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in a "paranoia" that forces them to be more careful than other Americans in order to avoid suffering.

The costs come into play in several areas, he said. Maintaining the civil rights agencies that attempt to protect individuals has a \$75 million or more price tag annually. Job losses based on discrimination could be as high as

\$141 billion not to mention the cost in sickness and other effects of inadequate health care for certain groups.

He cited lawsuits where women successfully sued and won judgments over sexual harassment. And then there is the loss of production.

"Nobody works up to par when they are working in a harassing

environment," he said.

Add to that the "soft costs" to the families of victims who must help and care for them.

Lobenthal did not paint a totally bleak picture, crediting America for its job in "coming to grips" with prejudice in its efforts to fight it. He said the United States is the only country that is attempting to protect the rights of people of many races and ethnic groups.

In response to a question by Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge President George Keith, Lobenthal not only lamented press and television coverage of issues of hate, but also complained about the consumers of that news.

"I'm disgusted with the media, with its lack of sophistication," he said.

He said TV news is more a function of entertainment than news.

"Six minutes of news and the rest fluff at 11 o'clock is questionable," he said. "But what is really bad is that 80 percent of the people say they get their news from TV."



STAFF PHOTOS BY BRIAN LEMIRE

From the audience: Above, George Keith, president of the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College, asks speaker Richard Lobenthal to comment on the media's role and responsibility. "Six minutes of news and the rest fluff at 11 o'clock is questionable," said Michigan's Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League.

To a comment by council member Joyce Kaplan of West Bloomfield, Lobenthal agreed that the Internet is a new hiding place for "cowards" who spread messages of racism and hatred from anonymous web sites.

He also warned against a repressive measures as a cure for society's ills. Citing a recent trip to Singapore, Lobenthal said because it was clean, orderly and efficient, the extreme measures that keep it that way are "very seductive."

"Groups like this (Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council) are on the cutting edge because their at the grass roots level grappling with these problems," he said.

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