

My name is Lev Tsypin and I am here today as an advisory board member of the Anti-Defamation League Pacific Northwest Region. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 398.

ADL is a national anti-hate organization dedicated toward stopping the defamation of the Jewish people and securing justice and fair treatment for everyone. Our work to combat hate, promote civil rights, and making our communities more inclusive places is more timely than ever.

Designated as an official hate symbol by the ADL, the hangman's noose has come to be one of the most powerful visual symbols directed against African-Americans, comparable in the emotions that it evokes to that of the swastika for Jews. Its origins are connected to the history of lynching in America, particularly in the South after the Civil War, when violence or the threat of violence replaced slavery as one of the main forms of social control that whites used on African-Americans. Today, we have seen it as a symbol of hate used to intimidate individuals, neighbors, and entire communities.

At ADL, we have seen how imagery, symbols, and words are powerful weapons in instilling fear in individuals' lives. While context of many of these symbols must be taken into account, a noose is a symbol that's purpose is to intimidate and harass.

We urge you to pass Senate Bill 398.