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Mass. hate crime hot line fields 400 calls in just over a week

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JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Attorney General Maura Healey set up a hot line to field reports of hate crimes. In just over a week, officials have received more than 400 calls.

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 23, 2016

In West Springfield, a Puerto Rican couple allegedly had the words “go home” keyed into their car. In Milford, neighborhoods were blanketed with The Crusader — the newspaper of the Ku Klux Klan.

A black woman and her child driving through Randolph were nearly run off the road by a white couple yelling, “Go back to where you came from!” At Attleboro High School, graffiti that used a racial slur and praised the KKK allegedly appeared on the walls of a student bathroom.

Those are just a few of the incidents that officials say have been reported to the state attorney general’s [new hate crime hot line](#). Altogether, more than 400 calls have been received since it was launched last week.

Officials from Attorney General Maura Healey’s office said complaints of bullying, threats, vandalism, and harassment have been made based on race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.



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A group of attorneys from the office is following up on the reports and working with law enforcement to take action wherever possible, officials said.

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Commissioner James O'Neill stopped short of saying Trump's victory played a role in what he described as a troubling trend.

“Our office will do all that we can to be a resource for people who have been subjected to bias-motivated threats, harassment, and violence, and are working with local police departments, district attorneys, and our Civil Rights Division to address these incidents as soon as possible,” Healey said in a statement Tuesday.

The hot line, [announced](#) Nov. 14, allows Massachusetts residents to report harassment and intimidation of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; women; LGBTQ individuals; and immigrants.

“We established this hot line in response to alarming reports we saw following Election Day where people here in Massachusetts and across the country had been subjected to conduct that imperils safety and civil rights,” Healey’s statement said. “Since we launched the hot line, we have received hundreds of calls, showing that this is a real issue that is happening right here in Massachusetts.”

Since Election Day, [reports of racist and antireligious](#)

An advertisement for GlassesUSA.com. At the top, a dark blue banner contains the text "LIMITED TIME OFFER" in a red box, followed by "50% OFF ALL EYEGLASSES" in white. Below the banner is a pair of black-rimmed eyeglasses. To the right of the glasses, the price "\$45" is shown in blue, with "\$89" crossed out in grey. At the bottom left is the GlassesUSA.com logo, and at the bottom right is an orange button that says "Shop Glasses".

[episodes](#) have made headlines around the country.

The AG's office this week provided brief descriptions of several of the cases. Information about every call was not released.

Officials said that the office has a number of staff members who are fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, and other non-English languages who are available to help field calls.


Residents can call the hot line at 800-994-3228 or fill out a complaint [online](#), officials said. People can also report through the attorney general's social media platforms.

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