

# The Detroit News

## READER DEBATE

### Expand hate crimes to acts against gays?

Hate crime laws are unconstitutional because they elevate one group over all others, particularly when they are selectively enforced. Thought police have no business in America.

JOHN BRANT  
*Detroit*

Crime against another human being is already on the books, and making it another type of crime or putting a different label on a crime committed against a homosexual is of no value. There are sufficient laws covering the nature of the crime. Our legislatures and lawyers should stop wasting taxpayer money with nonsense laws to only make themselves look good.

GREGG MOE  
*Troy*

More than two-thirds of CyberSurvey voters believe beating or committing a violent act against someone who is gay should not be considered a hate crime? Are we trying to see how low our society can go? Opponents should all be ashamed.

STEVE KASSAPPASS  
*Dearborn*

Crime or violence should be punished based on the actual crime or violence committed, not on whether the criminal called the victim a mean name

#### Bid to extend hate law stalls

Should the federal hate-crimes statute include acts against homosexuals?

YES 32% NO 68%

#### Cut legislative pay?

Should the Michigan Legislature approve a proposal to cut state legislators' pay 5 percent?

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Vote and give comments at [detnews.com/cybersurvey](http://detnews.com/cybersurvey). Also respond to 615 W. Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48226 or (313) 222-6417 or [letters@detnews.com](mailto:letters@detnews.com).

and hurt his or her feelings — or because the criminal was thinking unapproved thoughts during the act. I consider people trying to take away my freedoms to be committing the purest hate crime of all.

JOHN GALT  
*Grosse Pointe*

How in the world can a crime against someone be more against the law just because of who or what you are? There should never be a distinction between an assault charge and the motive. Let's just prosecute a

crime for being a crime and stop putting extra special names to everything.

JAMES BRADY  
*Livonia*

The shameful murder of homosexual Matthew Shepard in Wyoming by two straight men some years ago was a high-profile case cited in support of a hate crime bill. But no one heard of 13-year-old Jesse Dirkhising in Arkansas, who was tied up by a pair of homosexual men, drugged, blindfolded, gagged with his own underwear, tortured and repeatedly raped. Police found the boy's body covered in feces and duct tape. The killers of both Shepard and Dirkhising deserve the ultimate penalty in their respective states without the need for any special laws.

ROBERT BIRKMEYER  
*Troy*

Aren't all crimes filled with hate? If not, how can one differentiate one from the other? Our prisons cannot handle the load of inmates now. Why create laws to incarcerate more? The hate crime designation is no more than a pile-on by some who want to exaggerate crimes against their segment of the population.

BEA SCALISE  
*New Smyrna Beach, Fla.*

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