

# National Organization for Women

Kim Gandy  
President

Olga Vives  
Executive Vice President



Melody Drnach  
Action Vice President

Latifa Lyles  
Membership Vice President

March 9, 2007

Dear Representative:

The National Organization for Women, representing more than 500,000 contributing members across the country with many in your Congressional district, supports the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act to prevent and penalize bias crimes. The bill, sponsored by John Conyers (D-MI) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) will be introduced sometime this month and we hope that you will add your name as an original co-sponsor. If you have already added your name as a sponsor, we thank you for your support.

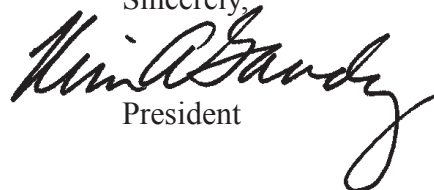
Congress has spent over a decade reviewing and discussing this legislation. Panels and debates and hearings have been held, advocates and constituents have raised their voices in support of this bill and just last year it passed with bipartisan support as H. Amendment 544 to the Child Safety Act (H.R. 3132) by a vote of 223 – 199. **We cannot continue to delay the passage of this important federal civil rights legislation because people's safety and lives are at stake.**

Passage of this legislation is especially important for the girls and women of this nation. NOW activists all across the country have been supporting the expansion of this bias crimes legislation since its inception. The bill extends existing federal hate crimes laws beyond the narrow scope of protected federal activities, such as voting, and also includes violent crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity.

And, our members know first hand how vicious crimes of hate can affect our lives. We know that hate crimes are more than individual assaults – they send shock waves and fear throughout a whole community and segments of our diverse population. Hate violence is also a message crime and the message is: “know your place” and “your kind is not welcome here.” Girls’ and women’s lives are restricted and often ruined by the fear as well as the reality of hate crimes, be they based on our religion, race, gender identity or just because we are women.

We ask you to be a leader who shares with us the vision that everyone should be free from hate violence, regardless of their race, religion, national origin or if they are women, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 is an important first step in protecting vulnerable individuals and making our communities safe. Please sponsor and support this bill

To be a cosponsor of this legislation, or for more information, please contact Keenan Keller with Rep. Conyers (225-2825) or Richard Goldberg with Rep. Kirk (225-4835).

Sincerely,  
  
President