

\_\_\_\_\_ **County State's Attorney's Office**  
**Coordinating Agency Responses to Bias Incidents**

**Bias Incidents.** For the purposes of this protocol, the phrase, "Bias Incidents" comprises the following

1. **Hate Crimes:** Actual or attempted crimes maliciously motivated by the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or service in the armed forces.
2. **Civil Harassment Offenses:** Conduct, whether a crime or not, that violates state or federal civil laws prohibiting harassment or discrimination in daily life, such as employment, housing, or public accommodations.
3. **Biased but Protected Speech:** Speech or expressive conduct that while biased and deeply offensive to members of the community, may nonetheless be constitutionally protected under the Vermont and federal constitutions.

**Bias Incident Coordinator.**

The Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs has designated James Pepper to serve as the **Bias Incident Coordinator** for the purposes of the communication protocol below.

**Communication Protocol.**

1. Upon receiving a complaint or police report of a Bias Incident this office will:
  - a. Coordinate further investigation efforts, as appropriate, with the concerned law enforcement agencies in accordance with this office's usual practices. This may include the decision to criminally charge and prosecute an offense.
  - b. Notify either the Department's Bias Incident Coordinator or the Attorney General's Office (AGO). The Department's Bias Incident Coordinator, James Pepper may be contacted by phone at **(802) 828-2891** or by email to [BiasIncidentCoordinatorSAS@vermont.gov](mailto:BiasIncidentCoordinatorSAS@vermont.gov). Alternatively, the AGO may be contacted by phone at **(802) 828-3657** or by email to [ago.civilrights@vermont.gov](mailto:ago.civilrights@vermont.gov). The Bias Incident Coordinator will further share all reported incidents with the AGO. The purpose of such notice is to enable the Bias Incident Coordinator and the AGO to assess and facilitate other potential responses to the reported Bias Incident, such as:
    - i. Coordination with federal authorities, such as the U.S. Attorney's Office, if the conduct implicates federal law;
    - ii. Civil enforcement actions by the AGO or the Vermont Human Rights Commission in lieu of, or in concert with, criminal enforcement action; and
    - iii. Non-enforcement responses, such as community outreach if the Bias Incident does not violate criminal or civil law.
2. If the Bias Incident Coordinator or AGO receive complaints or reports of any Bias Incidents in this county that allege criminal misconduct, they will contact this office to enable it to:
  - a. Coordinate notification to concerned law enforcement agencies about the incident to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort; and
  - b. Discuss other potential responses to the reported Bias Incident as described above.