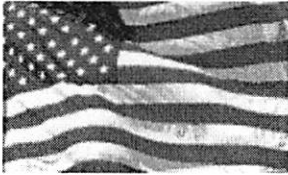




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SENATE PASSES HATE BILL! YET DEMOCRATS COMPROMISE

**By Rev. Ted Pike
 16 July 09**

Sen. Patrick Leahy's hate crimes bill, amending the National Defense Authorization Act, effectively passed the Senate tonight at about eleven o'clock p.m. EDT. A call for cloture, or termination of debate after thirty hours, was passed 63 to 28. Clearly, the Senate majority had spoken. Once cloture is invoked there is usually little more that can be done to resist.

There was no floor debate. A complete end run had been done around adequate Senate hearings, a Mark-up session and Rules Committee debate. Total Senate debate of the hate bill amounted to little more than a brief "kangaroo" hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee several weeks ago. Witnesses, which included Attorney General Eric Holder were stacked 4 to 2 against conservatives.

Passage occurred despite massive protest from the Christian/conservative right (even more than yesterday) with only the very smallest percentage of calls today in favor of the hate bill.

Yet Protest Made a Difference

Earlier Thursday evening the Senate finally assembled a quorum and voted down, 62 to 29, Sen. Hatch's amendment. It would require the federal government to conduct a study to determine if the states are not enforcing the law against violent hate crimes. Citing Attorney General Eric Holder's recent testimony in Judiciary, Hatch confirmed that states are already

“doing a good job.”

Then Senator Sam Brownback submitted an amendment which would include in the hate bill the most specific statement (part of the "Religious Freedom Act," passed in 1993 by Congress 97-3) that only speech that threatens imminent incitement of violence will be punishable under the hate bill. Speech that falls short of such actual incitement will be protected.

Sen. Leahy earlier said he had no problem with inclusion of Brownback's amendment. Although he voted against it, the amendment passed overwhelmingly 78-13. Approval of Brownback's amendment is a great victory, testimony to the pressure put on liberals even in the past two days. Most Senate Democrats were clearly eager to mollify, to some degree, the overwhelming anger at the hate bill from their constituents this week. Their House counterparts, under far less pressure eleven weeks ago, would never have made such a concession.

Inclusion of Brownback's amendment should help safeguard free speech from the pulpit or airwaves, except in the cases of the most blatant, immediate incitement to violence. It helps neutralize the extremely threatening language of the 1968 hate crimes law, Title 18, sec. 2A, which says if anyone "induces," through speech, commission of a violent hate crime the speaker will be tried "as a principal" alongside the active offender in federal court.

S. 909 remains a massive invasion of state's rights in law enforcement in violation of the 10th Amendment. It violates the 14th Amendment by exalting certain groups, including homosexual pedophiles, above the majority. But, thanks to massive pressure on liberal Senators, especially during the last two days, and the initiative of Sen. Brownback, at least the 1st Amendment may not be as imminently threatened as before.

Let the Anti-Defamation League teach you how they have saddled 45 states with hate laws capable of persecuting Christians, and spearhead attempts to pass the federal hate crimes bill: <http://www.adl.org/99hatecrime/intro.asp>.

TALK SHOW HOSTS: Interview Rev. Ted Pike on this

subject. Call (503) 631-3808.

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National Prayer Network, P.O. Box 828, Clackamas, OR 97015

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