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WORLDNETDAILY EXCLUSIVE

Southern Baptists say no to 'hate crimes' Ask GOP Senate Judiciary Committee leader to fight bill

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WASHINGTON – The head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has written to Sen. Jeff Sessions, the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, calling on him to battle approval of a "hate crimes" bill critics have called "The Pedophile Protection Act."

Richard Land sent the letter last week "to express our strong opposition to S. 909, the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would add 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' specially protected categories for victims of violent crimes. We urge you to vigorously oppose this bill, including by filibuster if necessary."

Land said the legislation is both unnecessary and unconstitutional.

"Laws are already in place to prosecute individuals for every form of violent crime committed against others," he wrote. "Yet the hate crimes legislation would afford special protections to some individuals but deny such protections to others, thereby making the latter second-class citizens. This would turn on its head the 14th Amendment, which grants equal protection under the law."

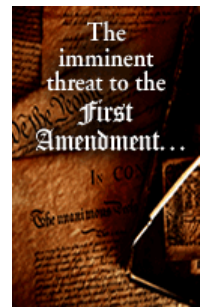
It's not too late to take advantage of the opportunity to overnight letters of opposition to the hate crimes bill to all 100 U.S. senators for only \$10.95.

Land said "hate crimes" laws by definition require judges to determine what perpetrators were thinking.

"This could create a chilling effect on religious speech, connecting innocent expression of religious belief to acts of violence against individuals afforded special protections," he wrote. "The criminalization of religious speech, such as speech against the practice of homosexuality, has already been seen in other countries with similar hate crimes legislation in place."

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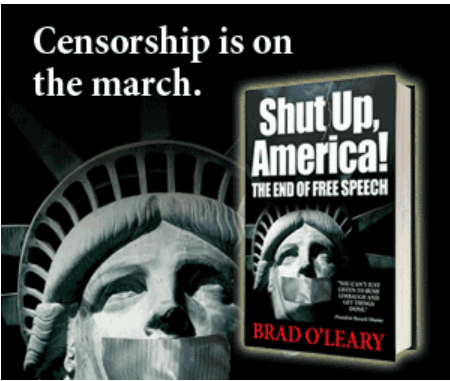
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Meanwhile, no senator – Democrat or Republican – has yet issued a formal denunciation of the bill.

Barack Obama has promised the mother of Matthew Shepard fast action in the U.S. Senate to approve the bill. Judy Shepard, the mother of the murdered homosexual, visited the White House to lobby for Senate approval after it cleared the House with opposition from many Republicans.

The White House issued an official comment on the meeting: "The President thanked Ms. Shepard for her work on the hate crimes bill and reiterated his commitment to ensuring that the Senate finalize the bill and act swiftly."

Critics call the bill "The Pedophile Protection Act," and it is the target of an organized letter-writing campaign that has already generated more than 560,000 individual letters sent by Fed Ex to all 100 U.S. senators.



Part of the FedEx campaign of letters from citizens opposing the "hate crimes" bill.

The campaign, organized by WND columnist Janet Porter, who also heads the Faith2Action Christian ministry, permits activists to send individually addressed letters to all 100 senators over their own "signature" for only \$10.95. Nearly 6,000 people have participated in the campaign.

Sources working with senators opposing the legislation say the campaign has shaken up the dynamics of the debate.

"This bill was supposed to sail through the Senate, but it suddenly has become much more controversial as a result of all these letters," one source said. "Still, not a single Republican senator has yet stood up in open, public opposition to the bill."

Last week, a Texas pastor wrote an open letter to the U.S. Senate, asking someone, anyone, to filibuster the pending "hate crimes" legislation and stop what he calls a "maddening march to the destruction of our First Amendment right to freely practice our religion."

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As WND has reported, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 would provide special protections to homosexual people but leave Christian ministers open to prosecution should their teachings be linked to any subsequent offense, by anyone, against a homosexual person.

WND first reported on what has become widely known as "The Pedophile Protection Act" last month, raising nationwide alarm that has already generated hundreds of thousands of individual letters of protest to members of the U.S. Senate.



Part of the FedEx campaign of letters from citizens opposing the "hate crimes" bill.

Rep. Louis Gohmert, R-Texas, and Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, said the only chance to defeat the legislation was for a massive outpouring of opposition from the American people.

"If you guys don't raise enough stink there's no chance of stopping it," Gohmert said on a radio program with Porter. "It's entirely in the hands of your listeners and people across the country. If you guys put up a strong enough fight, that will give backbone enough to the 41 or 42 in the Senate to say we don't want to have our names on that."

An analysis by Shawn D. Akers, policy analyst with Liberty Counsel said the proposal, formally known as H.R. 1913, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act bill in the House and S. 909 in the Senate, would create new federal penalties against those whose "victims" were chosen based on an "actual or perceived ... sexual

orientation, gender identity."

Gohmert warned Porter during the interview that even her introduction of him, and references to the different sexual orientations, could be restricted if the plan becomes law.

"You can't talk like that once this becomes law," he said.

He said the foundational problem with the bill is that it is based on lies: It assumes there's an epidemic of crimes in the United States – especially actions that cross state lines – that is targeting those alternative sexual lifestyles.

"When you base a law on lies, you're going to have a bad law," he said. "This 'Pedophilia Protection Act,' a 'hate crimes' bill, is based on the representation that there's an epidemic of crimes based on bias and prejudice. It turns out there are fewer crimes now than there were 10 years ago."

He said he fought in committee and in the House, where it was approved 249-175, to correct some of the failings, including his repeated requests for definitions in the bill for terms such as "sexual orientation."

Majority Democrats refused, he said. He said that leaves the definition up to a standard definition in the medical field, which includes hundreds of "philiias" and "isms" that would be protected.

Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Fla., a "hate crimes" supporter, confirmed that worry, saying: "This bill addresses our resolve to end violence based on prejudice and to guarantee that all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability or all of these 'philiias' and fetishes and 'ism's' that were put forward need not live in fear because of who they are. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this rule..."

Obama, supported strongly during his campaign by homosexual advocates, appears ready to respond to their desires.

"I urge members on both sides of the aisle to act on this important civil rights issue by passing this legislation to protect all of our citizens from violent acts of intolerance," he said.

But Gohmert pointed out that if an exhibitionist flashes a woman, and she responds by slapping him with her purse, he has probably committed a misdemeanor while she has committed a federal felony hate crime.

"That's how ludicrous this situation is," Gohmert said.

Akers' analysis said the bill would result in the federalization of "virtually every sexual crime in the United States." And he said it appears to be part of an agenda that would relegate pro-family and traditional marriage advocates into the ranks of "terrorists." Critics also have expressed alarm because in committee hearings Democrats admitted that a Christian pastor could be prosecuted under the law if he spoke biblically against homosexuality, someone heard the comments and then committed a crime.

"Under [the plan] the speech of a criminal defendant and the mere membership of the defendant in a given group may be used as evidence of his or her biased motive," Akers said.

He said there's already an effort afoot in the U.S. to list those pro-family organizations "alongside several neo-Nazi groups ... to create guilt by the artificial manufactured appearance of association."

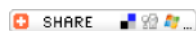
During arguments in the House while the plan was being adopted, lawmakers pointed out the representatives were voting for protection for "all 547 forms of sexual deviancy or 'paraphilias' listed by the American Psychiatric Association."

Porter cited the amendment offering from King in committee that was very simple: "The term sexual orientation as used in this act or any amendments to this act does not include pedophilia."

But majority Democrats refused to accept it.

"Having reviewed cases as an appellate judge, I know that when the legislature has the chance to include a definition and refuses, then what we look at is the plain meaning of those words," explained Gohmert. "The plain meaning of sexual orientation is anything to which someone is orientated. That could include exhibitionism, it could include necrophilia (sexual arousal/activity with a corpse) ... it could include urophilia (sexual arousal associated with urine), voyeurism. You see someone spying on you changing clothes and you hit them, they've committed a misdemeanor, you've committed a federal felony under this bill. It is so wrong."

Republicans in the House also attempted to amend the bill to offer hate crimes protection for U.S. military veterans who were attacked because of their service. Democrats unanimously rejected the amendment.



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