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## URGENT ACTION ALERT

**DATE:** June 15, 2009  
**TO:** Concerned Parties  
**FROM:** Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

### **NAACP Calls on the U.S. Senate for Swift Enactment of Expanded Hate Crime Prevention and Protection Legislation**

*HOUSE PASSED BILL TO PROVIDE MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE  
RESPONSE TO HATE CRIMES NEEDED NOW*

#### The ISSUE:

Hate crimes remain a festering and horrifying problem in the United States. This form of domestic terrorism is designed to intimidate whole communities on the basis of personal and immutable characteristics – and can spark widespread neighborhood conflicts, even damaging the very fabric of our society. Although there are laws on the books that help deter hate crimes and protect their victims, significant gaps remain unfilled. Sadly, the number of hate crimes in America continues to increase, and the number of “hate groups” (an organization that promotes hate or violence towards members of an entire class of people, based on characteristics such as race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation) in the United States increased to 926 in 2008, up 54 percent since 2000. Just last week, our nation was horrified to witness another hate crime at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Currently, the federal government is allowed to intervene in the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes only if they occur on federal property or if the victim was participating in one of six very specific activities, such as voting. The “*Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act*” (H.R. 1913, introduced by Congressman John Conyers, MI) would expand existing hate crime prevention laws and allow the federal government to assist the local authorities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes motivated by hate, regardless of where or what the victim was doing at the time the crime occurred. It would also expand the definition of a hate crime to include those motivated by the victim’s disability, gender or sexual orientation and it would provide money to states to develop hate crime prevention programs. ***H.R. 1913 passed the House of Representatives on April 29, 2009, by a vote of 249 yeas to 145 nays. We are now awaiting Senate action, where Senator Kennedy (MA) has introduced companion legislation, S. 909.***

In short, this proposed hate crimes prevention legislation would allow the federal government to work with state and local authorities to prevent or, if necessary, punish hate crimes to the fullest extent possible. While the NAACP believes that states should continue to play the primary role in the prosecution of hate crime violence, a federal law is needed to compliment state statutes and assist the states in securing the very complicated and expensive cases through prosecution.

*More*

**THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:**

Contact both your Senators and **URGE THEM TO SUPPORT AND CO-SPONSOR HATE CRIMES PREVENTION LEGISLATION, H.R. 1913 / S. 909.** To contact your Senators you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:  
The Honorable (name of Senator)  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**A SAMPLE  
LETTER IS  
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov); click on "Find Your Senators". Look up your Senators by state; go to their web sites for e-mail addresses.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

**THE MESSAGE:**

- New hate crimes prevention legislation is a necessary tool to help fight the continuing problem of hate crimes against people because of race, religion, national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation. It would enhance the federal government's ability to work with state and local authorities to prevent or, if necessary punish hate crimes to the fullest extent possible.
- While states should continue to play the primary role in the prosecution of hate crime violence, federal law is needed to complement state statutes and assist states in seeing these complicated and expensive cases through prosecution.
- Hate Crimes have a profoundly destructive impact not only on the victims, but on entire communities as well.
- Hate crimes continue to plague and terrorize this nation **AND ARE ON THE INCREASE;** congress must pass the *Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act* immediately!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!**

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

**MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.**

*For more information, call your local NAACP branch or visit [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)*

(date)

## Sample Letter

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United State Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### RE: HATE CRIMES PREVENTION LEGISLATION. H.R. 1913 / S. 909

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_;

As your constituent and an active member of the NAACP, I would urge you, in the strongest terms possible, co-sponsor and actively support hate crimes prevention legislation, the *Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act* H.R. 1913 / S. 909. In addition to being a co-sponsor, I am asking that you work with your leadership to see that the legislation is brought to the floor for a vote as soon as possible, and that you support the strongest version of the bill. Almost identical legislation passed both the House and the Senate by overwhelming bipartisan margins last Congress.

This legislation is an important next step in the battle against hate crimes; a battle that must be won if we are going to be able to protect all of our citizens, nation and our democracy.

The *Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act* is a necessary tool to help fight the continuing problem of crimes against people because of race, religion, national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation. It would allow the federal government to work with state and local authorities to prevent and if necessary punish hate crimes to the fullest extent possible. While states should continue to play the primary role in the prosecution of hate crime violence, a federal law is needed to compliment state statutes and assist states in seeing these complicated and expensive cases through prosecution.

Hate crimes continue to plague and terrorize this nation **AND ARE ON THE INCREASE**. Hate Crimes have a destructive impact not only on the victims, but on entire communities as well. Thus, I hope that you will do all you can to see that this legislation becomes law sooner rather than later. Thank you for your attention to this matter; I look forward to hearing from you as to what you are doing on this matter and what more I can do to help you promote this legislation.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and  
remember to include your address)

*Remember to contact  
BOTH of your Senators*