



# MATTHEW J. PLATKIN

## *Attorney General*



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### Addressing Hate, Bias & Discrimination

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they love, or how they worship. That's why Attorney General Platkin has made it a priority that all acts of hate, bias, and discrimination will be investigated and resolved or prosecuted where appropriate. Through enforcement, outreach, and prevention efforts, our office is taking numerous steps to combat hate, bias, and discrimination. Through the combined efforts of our office's divisions and offices, we have demonstrated our commitment to using every tool and resource at our disposal to tackle this problem head-on and to ensure our most vulnerable communities are safe and secure.

### **Promoting Equitable Access to Housing**

**Combating mortgage redlining.** Attorney General Platkin has aggressively pursued civil rights enforcement actions to promote fair and equitable access to affordable housing opportunities. In July, the Attorney General and the Division on Civil Rights (DCR) announced a landmark multi-jurisdictional settlement with Trident Mortgage Company (Trident) for its racially discriminatory "redlining" practices in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. "Redlining" refers to a practice by which banks and mortgage lenders systematically underserve and discriminate against neighborhoods with high percentages of African Americans, Hispanics, or other marginalized racial and ethnic minorities. The practice deprives such areas and their residents of adequate credit. The lack of competition also makes residents of redlined neighborhoods vulnerable to unscrupulous

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discriminatory behavior.

### Protecting Individuals from Discrimination

**Keeping New Jersey schools free from discrimination.** Attorney General Platkin co-led a multistate coalition of Attorneys General supporting a proposed rule by the U.S. Department of Education guaranteeing educational opportunities for students regardless of gender and preventing actions based on gender stereotypes. The proposed rule would expand and strengthen federal protections against discrimination on the basis of sex, including against sexual violence and harassment, in federally funded elementary schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary institutions. This will ensure that students are provided safe and equitable learning environments.

**Challenging “Don’t Say Gay” laws.** Attorney General Platkin also co-led a national coalition of Attorneys General in supporting a legal challenge to Florida House Bill 1557, known as the “Don’t Say Gay” law, that expressly prohibits classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity for children in certain grades. Ensuring marriage equality for New Jersey residents. Attorney General Platkin and DCR announced the launch of a new Marriage Equality Enforcement Initiative to ensure that municipal governments across New Jersey do not discriminate against or exclude LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking to obtain marriage licenses. As part of the Marriage Equality Enforcement Initiative, DCR issued Notices of Violation to five New Jersey

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result of that summit, all 21 New Jersey counties established programs and events specifically targeted to help combat bias and hate locally.

***Educating the public on bias incidents.*** In addition to prosecuting bias crimes and securing federal funding to help confront a rising tide of hate, the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) has also been instrumental in educating the public regarding how to identify bias incidents and how to report them. In addition to these efforts, the Community Relations Unit within DCR has been instrumental in helping communities resolve and move forward from bias incidents. CRU's primary function is to deploy resources to towns following a significant civil rights incident to help diffuse tension and heal the community.

***Safeguarding voting rights and election integrity.*** The Attorney General announced a new Voter Protection Initiative in advance of the 2022 General Election to protect the right to vote, and to assist voters, election officials, and law enforcement with resolving any emergent voting-related legal matters. The Initiative focuses on identifying and addressing voting rights or civil rights violations, including under the New Jersey Civil Rights Act and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD).

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