



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
EXECUTIVE

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

KELVIN W. SCOTT
DIRECTOR

For Release: October 30, 2009

Contacts:

Harold Core, Director of Public Affairs
Lansing: 517/241-3986

Jacki Miller, Public Information Officer
Detroit: 313/456-4694, Lansing 517/241-4926

Civil Rights Statement On Passing of Federal Hate Crimes Legislation

Lansing, MI - The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama on Wednesday. This Act protects individuals targeted for violent crime due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability status. In response to the passing of this Act, Kelvin W. Scott, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights released the below statement.

“This week, our nation took an historic step toward ensuring justice for all by adding persons targeted for violence due to their sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability to America's hate crime law.

Extending our nation's existing bias crime legislation to these communities sends a message that this country will not stand idly by while hate is expressed through criminal acts. No crimes are as abhorrent to the American precept of all being created equal as those motivated by a victim's being "the other."

When local authorities cannot, or will not, secure an appropriate conviction, this law empowers federal prosecutors to step in and do so. The legislation also makes federal funding available to assist local law enforcement with the often higher costs of investigating and trying these cases. Finally, it also provides grants for local law enforcement training and to support victims and those who care about them.

Although this federal act represents a giant step forward along the path to providing protection to ALL those who might be targeted, we continue to urge the Michigan Senate to join the Michigan Sheriffs' Association, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, and their colleagues in the Michigan House by passing HB-4836 and sending it to the Governor for her signature. It's time to give Michigan law enforcement the tools they need to combat hate crimes.”

For more information on the Michigan Department of Civil Rights call 1-800-482-3604 or visit <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr>.