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Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown joined City Council Speaker Christine Quinn yesterday at a Hate Crimes Symposium at Queensborough Community College. The event was part of a five-borough "Day Out Against Hate" event sponsored by Speaker Quinn in response to a 20 percent increase in reported hate crimes in the city. Below is a copy of the statement made by District Attorney Brown at the symposium.

Statement by Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown

_____ Acts motivated by hate and bias – particularly acts involving violence, intimidation and destruction of property based upon bias or prejudice – have, unfortunately, become more commonplace in recent years. More and more we have come to see instances in which individuals are intentionally targeted because of their race, color, ancestry, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

They do more than just inflict incalculable physical and emotional damage. They also threaten the safety and welfare of all of us. They tear at the very fabric of our society. They intimidate and disrupt entire communities and do immeasurable damage to the civility that is crucial in a democracy.

Hate crimes affect not only the targeted victim – they also impact upon communities that previously lived in harmony.

And so, I want to assure all of you that as long as I am the District Attorney of Queens County, acts predicated upon bias or hate will never be tolerated in this county. And that when they do, unfortunately, occur – particularly when they rise to the level of criminality – they will be vigorously prosecuted and severely punished.

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