



April 29, 2009
For Immediate Release

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Matthew Shepard Act Passes U.S. House of Representatives BRAVO Encourages Senate to Act Quickly

Columbus: BRAVO applauds the passage of the Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (LLEHCPA), also known as the Matthew Shepard Act (H. R. 1913) in the U.S. House of Representatives April 29, 2009 by a margin of 249 to 175. This action moves the United States one step closer to the passage of the first federal law to provide protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition the bill would add protections for gender and disability. The Bill was recently introduced in the Senate, though no vote has been scheduled.

This action sends a powerful message that this country will not tolerate violence against Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. There are 3 key components to this bill which are vital to that protection.

- The removal of the current prerequisite that the victim be engaging in a federally-protected activity, like voting or going to school.
- It gives federal authorities greater ability to engage in hate crimes investigations. This helps to ensure that victims in localities that are not LGBT-friendly have access to equal protection.
- The bill for the first time mandates that the FBI track statistics on hate crimes against transgender people.

BRAVO encourages the U.S. Senate to take up the legislation, which was introduced today. We anticipate that as promised, President Obama will sign the bill in to law.

BRAVO encourages you to find out how your Representative voted and let them know how you feel about their position. Additionally, please contact your Senators and let them know your position on this legislation.

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