



British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A. and Premier
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Via Email: Premier@gov.bc.ca

Re: Addressing the rise of hate in British Columbia

Dear Premier,

In response to the wave of anti-trans and LGBTQ2SAI+ actions that we are seeing across British Columbia, I write to urge you to take action against hate in our province. News of hate fuelled marches planned in several communities has many of us feeling scared for our children and our schools. Now is the time to take action to address the campaigns of misinformation and organized hate that give rise to marches like these. Hate is not the amorphous, unsolvable issue it may first appear to be; in fact, in March 2023, I delivered to this Legislature a roadmap of how to take tangible and transformative action against it.

As you know, it is my statutory responsibility to act as an impartial, nonpartisan advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights in B.C. Alarmed by a rise in hate during the pandemic, I used the powers of the Human Rights Commissioner under Section 47.15 of the *Human Rights Code* to launch a nearly two-year public inquiry into both the causes and solutions to hate. I heard from thousands of British Columbians and dozens of community organizations, and I collected information about hate from over 50 government ministries, local governments, police departments, courts, school districts, social media companies and transportation agencies.

Among my findings was that 62% of LGBTQ2SAI+ students feel unsafe at school, compared to 11% of cisgender or heterosexual students. More generally, I found that a lack of data on hate incidents is impeding action, that the legal system and government responses to hate have been largely ineffective, and that community solutions can be successful when they receive adequate funding and centralized coordination. I made 12 recommendations in [my final report](#), all of which are aimed at providing concrete steps to prevent hate and address it when it happens.

On March 7, 2023, in response to my final report, you committed that your government would [work with me to address the issue](#). Six months later, I am keen to see a level of action from your government proportional to the urgency and importance of this issue. The Ministry of the Attorney General has committed to sharing an interim response by the end of the month, and I encourage the government to include clear timelines for implementation and ambition plans for the year ahead.

Section 47.20 of the *Human Rights Code* gives me the ability to report back to the Legislative Assembly when an inquiry recommendation has not been adequately addressed. I may use this power during the fall sitting of the House, depending on the contents of the update I receive later this month.

The wave of increased anti-SOGI rhetoric we have seen in recent weeks further proves that we cannot afford to wait to address the rise in hate occurring in our province. I applaud the thousands of British Columbians – especially the young people – who are standing up against hate, and I commit to pursuing systemic change to the full extent of my powers. In recent years, trans people have become the focus of a surge of disinformation, conspiracy theories and hate, but these rallies are not only about hate on the basis of gender identity; they are an affront to human dignity, expression, and rights for all of us. When we stand together against anti-trans hate, we stand together against all hate.

I know that we share a commitment to systemic change to address the rise in hate in all its forms. I look forward to hearing from you about how you are putting these values into action.

Sincerely,



Kasari Govender
Human Rights Commissioner

CC: The Hon. Niki Sharma, Attorney General (AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca)
Barbara Carmichael, Deputy Attorney General (Barbara.Carmichael@gov.bc.ca)
Shannon Salter, Deputy Minister to the Premier (Shannon.Salter@gov.bc.ca)
Don Bain, Deputy Chief of Staff (Don.Bain@gov.bc.ca)

