



Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Chairman
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May 2, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear President Bush:

On May 3rd, the House of Representatives will consider H.R. 1592, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This legislation is harmful to all Americans because it perpetuates the very hatred and strife that it seeks to prevent. This legislation would federalize every state and local crime, so long as there exists the possibility that the crime was potentially motivated by hate – but only the specific “hate” directed to the special groups included in this bill and other hate crime legislation across the country.

The First Amendment establishes that Congress “shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech...”. The nature of “hate crime” legislation is to require that law enforcement officials try to ascertain the specific thoughts and motivations that a perpetrator may have had while committing a violent crime, in order to stiffen the penalty for the underlying offense. Sadly, this hate crime legislation further segregates people into different groups – based on sex, gender identity, minority status, and other often nebulous terms – then seeks to either reward or punish these different groups using different standards. Thus, under this legislation, a violent crime against an individual that is targeted because he or she falls within one of the bill’s protected classes will be investigated, prosecuted, and sentenced more harshly than an identical but “random” violent crime against a pregnant woman or a child, for example.

Further, religious leaders promoting traditional morality could be made subject to compulsory legal processes – and forced into court – simply because their religious teachings may have been misconstrued by a deranged criminal, particularly as prosecutors blur the line between what constitutes a “hate crime” and what they *deem* as hate speech.

“Equal justice under law” is one of America’s most firmly embedded legal principles. Our Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal, and the Fourteenth Amendment provides that “no state shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” This bill undermines these bedrock principles of liberty and justice, and takes the blindfold off of lady justice, so she can pick winners and losers.

The Republican Study Committee respectfully urges you to veto any legislation which threatens to undermine our most cherished constitutional rights – the freedom of speech and religious expression and equal protection under the law – and ask you to issue a strongly worded veto threat against H.R. 1592 or any bill that contains the vestiges of this legislation.

Respectfully yours,

Chairman, 110th Congress

Chairman, 109th Congress

Chairman, 108th Congress

Chairman, 107th Congress