



The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA)

The Interfaith Alliance calls on our members and all Americans to urge the United States Congress to pass the LLEHCPA, a comprehensive hate crimes bill. Those who value religious pluralism must send a strong, unified message that democratic and religious values call for equal protection for all people to be free from attacks motivated by bigotry.

Why We Need This Legislation:

Crimes motivated by hatred or bigotry are an assault not only upon individual victims' freedoms, but also upon a belief that lies at the core of our diverse faith traditions --that every human being is endowed with dignity and worth. Every American should enjoy the strongest possible guarantee of freedom from attacks motivated by bigotry.

- ❖ Since 1991, the [FBI has documented](#) almost 100,000 hate crimes. During that period, however, the Justice Department has filed fewer than 75 cases under the current, narrow federal law. And a new government report states that the real number of hate crimes in the United States is more than 15 times higher than FBI statistics reflect.
- ❖ The US Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of a hate crimes bill that define when a person's bigoted thoughts or speech turn into a crime against another person or persons.
- ❖ As of 2006, five states do not have hate crimes laws covering individuals (Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Wyoming). Among states that have hate crimes laws, some communities are protected, while some are not.
- ❖ According to FBI statistics, hate crimes most often target people because of their race, religion, and sexual orientation.

What This Legislation Will Do:

Democratic and religious values call for equal protection for all people in all places. National hate crimes legislation will help ensure equal protection under the law for all Americans.

- ❖ To ensure equal protection under the law, hate crimes prevention legislation must cover people based upon race, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability.
- ❖ The LLEHCPA would provide federal assistance to local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated crimes in states where current law is inadequate.

What this Legislation Will Not Do:

Opponents of this legislation have mischaracterized this legislation in two ways:

- ❖ Some are claiming this bill will muzzle or criminalize religious speech. This is a false characterization. This bill addresses violent crime and would not limited any protected speech.
- ❖ Others have said this would enhance penalties for crimes. It is important to note that this is not a "penalty-enhancement bill" and would not increase jail time for hate crimes perpetrators.

Who Supports Comprehensive Hate Crimes Prevention Legislation?

This legislation has received bipartisan majority support in Congress. On September 14, 2005, the House of Representatives approved the measure as an amendment to the Children's Safety Act by a vote of 223-199. The Senate has approved the bill on two occasions since 2000, most recently in June, 2004 by [a vote](#) of 65-33.

- The measure also enjoys the support of over 280 civil rights, professional, civic, and religious groups. [Download Complete List of Supporters.](#) (or go to <http://tinyurl.com/34rm2c>)
- The measure also enjoys the support of 26 state Attorneys General, former Republican Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, and a number of the most important national law enforcement organizations. [Download Complete List Of Law Enforcement Supporters](#)
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