

RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP TO FORM A SPECIAL FBI TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS THE ALARMING RISE OF HATE CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE OF THE JEWISH FAITH

WHEREAS, We, the members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, join the Simon Wiesenthal Center in urging President Donald J. Trump to form a special FBI task force to address the alarming rise of hate crimes against people of the Jewish faith across the nation; and

WHEREAS, A new report from California State University, San Bernadino shows hate crimes rising in each of America's five largest cities, with Chicago witnessing the highest number of hate crime incidents in the City since the months after 9/11; and

WHEREAS, In Chicago alone, 96 hate crimes occurred in 2019, up from 77 in 2018, with the number of reported anti-Jewish hate crimes rising more than 46% from 2018 to 2019 to a total of 19 incidents; and

WHEREAS, Sadly, over 30 hate groups are currently operating in Illinois, in every region of our State; and

WHEREAS, The spate of anti-Semitic attacks in New York during the recent Hanukkah holidays were particularly savage, with a machete-wielding attacker stabbing five people at a Rabbi's home during a Hanukkah gathering; and

WHEREAS, These statistics and incidents are a grim reminder of the cost of inaction and silence in the face of incredible violence and hate; and

WHEREAS, There is precedent for this type of task force and evidence that shows the effectiveness of such task forces; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, the number of arson attacks against African-American churches rose from 51 to 297, bringing issues of racism, violence, and religious hatred to the forefront of the public eye; and

WHEREAS, The devastation of these vicious attacks ultimately moved leaders and legislators to action, with the Justice Department creating the Church Arson Task Force in 1996, deploying additional agents to work open investigations and serve in under-resourced communities that were impacted by the crimes; and

WHEREAS, Within two years the number of arson incidents dropped from nearly 300 in 1996 to 114 in 1998; this level of focus, oversight, and leadership from the Church Arson Task Force was clearly needed then, and that kind of leadership from the federal government is clearly needed now; and

WHEREAS, All communities deserve to feel safe in this country; and

WHEREAS, As we begin this new decade, we must draw on the powerful lessons of the past and take action against anti-Semitism; and

WHEREAS, Jewish communities need assistance to improve their physical security and deter attacks against them, and law enforcement needs additional tools to investigate and prosecute those motivated by hate to attack Jewish residents and institutions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this fifteenth day of January, 2020, in keeping with our Country's highest and best ideals of the freedom of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and the rights of religious freedom and assembly, urge President Donald J. Trump to form a special FBI task force to address the alarming rise of hate crimes against people of the Jewish faith across the nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be prepared and presented to President Donald J. Trump and to the members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, as a sign of our solidarity with and support for the Jewish community.

MICHELE SMITH
Alderman, 43rd Ward

DEBRA SILVERSTEIN
Alderman, 50th Ward