Increasing Hate Crimes in Massachusetts Create Police Response

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Hate crimes are on the rise in Massachusetts, with a **26.5% increase** through 2022 to 2023. The [2023 Hate Crime Report in Massachusetts](Executive%20Summary) highlights a concerning streak that is consistent with an increase in hate crimes across the United States.

There was a 70% increase (and an 8 year high) in antisemitic hate crimes alone in 2023, says the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The analysis shows that prejudice against race, ethnicity, and origin is the bias motivation for 45.1% of hate crimes. The top three categories of bias reported include anti-race/ethnicity, anti-religion, and anti-sexual orientation.

Previous to 2018, hate crimes in Massachusetts had declined and then stayed consistent. So, what has caused this increase? Many claim that negative political polarization is a driving factor. Massachusetts residents and politicians are taking notice of this sudden increase in hate crimes, and deem it unacceptable.

“With hate crimes on the rise across the country and here in Massachusetts, it is essential that we bring people together to advance proactive solutions and support our communities,” said Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey. She followed up with “Here in Massachusetts, we stand firmly against hate – and we are backing up that commitment with resources and investments.”

In efforts to help reduce bias incidents, Massachusetts State Police has formed the Hate Crimes Awareness and Response Team. In addition, $461,920 in Hate Crime Prevention grants will go towards reducing bias incidents in school districts. Data collection will continue and hate crime response training is being initiated. Grant money also goes towards security personnel and programs.

Some may argue that hate crimes and the motivators for them are a thing of the past. It is important to realize that even in Massachusetts, members of minoritized communities remain at risk of violence. This increase in crimes that directly targets them shows us that there is still much work to be done until everyone can feel safe.

Massachusetts’ swift policy and police response are a good part of the solution. Another part of the solution is building community resilience and supporting victims. Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll puts it well when she said “Our administration remains deeply committed to ensuring that communities and organizations have the tools and resources needed to create safe, inclusive, and protected environments,” However, the administrative side will only be successful with wholehearted public support and follow-up.

[Resources for victims of hate crimes](https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/victims) provides information on how to report a hate crime, where to find support, grants, and statistics. [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-hate-incidents-and-hate-crimes#resources-for-victims-) has resources to learn more and is Massachusetts specific.

**Works Cited**

[Massachusetts Hate Crimes, 2023](https://www.mass.gov/doc/2023-massachusetts-hate-crime-report-0/download) [Antisemitic Hate Crimes](https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/antisemitic-hate-crimes-reach-8-year-high-massachusetts-state-report-shows/KFRIKUVI5RHMJOBEZ23BCHCMCQ/) [Mass. State Police](https://www.police1.com/hate-crime/articles/mass-state-police-to-establish-hate-crime-task-force-amid-spike-in-violence-ne0YwoOjFaO5e0Lz/) [Healey-Driscoll Administration](https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-launches-new-statewide-initiatives-to-combat-and-prevent-hate-crimes) [HART Team](https://www.wwlp.com/news/local-news/governor-healey-to-announce-efforts-to-address-and-prevent-hate-crimes/) [Hate Incidents](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-hate-incidents-and-hate-crimes) [Resources](https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/victims)