



U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

In recent weeks, the U.S. Attorney's Office has engaged in several community outreach events related to the protection and enforcement of civil rights, which I have made a priority program for the Office.

In February, several members of the U.S. Attorney's Office and I visited two New Haven schools in celebration and recognition of Black History Month. Our presentations to students at MicroSociety Magnet School and Hill Central Music Academy began with a discussion of prominent African Americans in recent history and important moments in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. We then engaged the students in a discussion about hate crimes by using the example of a civil rights prosecution handled by this Office, asking the students "what would you do?" and "how would you feel?" if you were a victim of or witness to the conduct. We finished with a vibrant discussion about bullying and its consequences. ,

This month, we hosted a visit to Connecticut by Thomas E. Perez, the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. AAG Perez joined the Office during our civil rights presentation to a third New Haven School, Metropolitan Business Academy. We greatly enjoyed our time during each of these presentations, and I thank the New Haven school system for inviting us.

On March 16, the Office convened our first-ever comprehensive Civil Rights Conference. Approximately 200 members of federal, state and local law enforcement, government offices, community organizations and others gathered at the conference, which was generously hosted by the Quinnipiac University School of Law in Hamden. The conference featured a powerful presentation by AAG Perez and Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy, as well as personal and in-depth discussion of the Matthew Shepard Case. In October 1998, 21-year-old Matthew Shepard was murdered in Wyoming because of his sexual orientation. We were truly fortunate to have been joined by Dennis Shepard, who, along with his wife Judy, tirelessly and successfully advocated for expanded hate crimes legislation since their son's death, and Sheriff David O'Malley, who was instrumental in bringing Matthew's killers to justice.

Following presentations by the featured speakers, conference attendees attended breakout sessions on Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation, Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Institutions and the Community, Voting Rights, Fair Housing and Fair Credit, Bullying and

discrimination in Schools, Excessive Force and Police Misconduct, and Veteran's Rights.

We are honored to have had participants and panelists with rich and diverse backgrounds, and we appreciate the cooperative and tireless efforts of all who are helping to promote a deeper understanding of the issues within our community and protecting the civil rights of everyone.

Partnering with the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, the U.S. Attorney's Office has embarked on a significant civil rights enforcement initiative. As a result, in the past year, we have more than tripled the number of civil rights cases under investigation in our Office. Also, I have appointed two Civil Rights Coordinators to oversee our Office's expanding docket of civil rights matters: Assistant United States Attorney Ndidi Moses serves as the Civil Rights Coordinator for the office's Civil Division, and Assistant United States Attorney Krishna Patel serves as the Civil Rights Coordinator for the Criminal Division.

Also, the Office has created a Civil Rights Fellowship for college seniors and second and third-year law students to work in the Office on civil rights matters during the fall and spring semesters and over the summer months.

Nearly a half-century ago, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate against someone because of their race, color, religion, gender or nationality. Today, the Department of Justice continues to enforce the Act and our nation's other civil rights laws to ensure that all individuals have equal access to jobs, public places, housing, loans for housing, and quality education. Fortunately, we are constantly reminded that a lot of has changed since 1964. But while discrimination is not as common as it once was, we, as a country, still have much work to do. The goal of civil rights will not be reached until we have eliminated all discrimination, and every person is treated equally.