



The Straight Facts About Hate Crimes

What is a "Hate Crime"? Almost every crime is motivated by hatred or anger against the victim. The term "Hate Crime" is used to express the belief that some crimes should be punished more severely because they were motivated by hatred against a group the victim was a part of, or was perceived to be part of, by the perpetrator.

One of the examples often used to demonstrate the need for hate crime laws is the dragging death of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas. This is the story of a black man who was beaten by three white men and then chained and dragged behind a pickup truck causing his death. Another example is that of Matthew Shepherd, a gay student in Wyoming who was robbed, beaten, tied to a fence in a remote area and left to die. This story gained national publicity because witnesses said Shepherd was targeted specifically because he was gay.

These were both terrible crimes and those responsible for them should have been punished. But consider this: what if Matthew Shepherd had not been gay or James Byrd had been white? Would their deaths have been less tragic? Shouldn't their killers have received the same punishment under the law?

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This is a fundamental principle of our legal system, that everyone should receive equal justice under the law. Most of the time our legal system works well and the guilty are punished regardless of who the victim is. Matthew Shepherd's killers were; one received two consecutive life sentences and the other two received life without the possibility of parole. One of James Byrd Jr.'s killers received life in prison while the other two received the death penalty.

Hate crime laws take us into the dangerous territory of beginning to punish people not just for their actions but for their thoughts and beliefs as well. In a race motivated killing we already punish the perpetrator. Hate crimes laws say that we should punish him more because of his racist beliefs. Once you start to punish people because of their beliefs, where does that end?

The Local Law Enforcement Prevention Act of 2009 that has already passed in the House of Representatives adds two protected classes, sexual orientation and gender identity. If we are going to punish people because of their beliefs and the law now says

beliefs that oppose any sexual orientation or gender identity are wrong, where will that lead us? Once we start down this road, there are some of the outcomes we can already see:

- **Criminalization of Evangelism:** David Ott was charged with a hate crime in Madison, Wisconsin for sharing his faith at a car wash with a man who had a gay pride sticker on his car. Ott talked with him while holding his then one-year-old son. He was later charged with Disorderly Conduct but with a hate crime enhancement which increased the penalty to one year in jail and a \$10,000 fine. To avoid jail time, he pled no contest in a plea agreement that gave him 50 hours of community service, one year probation and sensitivity training taught by lesbians. This resolution came after ten months of turmoil and \$7,000 in legal fees. In other countries, it is a crime to share your faith with a Muslim under their hate crimes law.
- **Regulate Pulpits:** At a hearing during the last Congress, Representative Artur Davis (D-AL) admitted that hate crime legislation could be used to arrest pastors for comments made during sermons. Attempts to amend hate crimes bills to protect religious speech have been rejected.
- **Force Christians to Act Against their Conscience:** John and Elaine Huguenin, owners of Elaine Photography, were fined \$6,600 by the New Mexico Human Rights Commission when they would not accept a job to photograph a same-sex commitment ceremony for two women. Catholic Charities in Boston was forced to stop providing adoption services in Massachusetts because they refused to place children with same-sex couples.

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- **Protect Pedophiles:** The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes, but leaves the terms undefined. Rep. Steve King (R-IA) offered an amendment to the bill while it was still in committee to be sure it would not be used to protect adults who are attracted to children. His amendment was rejected with a vote of 13-10. It has been speculated that without clear definitions the bill could be used to protect pedophilia, bestiality, incest and dozens of other sexual orientations and gender identities.
- **Criminalize Christian Literature:** In Canada, a pastor was told that it was a hate crime to pass out gospel tracts and that he faced prison time if he

continued. In Australia and many European countries giving Christian literature to Muslims is considered hate speech.

- **Indoctrination of our Children:** In Lexington, Massachusetts, David Parker objected to a book called “King and King” (a story of two princes who marry) being read to his son’s kindergarten class. He repeatedly asked to be notified when this subject would be covered in class and asked to allow his son to opt-out. After being informed in a meeting with principal and the town’s Director of Education that no opt-out would be allowed he refused to leave until they resolved this issue. He was then arrested and spent the night in jail. The school continues to refuse to notify parents when homosexual propaganda is being used in class with children at all grade levels.
- **Legalize Same-Sex Marriage:** Once hate crime laws are implemented it will be illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The natural extension of that is to provide the same benefits to same-sex couples as heterosexual couples. Judges have cited state hate crime laws in their rulings to overturn state laws intended to protect marriage. Leaders within the activist homosexual community have stated their belief that hate crime laws are the best opportunity they have to force same-sex marriage on a national basis.
- **Churches and Ministries Forced to Hire Homosexuals:** Hate crime laws, as well as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that will soon be voted on in congress, will be used to force churches and ministries to hire openly homosexual workers and staff members. The gender identity term will also be used to force acceptance of cross-dressers, transvestites and countless other deviant behaviors. This will also apply to private Christian schools in their acceptance of faculty, staff and students.

The examples included in this document are intended to help with the mentality many have that “this cannot happen in America.” Hate crime laws are a direct assault against Christianity and the church must respond soon. If we don’t speak out now, it could be a federal crime to do so later. The senate will soon vote on S.909. If it passes it will be difficult if not impossible to prevent all of these things from happening in every part of America. The only opportunity we have to protect our religious liberties and the last vestiges of moral values in America is to create a groundswell of opposition to this bill before the senate votes.

There isn’t time to reach your senators by mail. Please call the capital switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask both of your senators to oppose S.909 and any other hate crimes legislation or contact them through our site, www.pointofview.net/hatecrimes. You can also email your senators through the senate website at www.senate.gov.