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Man Convicted of Hate Crime Against Traffic Worker *Ocean Beach man used racial slurs before assaulting SDG&E employee*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that a man who assaulted and hurled racial slurs at an SDG&E worker in Point Loma Heights has been convicted of all charges.

Roger Stefan Witthoeft Jr. was convicted of misdemeanor battery with a hate crime allegation, and violating the victim's civil rights.

“This jury has sent a clear message that violent, abusive, and racist conduct like this has no place in our community,” San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“My Office will continue to prosecute and hold accountable people who commit hate crimes, and I urge victims and witnesses to report all such activity.”**

Witthoeft, 34, aggressively confronted an SDG&E employee who was diverting traffic around a work site at the intersection of Voltaire Street and Mendocino Boulevard on Sept. 14, 2021. Witthoeft assaulted the worker, who is Latino, and called him an “(expletive) immigrant.” He also yelled at him to “talk in English,” although the two were already communicating in English.

Witthoeft faces a potential sentence of up to a year in jail, one year of probation, and a \$1,000 fine. He is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 13.

He was previously convicted of vandalism for a 2016 confrontation with a 71-year-old Latino man in Lakeside. The victim asked Witthoeft to move his pickup truck. Witthoeft came up to the victim's truck, screaming, kicked the man's door, and kicked a window out of his camper shell.

This case was prosecuted by Chief Deputy City Attorney Taylor Hearnberger of the Special Prosecutions Unit, under the supervision of Assistant City Attorney Paige Folkman.

The City Attorney's Office takes reports of hate crimes seriously, and urges victims and witnesses to report incidents to the San Diego Police Department, or directly to the City Attorney's Office at (619) 236-6220 or CityAttorney@sandiego.gov.

The City Attorney's Office participates in the San Diego Regional Hate Crimes Coalition, a group formed to unite law enforcement agencies with community-based organizations to tackle the issues presented by hate crimes in the community.

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