

eliminating racism  
empowering women

**ywca**

**advocacy action center**

.....Striving for **racial justice**  
ywca evanston/north shore

# **senate passes hate crime legislation!!**

*On Thursday, September 27th, the Senate voted for the Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2007 (S. 1105) as an amendment to the FY08 Defense Authorization bill. The Senate action follows the House of Representatives vote on similar legislation (H.R. 1592) in May.*

**who do we thank?** The passage of these bills by both the House and Senate is a victory for advocates who have fought for years to expand federal hate crimes laws. We now have both the House and Senate on record as voting in favor of strengthen these laws!  
Thank you to all advocates who helped move this legislation through Congress.

....that means YOU!

**what does this do?** The LLEHCPA/Matthew Shepard Act provides the Justice Department with the ability to aid state and local jurisdictions either by lending assistance or, where local authorities are unwilling or unable, by taking the lead in investigations and prosecutions of violent crime resulting in death or serious bodily injury that were motivated by bias. The LLEHCPA also makes grants available to state and local communities to combat violent crimes committed by juveniles, train law enforcement officers or to assist in state and local investigations and prosecutions of bias-motivated crimes.

**what's the background?** **Bias-motivated violent crime affects an entire community.** A hate crime occurs when the perpetrator of the crime intentionally selects the victim because of who the victim is. While violent hate crimes are a widespread and serious problem in our nation, it is not the frequency or number of violent hate crimes alone that distinguishes these acts of violence from other types of crime. A random act of violence resulting in injury or even death is a tragic event that devastates the lives of the victim and their family, but the intentional selection and beating or murder of an individual because of who they are terrorizes an entire community and sometimes the nation. For example, a 2006 Harris Interactive poll found that 64 percent of gays and lesbians are concerned about being the victim of a bias-motivated crime.

**Bias-motivated violent crime is a pervasive community problem.** Evidence indicates that hate crimes are underreported; however, statistics show that since 1991 more than 100,000 hate crime offenses have been reported to the FBI, with 7,163 reported in 2005, the FBI's most recent reporting period.