



The issue:

# HATE CRIMES

There were **7,783 hate crimes** incidents reported to the FBI in 2008 – **almost 1 hate crime per hour.**



## damn facts

About 1 out of every 6 hate crimes is committed on the basis of sexual orientation.<sup>10</sup>

Gay men and lesbians are the third most targeted group for hate crimes.<sup>11</sup>

Known anti-gay and transgender murders rose 28% between 2007 and 2008.<sup>12</sup>

Only 31 states and the District of Columbia cover hate crimes based on sexual orientation.<sup>13</sup>

Only 12 states and the District of Columbia cover hate crimes based on gender identity.<sup>14</sup>

a project of

## Every Hour, More Hate: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HATE CRIMES!

Hate crimes are acts of violence committed against a victim because of who that person is, or is perceived to be. They may range from harassment and physical intimidation to beatings, rape, torture—even murder. Perpetrators commit these horrific acts to intimidate and terrorize a community, and to send a message about the victim and “their kind.”

Hate crimes are ugly acts of outright bigotry. Victims are targeted because of their sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, religion, race, color or any number of superficial factors. Every day, innocent people get singled out, just because they happen to be the “wrong” color or have the “wrong” sexual orientation or practice the “wrong” religion.

Finally, hate crimes can happen anywhere, at any time. And they occur far more often than you may think. In 2008, the most recent year in which such data is available, 7,783 incidents of hate crime were reported to the FBI<sup>1</sup>—a rate of almost one hate crime an hour.

## WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS OF HATE CRIME LAWS!

There is strong support for strengthening hate crime laws to cover crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity: 68% of Americans are in favor of such action,<sup>2</sup> not to mention 26 state attorneys general and a number of the country’s most respected law enforcement organizations.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT’S BEING DONE ABOUT HATE CRIMES!

Federal legislation has, until recently, offered minimal protection from hate crimes.

**The 1969 Federal Hate Crimes Law.** Covered only bias-motivated violence that met two criteria:

1. The act had to be committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion or national origin. (Crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability could not be prosecuted as hate crimes.)
2. The act must have been committed while the victim was involved in a federally protected activity, such as voting, going to school or acting as a juror in a state court.

**The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990.** Requires the FBI to collect data on crimes committed on the basis of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or ethnicity. Participation at the state, regional and local levels is voluntary, however: More than 4,000 U.S. police agencies choose not to collect such statistics.<sup>4</sup>

**Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (1994).** Included a provision that required an increase in penalties for bias-motivated crimes. The provision applied only to federal crimes, while most hate crimes are prosecuted at the local or states level.

Hate crime homicides  
based on sexual orientation  
and gender identity rose 28%  
between 2007 and 2008.

**damn partner**



HUMAN  
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www.hrc.org

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.

**State laws.** Only 45 states and the District of Columbia actually carry hate-crime laws on their books. Of those, only 31 and the District of Columbia cover crimes based on sexual orientation; fewer still cover gender-identity hate crimes.<sup>5</sup>

**The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.** On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the most far-reaching hate crimes legislation to date. This law gives the Department of Justice the authority to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violence based on the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.<sup>6</sup>

The new law is significant in a number of ways:

1. It has expanded hate crimes to include acts based on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability.
2. Bias-motivated violence can be prosecuted even when the victim is not engaged in a federally protected activity during the attack.
3. It requires the FBI to track hate crime statistics against transgender people.

## STILL A LONG WAY TO GO!

But, we still have a long way to go. Consider that gay men and lesbians are the third most targeted group for hate crimes.<sup>7</sup> And, in 2009, the FBI reported an 11% increase in the victims of hate crimes based on sexual orientation, in just 1 year.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, known anti-gay and transgender murders rose 28% between 2007 and 2008.<sup>9</sup>

**And:** We still live in a country that sees  
7,783 hate crimes a year.

Seven thousand, seven hundred and  
eighty-three acts of violence.

Seven thousand, seven hundred and  
eighty-three incidents of hate.

It's time for things to change.

**WE GIVE A DAMN. DO YOU?**

## I GIVE A DAMN ABOUT HATE CRIMES! Now What?

- **JOIN THE GIVE A DAMN CAMPAIGN:** The Give A Damn Campaign is for everybody who cares about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality, especially all you straight people out there!
  - Register now at [www.wegiveadamn.org](http://www.wegiveadamn.org)
- **GET INVOLVED:** Learn more about the issues.
  - Watch a Damn Video or read people's Personal Stories
  - Check out our Damn Blog, which is updated daily
- **GET INVOLVED:** Spread the word about equality to family and friends!
  - Share a Damn Video or tell us your Personal Story
  - Forward this PDF
- **VISIT OUR NON-PROFIT PARTNER'S WEBSITE**
  - Human Rights Campaign: [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

[www.wegiveadamn.org](http://www.wegiveadamn.org)

1 U.S. Dept. of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). "Hate Crime Statistics, 2008," November 2009.

2 Newport, Frank. "Public Favors Expansion of Hate Crime Law to Include Sexual Orientation," Gallup News Service, May 17, 2007.

3 Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD). "Talking About: Inclusive Hate Crime Laws," 2009.

4 Shapiro, Ari. "Obama Signs Hate Crime Law," All Things Considered, National Public Radio, October 29, 2009.

5 Human Rights Campaign. "State Hate Crimes Laws," June 1, 2009.

6 Human Rights Campaign.

7 According to the FBI's 2008 HCSA data, approximately 51.3% of reported hate crimes were on the basis of race, 19.5% were on the basis of religion and 16.7% were on the basis of sexual orientation.

8 See 1.

9 The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. "Hate Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the United States," October 2008.

10 See 1.

11 See 7.

12 See 9.

13-14 Civilrights.org "Controlling the New Faces of Hate: Hate Crimes in America, 2009" October 2009.