



Bush Will Veto Hate Crime Bill

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By Ann Rostow

In other news, George Bush has pledged to veto the hate crime bill, even if lawmakers manage to attach it to the defense appropriations bill. White House spokesman Tony Fratto said the president will veto any bill that contains the hate crime language, because: "The qualifications [in the bill] are so broad that virtually any crime involving a homosexual individual has potential to have hate crimes elements. The proposals they're talking about are not sufficiently narrow."

This is utter nonsense. **In fact, as Matt Foreman of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force pointed out, "the provisions of this legislation are identical to those that have been on the books since the 1960s. Just as those provisions have not led to any crime committed against a black person or a Jew constitute hate crimes, this legislation would not make any crime committed against an LGBT individual a hate crime."**

I, for one, would like to see Bush veto the defense appropriations bill. How the hell would he explain that to the American people?

As a matter of fact, there's a ruling just this week out of New York that clarifies the use of the Empire State's hate crime law. Three men with robbery on their minds deliberately picked a gay man to lure to a remote area, using a gay chat room because they thought it would be easy to convince a gay man to meet them somewhere. Indeed, Michael Sandy rendezvoused with the young thugs, who beat him up and chased him into traffic on the Belt Parkway. Sandy, 29, later died of his injuries.

Charged with hate crime enhancements as well as murder, the defendants claimed they didn't "hate" gays, but simply thought they might be easy targets. But despite its name, the judge ruled that hate crimes don't punish emotion, they punish criminals who select their victims based on race, sexual orientation, and the like.

"The grand jury evidence shows that this is not a case where hate crimes are charged simply because the victim just happened to be of a certain sexual orientation," wrote Justice Jill Konviser. "Rather, this is case where the defendants deliberately set out to commit a violent crime against a man whom they intentionally selected because of his sexual orientation. Thus, the hate crimes charges in this case are consistent with the intent of the Legislature."

Apparently, selecting victims based on sexual orientation is just fine with this administration. We wouldn't want to hamper the free expression rights of violent robbers and killers.