



July 2009

Dear Senator

On behalf of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) and our 35 member agencies across the country, we urge you to support the Mathew Shepard Hate Crime Act (S. 909) when it comes to Senate floor for a vote.

The legislation was passed by the House of Representatives on April 29th, 2009 and the Senate has previously supported substantially similar measures on three separate occasions. In addition to having broad public support, the Act has the backing of hundreds of community-based, civil rights, and religious organizations.

NCAVP and our member organizations work to end violence in all its forms against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities across the country, including hate violence, sexual assault, domestic violence, and police misconduct. Most NCAVP member programs utilize a two-pronged approach in their work: Direct services to those who have experience violence, and education and community organizing efforts aimed at preventing such violence in the first place. Every year, NCAVP member programs work with thousands of victims and survivors of hate crimes and their families and provide hundreds of workshops to individuals, organizations, healthcare providers, and schools on LGBT related violence issues.

On June 16th, 2009, NCAVP released our 2008 Report on Anti-LGBT Hate Violence. The report can be read in its entirety at www.ncavp.org. Major findings for the 2008 report included a substantial increase in reports of anti-LGBT hate violence in the midwest and the west coast, as well as a 28% increase in anti-LGBT murders in 2008 (from 21 in 2007 to 29 in 2008) highest ever since 1999. NCAVP members work with victims and survivors of hate crimes whose lives are forever changed in the aftermath of the brutal violence that often characterizes these incidents. The time has come for a law which strengthens prevention measures and is inclusive of LGBT communities. Please support this important bill.

Sincerely,

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