

# PATTY MURRAY ON ‘HATE CRIME’

Sept 22, 2004

*Note from Pastor Kevin: A member of our congregation sent an e-mail to Senator Patty Murray ("mom in tennis shoes") asking her to support a constitutional amendment to define marriage as being between one man and one woman.*

*What follows is her response, which switches the subject to hate crime legislation she is trying to get passed. It is clear from her response that we are getting ever closer to the day when Christians in America will be getting arrested for hate crimes simply because they vocalize support for God's law. Bill Koenig reported the following in his September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004 newsletter ([www.watch.org](http://www.watch.org))*

Statements by homosexual activist Eleanor Brown should give us cause for some concern. Brown, a columnist for a pro-homosexual website, admits that the real purpose behind hate-crimes legislation is to silence the church. "The religious right says we are trying to outlaw the Bible," she says, "and they are right."...

Thank you for contacting me regarding hate crimes. It was good to hear from you on this important issue.

Despite great gains in civil rights protection and equality throughout the last century, many Americans still face discrimination, violence and even death because of their identity or beliefs. Hate crimes threaten the safety and security of Americans in every corner of our country. They dehumanize the victims and terrorize their respective communities. They send a destructive message that some Americans are second-class citizens who do not deserve the same rights as the rest of us. Through intimidation, property destruction and bodily harm, these pernicious crimes erode the quality of life for Americans nationwide.

Since 1992, the FBI has documented nearly 75,000 hate crimes. The most recent available statistics indicate that in 2001, approximately 12,000 Americans were victims of hate crimes. Hate crimes are most often motivated by race.

To combat this insidious problem, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of S.966, the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA). This bill

would provide federal assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute violent hate crimes, especially crimes committed by offenders in multiple states and in rural areas that often have difficulty covering law enforcement expenses. It would also help train local law enforcement officers in identifying, investigating, prosecuting and preventing hate crimes. The LLEEA is supported by 22 state Attorneys General, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association and over 175 other religious, law enforcement and civil rights organizations.

Existing federal hate crime law only allows federal prosecution of crimes involving bodily injury if they were motivated by the victim's real or perceived race, religion, national origin or color-and if the victim was engaging in a federally-protected activity such as voting or attending school. S.966 removes this second requirement and adds sexual orientation, gender and disability to the list of protected categories.

On June 15, 2004 I joined 65 of my fellow senators in adding LLEEA as an amendment to the Department of Defense appropriation bill. The Senate has now passed this vital legislation twice, and once the House and Senate come to agreed version of the bill I look forward to the full Congress finally acting to provide equal protection to all Americans. We've already waited far too long.

Attacks on Americans by other Americans are attacks on America itself. Our nation is strong because it rests on the principles of individual freedom and justice for all, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. We must work to fulfill the dream our nation's founders articulated for us-that all Americans should be judged on their merits and not their status or personal characteristics. I firmly believe that by failing to value and respect our diversity, we weaken our nation. I will continue working in the Senate to ensure that all Americans can enjoy lives free from fear, discrimination and injury because of their identity or beliefs.

Again, thank you for contacting me. Please stay in touch.