're the ones who are different. We're the minority here.

Let's tell them how we work. Explain to them how we work. And sometimes, by the way, there are things which could easily be difficult and annoying to them, to law enforcement, why these things are so important to us and how we can change the way we do things within the context of what we need to do religiously and socially for our community but that can also help the police do their job.

So I guess it starts with an idea that we know the police exist. They literally risk their lives to help us. And so if we start with that point of view, we reach out to them.

What I'm offering is there are a number of people, and I can't take credit for this. I'm just observing this. There are a number of people at the community level in dozens of Orthodox Jewish communities who have created genuinely bottom up outreach to law enforcement and what we've met has been probably universal, not just acceptance, but appreciation.

And so I think what would be helpful, if the Commission wants, I'm certainly happy to put together a roster of examples of local communities where that's happened for the Commission to find out more information about it. I think there should be a study of how it's working.

Because, again, if it were a centralized policy, it would possibly have not worked out as well as it has. It's a community-by-community outreach program and it's been really successful across the country.

Phil Keith: Thank you.

Jack Moline: This is Rabbi Moline. Yes, I want to say something that I hope doesn't cause any insult. But it is something that I think needs to be iterated. The first two rights in the First Amendment have to do with freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and separation of government from religion.

Being a person of faith or of no faith in this country is something that is constitutionally guaranteed. It's the default situation. And so I don't think it's accurate to suggest that there needs to be outreach from minority communities to, in a sense, justify their lifestyles, their observances, who they are.

Imam Shareef is a friend of mine, a dear friend of mine. And I have nothing but admiration for what the Masjid has done in terms of countering violent extremism. But I have to say it bothers me as a Jew that there is some notion that the Muslim community or any other faith community in this country needs to justify itself as being loyal and cooperative Americans.

I think that needs to be the presumed default position of law enforcement that we're dealing with the pluribus that makes us unum and that therefore it is a default position that anybody at any level of law enforcement needs to know about the communities whose rights they're protecting and whose safety they're securing.

And that is part of what is the default training that should be necessary in law enforcement. It should not be up to a community of Orthodox Jews or a community of Sikhs in Santa Fe where they just suffered a horrible hate crime or a community of Hindus in the Washington, D.C. area to approach law enforcement and say, would you like to know about us? Law enforcement should like to know about us.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Imam Shareef?

Talib Shareef: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Thank you. And I certainly want to thank the Rabbi. What was just said, certainly, he's right. We shouldn't have to do that. That shouldn't be the case. But unfortunately that has been the case and of course what you're asking is how do we change that.

And so there are a number of things that have to happen in various areas. And, of course, the partnership on the community events is one of those areas. We did an event, a chili cook-off in D.C. And we invited the U.S. Attorney. We invited the FBI, the leaders, and also MPD. And they came. And the members of the community really had been skeptical of them.

But they just didn't come - you know, some of them were there in uniform and most of them did come in uniform and they participated. In fact one of them even participated in the chili cook-off, cooked the meal.

And we had so much good feedback from that event and some of the walls began to come down. That was just one thing in terms of really having a presence with the people. We were talking about a relationship. That's not a relationship.

We know that these are public funds that facilitate law enforcement. So they have to have a relationship with the people that's really funding their positions in a better way.

And we also think that there should be billboards -- we got billboards of all kind of other stuff in communities -- showing those relationships. This is messaging. These are things people should be seeing on a regular basis in addition to those pictures that would stay fixed. Also we need to change the mobility, the movement in the community in terms of that engagement and certainly training, more sensitivity in cultures.

I work also with ex-White supremacists not to mention those who were extreme on the radical side of Islam but also ex-White supremacists. And both groups, one of the reasons that there's hate and these problems that we're seeing is because there are no meaningful relationships.

So if there are no meaningful relationships to get to know each other and one mentioned that the community shouldn't have to say this is who I am. You know, we are being funded by the community. You should know who the community is that you're working for, that you're serving.

And I think we need to also should change - we have to add to the title police, maybe add the term community, community police service, or something. Add that term. Let that term be seen as well.

And certainly legislature has to be changed. We've got to now change the paradigm, change the mindset. There's a strong mindset out there in terms of us against them the way it's been. We've got to start mandating six months of simulation, reactionary simulation trainings, and begin to put in some of those sensitivity things involving minor traffic versus criminal violations and looking at those scenarios and how they're acting, you know, officers who are flagged with violating human rights, they've got to be dealt with immediately, be taken off the street, et cetera.

And then we mentioned earlier, they shouldn't have to be involved in everything that happens. I mentioned about the mental health situation. We know that this would be something that would be a big savings, you know, if after the initial arrest some mental impaired individuals can be directed toward social workers and treatment instead of being held for those minor offenses. You know, this again we could do some savings because, you know, jail administrations, they do those things routinely. So those things would help.

Now I make it a habit to bring in the leadership to the mosque and we do a telecast to our national community. Again, we've been in America for a long time. I mentioned that our community, the Muslims, were the ones that picked the flag up and take seriously our responsibility as citizens

And we've helped others to do that and, of course, if we look at outreach on every one of our areas, from the DOJ on down, if there's more engagement and also transparency. Because of the history now, how things have gone in terms of us against them, we've got to be more transparent now where we can be.

I used to, I was in intelligence in the military so I know there are certain things you cannot disclose. But we need to start going to town hall meetings in the community, the civic meetings, et cetera, and sharing things that are going on without giving the stuff you can't give, showing that you're being transparent and that you're not there just to look to get. You're there to help and you need the help of those that you're serving.

Those are some of the things that have to be considered as we look at some type of a change.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Other Commissioners with questions?

Jeff Ballabon: It's Jeff Ballabon. Can I follow up?

Phil Keith: Yes, sir, please.

Jeff Ballabon: I just wanted to follow up briefly. I mean, I don't take offense. Rabbi Moline suggested that I might be insulted, I'm not sure. But I am fascinated to note that all I'm reporting is a fact, a set of facts. That we know we have a minority community that needs law enforcement and that has managed to create a set of excellent relationships across the country with local law enforcement.

It seems to me that's something we should all want, all communities should want. But I really can't project what we want onto other communities. I don't understand the concept that somehow law enforcement, the police, are supposed to be fully understanding or educated or empathetic as to our community's unique needs without us explaining it to them. I don't understand seeing law enforcement as the other side or our opponent as opposed to being partners and allies against crime. So it is a very different experience. And actually after hearing what I just heard with the greatest of respect, I suggest - all the more reason.

Maybe it won't be applicable in some communities, but all the more reason to undertake a study of this phenomenon, which isn't widely known which is what happens when communities actively invite law enforcement in to learn about them. And we found across the board truly that law enforcement is equally interested in sharing the way they work with us so we'll understand them, and it's only been to everyone's advantage.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Other Commissioners with questions?

Hearing no further questions, let me close by thanking our panelists once again for your time and your most valuable testimony and responses to the questions from our Commissioners. On behalf of the Attorney General and his leadership team of Rachel Bissex and Jeff Favitta and all the Commissioners, your contributions provided today are most sincerely appreciated and will assist the Commission in the deliberations and work.

Also please check the President's Commission page for additional updates of documents and information on the main Justice website. And we will update it regularly when information is available for posting.

This concludes our hearings for this week. We will be following up separately with calendar invites and information for next week's hearing, which will commence with a hearing on Tuesday that will examine law enforcement accreditation models.

Are there any questions or comments from Commissioners?

If there's no further business before us today, the President's Commission is adjourned and thank you again, Commissioners, for your continued dedication and commitment for the work of this Commission.

Have a great and safe weekend.

Male: Thanks Phil.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes today's call. We thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.