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Wed., April 29,  
2009

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**Rep. Matsui Votes in Favor of Landmark Hate Crime Legislation**

*Legislation Passes House; Will Enable Enforcement of Violent Crimes in Communities Across the Country*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today the U.S House of Representatives passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 by a vote of 249 - 175. H.R. 1913, which was co- sponsored by Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05), helps state and local law enforcement agencies with the investigation and prosecution of violent, bias-motivated crimes perpetrated to terrorize vulnerable groups by providing additional funds in challenging economic times.

Under current law, the federal government can only investigate hate crimes motivated by the victim's race, color, religion or national origin. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act extends federal jurisdiction to hate crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability, and provides assistance to state and local law enforcement to streamline the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes.

By establishing new hate crimes and authorizing \$5 million in grants for both fiscal year 2010 and 2011 to assist state and local governments in prosecuting these crimes, the legislation ensures that violent offenses based on prejudice are prosecuted to the full extent of the law. The grants will help in identifying, investigating, prosecuting and preventing hate crimes, including programs to train local law enforcement officers to do so.

The passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act will not only help protect potential victims of future crimes, it helps law enforcement officials in Sacramento and around the country prevent and prosecute these violent crimes.

“In spite of our nation’s substantial advances toward equality over the past 40 years, prejudice and hatred continue to lead to violence. Unfortunately, hate crimes have become more prevalent in recent years, and we simply cannot let tragedies like that of Matthew Shepard repeat themselves,” stated Congresswoman Matsui. “This bill expands the rights of victims to seek justice under the law, and we hope it will help deter further violent crimes in the coming years.”

Since 1991, the FBI has documented over 118,000 bias-motivated criminal incidences directed against an individual because of their personal characteristics. The current bipartisan legislation is supported by a broad coalition of more than 300 law enforcement, religious, women’s advocacy, civil rights and disability rights organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Sheriffs Association, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

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