

Prepared Opening Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on Combating the Rise in Hate Crimes
March 8, 2022

[VIDEO](#)

Thank you, Chairman Durbin, for holding this important hearing. The Republican side asked for this hearing back in April of last year, I'm glad we're doing it now.

Hate crimes are rising as violent crime goes up in many cities across the United States. We've all read horrible stories about attacks in New York, Los Angeles, and other places. There's been a disturbing rash of threats on Historical Black Colleges and Universities. Attacks on Asian Americans and Jewish Americans continue at alarming rates.

These crimes spread terror far beyond their direct victims. Threats on schools and attacks on houses of worship can intimidate the entire community that has been targeted. These crimes chill participation in the most important aspects of our daily lives. They make us afraid to go to the very places where we should feel safest.

This rise in hate crimes is deeply disturbing for all Americans. In the course of speaking with members of the black, Asian American and Jewish communities, I've received an outpouring of concern. I'll enter into the record today numerous letters from lawmakers, community organizations and community leaders about this hate crime spike and how we can combat it.

I'd like to recognize some of my guests here today, including the UNCF and the Korean American Grassroots Conference. Thank you for sharing your concerns with me, and thank you for your important work.

Congress can do much to call out these crimes. Congresswoman Steel, and myself, have [led resolutions](#) condemning acts of hate against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Senators Cruz and Cornyn of Texas have led a resolution condemning the anti-Semitic attack on a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. Senator Scott has [led a resolution](#) condemning these hateful threats on HBCUs.

But there's more that Congress can do. Last year, we passed the [Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act](#) with overwhelming bipartisan support. I appreciate Senator Hirono's work with Senator Collins to improve the bill, and I appreciate her kind words on the contributions that I and others were able to make.

We must now engage in oversight over the department's implementation of the act.

One of the challenges in pursuing these crimes is being sure that law enforcement can recognize a hate motive. It's therefore unfortunate that the FBI refused our invitation to appear today. The FBI appears to have struggled at first to recognize the anti-Semitic motive in the Colleyville attack. They also have been disorganized in their response to threats against HBCUs. Staff for myself and for Senator Durbin worked together and appealed to the FBI to provide a witness

with knowledge at just about any level in the organization. They declined. This is very disappointing. I thank Senator Durbin for pressing with me for an FBI witness, and I hope we will continue rigorous oversight of the FBI's response to hate crimes.

The rise in hate crimes coincides with a major rise in crime in many of America's cities. Violence on the streets is up, and that sadly includes hate crimes as well.

One theme that I've heard constantly in speaking with communities that have been targeted by hate crimes is that the police are stretched thin. They're understaffed and challenged not only by real threats but also hoaxes that prey on the deeply upsetting nature of hate crimes to achieve a maximum effect. In some cities, the police can't sweep the campus each time there's a bomb threat against an HBCU. I've been informed by groups like Secure Community Network that, when law enforcement is overburdened, this places a terrible weight on houses of worship to try to provide their own security. It's no surprise that hate crimes are up in cities where crime is up generally.

I hope this hearing will be one of many that will examine all the aspects of the crime spike and how we can combat them.