

Hate crimes

Local law enforcement bill gives homosexuals special status

By Robert H. Knight

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle tried last week to quash debate on Sen. Ted Kennedy's proposed federal "hate crimes" bill. The gambit perfectly illustrated what these men are trying to do to the whole country — shut down discussion about homosexuality.

The brilliantly misnamed Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act would vastly increase federal police power — not that of the local cops. The feds could rush in anywhere they decided something is a "hate crime."

And what exactly constitutes a hate crime?

Gary Glenn, president of the American Family Association of Michigan, gives this summary: "A criminal who physically assaults a pregnant mom, a small child, or a senior citizen will be punished less severely than someone who attacks a grown man, if that grown man engages in homosexual behavior."

No wonder Messrs. Daschle and Kennedy wanted to close the curtain and instruct the nation to "pay no attention" to the giant red-faced man pulling all the levers. Even a cursory look reveals stark absurdities.

Do you think rape is a hate crime? Well, gird your loins for this one: At a Senate committee hearing, Mr. Kennedy said that most rapes are not hate crimes, only the ones motivated by "gender bias." That must be comforting to women whose attacker has been a politically correct rapist.

The Local Law Enforcement Act is being sold as a crime-fighting tool and civil rights measure, but it is really an old-fashioned federal power grab. Chief Justice William Rehnquist has warned of a trend toward federalizing crime and the growing specter of a national police force. The Kennedy measure would put it all on a fast track.

The bill is above all a sop to an increasingly pampered special-interest group: homosexual activists.

Among other things, it would create a new federal civil right based on sexual behavior. This is no small change in the law. It would have the effect of recasting traditional morality as a form of bigotry, and providing legal tools to criminalize thought and speech that the government

deems "hateful." Liberals are already blaming Christian conservatives for everything from Matthew Shepard's murder to any mugging of a homosexual anywhere.

You don't have to connect too many dots to arrive where Canada has

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landed after passing lots of hate crime laws. Canadian TV and radio broadcasters are forbidden to discuss homosexuality in any but a positive way, lest they trigger "hate-motivated violence." A man who took out an ad in a Saskatchewan newspaper featuring Bible verses about homosexuality was hauled before a human rights commission and fined \$4,500. So was the publisher. Both were warned not to publish any more hate speech.

It's already happening in America. In San Francisco, the city council passed a resolution in 1998 urging local media not to accept ads that featured people coming out of the "gay" lifestyle through the grace of God. They said the ads would lead to "hate violence." In Staten Island, New York, city officials invoked New York's hate crimes law to force a billboard company to take down a pastor's ad that featured a Bible verse about homosexuality.

Proponents of the federal hate crimes law say it won't have any effect on freedom of speech or religion. If you believe that, you might even believe that some rapes are not really hate crimes.

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