



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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May 20, 2009

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors, I am writing to register the organization's strong support for the "Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act" which you recently introduced. America's mayors urge the Senate to quickly pass this important legislation.

The bill serves to strengthen the ability of local, federal, and state governments to investigate and prosecute hate crimes based on race, ethnic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Current law does not recognize violent crimes committed because of a person's sexual orientation, gender, or disability as hate crimes. Inclusion of these categories will ensure that all victims of vicious acts of violence are protected by the full strength of this nation's judicial and investigative systems.

The United States Conference of Mayors, representing this nation's cities through their chief elected official, the mayor, is in a unique position to understand the effectiveness of successful federal, state, and local collaboration in achieving justice. This bill will provide us with an important tool to strengthen that partnership by allowing government at all levels to prosecute ALL hate crimes.

We greatly appreciate your steadfast commitment to this issue. We are proud to join with hundreds of law enforcement, civil rights, civic, and religious organizations in urging immediate passage of the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act. If you have any questions please contact Chief of Staff Ed Somers at 202-861-6706.

Sincerely,

Manuel A. (Manny) Diaz
Mayor of Miami
President

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