

NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
RESOLUTION OF JUNE 12, 2007
SUPPORTING THE PASSAGE OF THE
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIME PREVENTION ACT

WHEREAS, by an Act of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights was created; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Civil Rights is charged under the law with consulting with and advising the Attorney General with respect to the work of the Division on Civil Rights, surveying and studying the operations of the Division, and reporting to the Governor and the Legislature with respect to such matters relating to the work of the Division and at such times as it may deem in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act (LLEHCPA) adds sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability to existing federal law conferring authority on the government to investigate and prosecute violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, this authority already exists for crimes committed because of the victim's race, religion, and national origin; and

WHEREAS, the First Amendment forbids the government from punishing an individual's speech, including an individual's expressive associations; and

WHEREAS, nothing in this act would prohibit the lawful expression of one's deeply held religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, evidence indicates that bias motivated crimes are under-reported; however, statistics show that since 1991 over 100,000 hate crime offenses have been reported to the FBI, with 7,163 reported in 2005, the FBI's most recent reporting period. Crimes based on sexual orientation constituted 14.2 percent of all bias motivated crimes in 2005, with 1,017 reported for the year. While the FBI doesn't specifically collect data on hate crimes based on gender identity, we know that all too often the transgender community is affected by some of the most horrific hate violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this date, June 12, 2007 by the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights that the Members of the Commission hereby support passage of LLEHCPA and urge enactment of such legislation as soon as possible; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Commission believes in equal rights and protections for all citizens; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division shall ensure that a copy of this Resolution is transmitted to the Legislative leadership, Attorney General, and the Governor, and shall have a copy posted on the website of the Division under the Commission's link.