

# 'Hate Crime' Laws Are in the Eye of the Enforcer

*"Shut it down! Shut it down!  
Shut it down!"*

*-- Sound truck parked outside the  
Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Boston*

By Robert Knight

Imagine being locked in a church building as 1,000 demonstrators outside scream obscene demands. Imagine the police doing nothing more than guarding the doors and watching.

This is what those at the Love Won Out conference faced in Boston last October 29. A ministry of Focus on the Family, Love Won Out is staged six times annually around the country, with speakers who aid people in overcoming homosexuality.

As Congress is being asked to enact a new, sweeping "hate crime" law authored by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), the events in Mr. Kennedy's hometown of Boston demonstrate one reason why such laws are dangerous: They are selectively applied.

Massachusetts' "hate crime" law already prohibits anyone from interfering with another's constitutional right to freedom of speech. Yet the police saw nothing wrong with a mob trying to disrupt a Christian conference. If Christians, however, tried to enter a Boston "gay pride" event, the likely result would have been a police order to disperse and perhaps some arrests.

This is exactly what happened under

Pennsylvania's "hate crime" law in October 2004, when 11 Christians spent the night in jail, with five charged with eight offenses that could have brought jail terms of 47 years. (Months later, a judge dismissed the charges.) [See "Preaching the Gospel is a 'Hate Crime,'" March-April 2005 *Family Voice*.]

In other Western nations, "hate crime" laws are also being used to crush dissent:

- Catholic Bishop Fred Henry of Alberta, Canada, appeared before the Alberta Human Rights Commission in early 2005 on two "hate crime" charges for writing a pastoral letter urging the government to defend traditional marriage. After the diocese spent thousands of dollars in the bishop's defense, the commission dropped one charge, with one pending. The homosexual activist who brought the charges admitted that he did it to attract attention to the "gay rights" cause.
- In 2003, police in Chester, England, investigated an Anglican Bishop, the Rev. Dr. Peter Forster, for saying that homosexuals "could and should seek medical help to 'reorient' themselves." The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) accused him of advocating a "scandalous" and "offensive" argument from a "bygone age."



Homosexual demonstrators aggressively converged outside the Love Won Out conference in Boston.

Police did not press charges, but the local police chief said community leaders should “promote diversity—including homosexuality.”

- In Sweden, Pentecostal pastor Ake Green was arrested in June 2004 and sentenced to one month in prison for preaching against homosexuality in his pulpit. The public prosecutor justified the arrest, saying, “Collecting Bible [verses] on this topic as he does makes this hate speech.” An appeals court threw out the case, but the Swedish Supreme Court heard an appeal of the verdict last November 9. Thankfully, this Court acquitted Pastor Green once and for all.

Under “hate crime” laws, penalties are added to a criminal sentence if the criminal is also convicted of having a “hateful” intent toward the victim based on the victim’s real or perceived group identity. Crime victims who don’t fit into certain categories see their assailants face lesser penalties.

Proponents say such laws are needed to protect minorities from acts of violence. But criminal acts are already illegal and are being prosecuted. “Hate crime” laws violate the constitutional right to equal protection. They are key to a long-term strategy by homosexual activists to use “sexual orienta-

tion”-based laws to redefine marriage and to criminalize Biblical morality.

On September 15, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a “hate crime” bill as part of another, unrelated bill about sex offenders. Concerned Women for America (CWA) sounded the alarm, notifying thousands of people who have been calling, faxing and e-mailing the Senate, which is currently considering the bill. Capitol Hill staff members have told CWA that the response has stalled the bill, but that more calls are needed, since Sen. Kennedy has threatened to attach “hate crime” language to other bills that could come to the Senate floor for a vote.

### Take Action:

Contact your U.S. senators and ask them *not* to approve any “hate crime” legislation. Capitol Hill switchboard: 202-224-3121.

CWA is on the front line of this battle to preserve our freedoms, thanks to God, and your prayers and donations.

**To Learn More:** Visit [www.cwfa.org](http://www.cwfa.org) to read Robert Knight’s new papers on the dangers of “hate crime” laws: *Federalizing Criminal Law While Threatening Civil Liberties and Assault on Freedom*. Or call **1-800-323-2200** to request your copies. ■