

N E W S

FROM THE

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations



Office of Media Relations ☎ (213) 974-7654

For Immediate Release:

For further information, contact:

Ava Gutierrez

(213) 974-7654 Telephone

(213) 687-4251 Facsimile

Email: agutierrez@hrc.co.la.ca.us

**Rock the Vote, National Youth Media Organization, Partners with the
Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission to
Bring Awareness of Hate Crimes and Incidents to the Youth of Los Angeles County**

Los Angeles: The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recently approved a contract between the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations and Rock the Vote to create a campaign directed to the youth of Los Angeles County.

This contract is based on concerns raised in 2001 when the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations unanimously voted to adopt a Strategic Focus on Youth as part of its strategic plan. It was evident that the increased number of hate crimes in the schools, the persistent outbreaks of interracial tension and homophobic harassment on school campuses, and the growing phenomenon of racialized youth gang violence plaguing neighborhoods throughout the County, posed a significant threat to the security and tranquility of Los Angeles residents. In addition, the aftermath of 9/11 brought an increase in hate crimes targeting Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, Latinos and other ethnic groups. Funding to help the Commission raise public awareness about these hate crimes is being provided by The California Endowment.

Rock the Vote's mission is to inspire 18-to-24-year olds to civic activism in general, and voting in particular, by meeting them on their level. This same type of technique will be employed in developing a campaign to the high-school students of Los Angeles County. In 1998-1999 over one-half of all felony hate crime prosecutions were against juveniles.

Rock the Vote plans to dispatch volunteers to concerts and special events to do outreach. It means public service announcements that will feature celebrities and pop stars, and print ads that will run in magazines like Rolling Stone. It also means a cutting-edge Web site. The ultimate objective is to build a program for L.A. County youth that will enable them to build a human relations infrastructure in the school community, and to provide them with a vehicle for non-violent conflict resolution within their Los Angeles County schools.