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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**District Attorney Statement on White Supremacist Hate Incidents**

(Woodland, CA) – August 30, 2022 – This past weekend, four men wearing black clothing and masks displayed an antisemitic banner over the Highway 113 bicycle overpass in Davis that stated, “The Holocaust is an anti-white lie.” A similar incident occurred a week earlier. This type of hateful behavior cannot be tolerated in our community and we must stand together against these abhorrent acts.

As the chief prosecutor in the County, I want to assure you that my office will aggressively prosecute hate crimes perpetrated in this County. I have always taken a strong stand against these sorts of crimes - hate crimes are message crimes that traumatize not only the direct victim, but all community members. I am hopeful that, to further assist CA prosecutors, Governor Gavin Newsom will sign into law AB 557, which will require the CA Department of Justice to establish a grant program for the purpose of creating, supporting, or expanding vertical prosecution units for the prosecution of hate crimes. This bill was recently passed unanimously by the assembly and senate. Of course, we must keep in mind that not all of these repugnant acts rise to the level of a hate crime. Some, including the hateful act that occurred this past weekend, are classified as hate incidents. And some hateful speech is protected by the United States Constitution.

With the rise in hate incidents and crimes in our County over the past few years, I have had numerous discussions with the Yolo County Multi-Cultural Community Council (MCCC). The MCCC is comprised of a diverse group of individuals throughout Yolo County. The mission of the MCCC is to seek fair and equal justice, facilitate understanding, ensure open communication,

and promote community participation, education and diversity within the criminal justice system. The group also acts as an advisory committee to the DA.

At a recent MCCC meeting, as I've done so many times in the past, I asked the MCCC for their thoughts and input. What I found most poignant were the comments of MCCC member Alan Brownstein, who is a retired King Hall Law School Constitutional Law professor and is also a member of Congregation Bet Haverim. Professor Brownstein told us the following. He said that under the Constitution, the remedy for bad speech is good speech, not the suppression of evil messages. This First Amendment doctrine, however, relies on the willingness of good people to speak up when there is time to do so and counter evil counsel to reduce the likelihood that bad speech will lead to unlawful acts or violence.

So, I think it is important for government officials, like me, to know that while free speech doctrine prevents us from silencing evil ideas, the reasoning underlying that doctrine obliges and requires us to speak up loudly against evil speech. I was pleased to see strong statements condemning the recent acts of hate made this past Monday by the Davis Mayor Lucas Frerichs, UC Davis Chancellor Gary May, and Davis Police Chief Darren Pytel.

We must stand united against all acts of hatred. All human beings should be treated fairly regardless of age, education level, race, ethnicity, gender expression and identity, religion, marital status, and socioeconomic status.

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