



# NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gordon Smith  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy and Senator Smith,

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association, I write to express support for the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2007. This piece of legislation is a necessary step to ensure that those who commit crimes against others based on specific individual characteristics are properly punished and that no American lives in fear of violent attack.

The National Sheriffs' Association is the voice of 3,087 elected sheriffs across the country and the largest association of law enforcement professionals in the United States. Given that sheriffs and local authorities are often responsible for the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, NSA recognizes the importance of legislation that would ensure that each case receives adequate and proper attention. Unfortunately, sheriffs and local agencies do not always have the resources necessary to properly attend to hate crime cases, particularly when federal law prohibits local agencies from seeking federal assistance in addressing hate crimes committed outside of federally-protected contexts. The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2007 would alleviate this burden on sheriffs and local law enforcement by allowing the federal government to investigate or prosecute hate crimes committed under all contexts.

Furthermore, sheriffs are responsible for protecting the well-being of all citizens, regardless of their personal characteristics and values. Thus, NSA supports the language in the legislation which would expand the current federal hate crimes laws to include bias-motivated crimes against people because of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability. Current hate crimes law does not cover these groups, yet we believe that it is important to recognize that such hate crimes do exist and must be prosecuted and investigated to the fullest extent.

Sheriffs have a vested interest in protecting the safety of their constituents and recognize that while a hate crime may be committed against an individual or group, the lasting effects of such an act are felt throughout the entire community. Therefore, NSA supports the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2007 and believes that the federalization of hate crime investigation and penalty, as well as the expansion of offenses covered by hate crime law can help ensure that Americans and communities can live and exist free of fear.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Ted Kamatchus  
President