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For Immediate Release

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## DA Files Hate Crime and other Charges Against Man Who Hung Anti-Semitic Banner over Interstate 805

### *The Defendant Hurling Anti-Gay Insults, Attacked Neighbor Weeks Earlier*

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan announced criminal charges today against a man who attacked his neighbor on November 10 while yelling anti-gay slurs. Robert Frank Wilson, 40, is charged with one count of felony battery and a hate crime allegation. He was arraigned today in San Diego Superior Court in the South Bay and pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors say Wilson blocked his neighbor's driveway, got out of his vehicle and started yelling homophobic slurs at the victim. At one point, Wilson reached into the window of the victim's vehicle and struck him in the face.

About five weeks after the incident, on December 18, Wilson was cited by the San Diego Police Department for working with a group of people to hang a large anti-Semitic poster on the fence of an Interstate 805 overpass in violation of the San Diego City Municipal Code. The DA is including the code violation as part of the charges it filed against Wilson. If convicted, he faces up to three years, six months in prison.

"This case and these events demonstrate that those who are motivated by prejudice often spread their hate around to various groups, attacking our neighbors on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation or other grounds," DA Summer Stephan said. "Hate against one group is a threat to everyone and we won't tolerate these crimes in our community. Anyone considering committing a hate crime should think again as they will be investigated, prosecuted and held accountable under the law."

Prosecuting hate crimes is a priority for the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. The DA has nearly tripled the number of hate crime cases it has prosecuted in recent years, filing 21 cases in 2020 and 30 such cases in 2021.

Last year, in response to reports of hate-related incidents aimed at the Asian community across the nation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District Attorney's Office announced a new online form and hotline where the public can report suspected hate incidents and hate crimes they've been a victim or witness to in San Diego County. The [online reporting form](#) can be found on the District Attorney's website [here](#). The Hate Crimes Hotline number is 619-515-8805.

Individuals submitting information about a suspected hate crime will be contacted with information about the DA's review of the report and any action that may be taken. The public is reminded that hate speech in and of itself often does not rise to the level of a hate crime but is relevant as it could escalate to criminal behavior. Hate crimes are often preceded by hate speech. By law, a hate crime is a criminal act committed against another person that is motivated by prejudice against that person's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Wilson will next be in court on January 5 for a readiness hearing. His preliminary hearing is scheduled for January 19.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*