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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 23, 1990

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
DURING SIGNING CEREMONY  
FOR HATE CRIMES STATISTICS LEGISLATION

Room 450  
Old Executive Office Building

3:02 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, let me give a special welcome to the members of Congress -- Congress in session, taking the time to come down here -- several here who were so instrumental in the passage of this bill. Senator Simon, Orrin Hatch -- Senator Hatch. Senator Metzenbaum, Congressman Conyers, Congressman Sangmeister, Jack Brooks -- Chairman Brooks, I should say respectfully, to a fellow Texan. (Laughter.) And to Barbara -- Barbara Kennelly. And members of the civil rights community, religious leaders and friends, welcome here.

We join together to celebrate a significant step to help guarantee civil rights for every American -- the passage, and now the signing, of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act.

When I first heard that this bill had passed both houses of Congress, I thought of a photograph in the news recently. And it's of the plaza near a Montgomery, Alabama church where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached during the '55 bus boycott. And in that plaza stands a new civil rights memorial inscribed with the names of 40 brave Americans who died in the civil rights struggle, each one the victim of a hate crime.

On the memorial's wall, water cascades over the vow made by Dr. King on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial: "We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

His pledge is just as powerful today. We will not be satisfied. Justice for all has been the historic mission of the civil rights movement, and it's a mission still to be fulfilled. Bigotry and hate regrettably still exist in this country. And hate breeds violence, threatening the security of our entire society. We must rid our communities of the poison we call prejudice, bias and discrimination.

That's why I'm signing into law today a measure to require the Attorney General to collect as much information as we can on crimes motivated by religion, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation -- the Hate Crimes Statistics Act.

One of the greatest obligations of this administration and of the Department of Justice is the guarantee of civil rights for all Americans. As I said in my State of the Union address, every one of us must confront and condemn racism, anti-Semitism, bigotry and hate not next week, not tomorrow, but right now -- every single one of us. For hate crimes cannot be tolerated in a free society.

We have vigorously prosecuted federal violations involving hate crimes. We will continue to do so. As we speak, 17 racist skinheads in Dallas are waiting to be sentenced by a federal court for conspiring to commit hate crimes against Jewish, black and Hispanic citizens. The mail bombings which

MORE

killed a federal judge and a NAACP lawyer, are being investigated tenaciously by federal authorities. We will not rest until the cowards who committed these senseless crimes are behind bars.

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act is an important further step toward the protection of all Americans' civil rights. Our administration will work with Congress to determine whether new law enforcement measures are needed to bring hate mongers out of hiding and into the light of justice. And at the same time, by collecting and publicizing this information, we can shore up our first line of defense against the erosion of civil rights by alerting the cops on the beat.

I'm also pleased to announce today that the Department of Justice has established a new toll-free phone number for reporting complaints of these hate crimes. Those incidents that can and should be prosecuted will be reported directly to the appropriate federal, state or local agency for action. The faster we can find out about these hideous crimes, the faster we can track down the bigots who commit them.

We must work together to build an America of opportunity, where every American is free finally from discrimination. And I will use this noble office -- this bully pulpit, if you will -- to speak out against hate and discrimination everywhere it exists.

Enacting this law today helps move us toward our dream -- a society blind to prejudice, a society open to all. Until we reach that day when the bigotry and hate of mail bombings and the vandalisms of the Yeshiva school and the Catholic churches we've seen recently, and so many other sad, sad incidents are no more -- until that day, we must remember: for America to continue to be a good place for any of us to live, it must be a good place for all of us to live.

So you wouldn't be here if you weren't extraordinarily interested in the work of the United States Congress. So I want to thank each and everyone of you for coming. And now I'm pleased to sign the Hate Crimes Statistics Act into the law. (Applause.)

END

3:08 P.M. EDT

**HATE CRIMES BILL SIGNING CEREMONY / ROOM 450  
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 1990 / 3:00 P.M.**

**FIRST OF ALL, I'D LIKE TO GIVE A SPECIAL WELCOME TO THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO WERE SO INSTRUMENTAL IN THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL: SENATORS PAUL SIMON, ORRIN HATCH, AND HOWARD METZENBAUM; AND CONGRESSMEN JOHN CONYERS, JACK BROOKS, JOHN BRYANT, GEORGE SANGMEISTER, BARBARA KENNELLY, AND CHARLES SCHUMER. MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMUNITY, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND FRIENDS.**

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**WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE. WE JOIN TOGETHER TODAY TO CELEBRATE A SIGNIFICANT STEP TO HELP GUARANTEE THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF EVERY AMERICAN: THE PASSAGE -- AND NOW THE SIGNING -- OF THE HATE CRIMES STATISTICS ACT.**

**WHEN I FIRST HEARD THAT THIS BILL HAD PASSED BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, I THOUGHT OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE NEWS RECENTLY. IT IS OF THE PLAZA NEAR THE MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA CHURCH WHERE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., PREACHED DURING THE 1955 BUS BOYCOTT.**

- 3 -

IN THE PLAZA STANDS A NEW CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL, INSCRIBED WITH THE NAMES OF 40 BRAVE AMERICANS WHO DIED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE -- EACH ONE THE VICTIM OF A HATE CRIME. ON THE MEMORIAL'S WALL, WATER CASCADES OVER THE VOW MADE BY DR. KING ON THE STEPS OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL: "... WE WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATERS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM." DR. KING'S PLEDGE IS JUST AS POWERFUL TODAY -- WE TOO WILL NOT BE SATISFIED.\\

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JUSTICE FOR ALL HAS BEEN THE HISTORIC MISSION OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. AND IT IS A MISSION STILL TO BE FULFILLED. \\ BIGOTRY AND HATE STILL EXIST IN THIS COUNTRY, AND HATE BREEDS VIOLENCE, THREATENING THE SECURITY OF OUR ENTIRE SOCIETY. WE MUST RID OUR COMMUNITIES OF THE POISON WE CALL PREJUDICE, BIAS, AND DISCRIMINATION.

THAT IS WHY I AM SIGNING INTO LAW TODAY A MEASURE TO REQUIRE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO COLLECT AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN ON CRIMES MOTIVATED BY RELIGION, RACE, ETHNICITY OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION -- THE HATE CRIMES STATISTICS ACT.

ONE OF THE GREATEST OBLIGATIONS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION AND OUR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS THE GUARANTEE OF CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL AMERICANS.

AS I SAID IN MY STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, "EVERY ONE OF US MUST CONFRONT AND CONDEMN RACISM, ANTISEMITISM, BIGOTRY AND HATE, NOT NEXT WEEK, NOT TOMORROW, BUT RIGHT NOW -- EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US." FOR HATE CRIMES CANNOT BE TOLERATED IN A FREE SOCIETY.\

WE HAVE VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTED FEDERAL VIOLATIONS INVOLVING HATE CRIMES AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

- 7 -

AS WE SPEAK, SEVENTEEN RACIST SKINHEADS IN DALLAS ARE WAITING TO BE SENTENCED BY A FEDERAL COURT FOR CONSPIRING TO COMMIT HATE CRIMES AGAINST JEWISH, BLACK AND HISPANIC CITIZENS. THE MAIL BOMBINGS WHICH KILLED A FEDERAL JUDGE AND AN NAACP LAWYER ARE BEING INVESTIGATED TENACIOUSLY BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES. WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL THE COWARDS WHO COMMITTED THESE SENSELESS CRIMES ARE BEHIND BARS. \\

- 8 -

THE HATE CRIMES STATISTICS ACT IS AN IMPORTANT FURTHER STEP TOWARD THE PROTECTION OF ALL AMERICANS' CIVIL RIGHTS. OUR ADMINISTRATION WILL WORK WITH CONGRESS TO DETERMINE WHETHER NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT MEASURES ARE NEEDED TO BRING HATE-MONGERS OUT OF HIDING AND INTO THE LIGHT OF JUSTICE. AND, AT THE SAME TIME, BY COLLECTING AND PUBLICIZING THIS INFORMATION, WE CAN SHORE UP OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST THE EROSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS -- BY ALERTING THE COPS ON THE BEAT.

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I'M ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBER FOR REPORTING COMPLAINTS OF HATE CRIMES. THOSE INCIDENTS THAT CAN AND SHOULD BE PROSECUTED WILL BE REPORTED DIRECTLY TO THE APPROPRIATE FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL AGENCY FOR ACTION. THE FASTER WE CAN FIND OUT ABOUT THESE HIDEOUS CRIMES, THE FASTER WE CAN TRACK DOWN THE BIGOTS WHO COMMIT THEM.

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WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD AN AMERICA OF OPPORTUNITY, WHERE EVERY AMERICAN IS FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION. AND I WILL USE THIS NOBLE OFFICE -- THIS BULLY PULPIT -- TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE AND DISCRIMINATION EVERYWHERE IT EXISTS.

ENACTING THIS LAW TODAY HELPS MOVE US TOWARD OUR DREAM -- A SOCIETY BLIND TO PREJUDICE, A SOCIETY OPEN TO ALL.

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UNTIL WE REACH THAT DAY, WHEN THE BIGOTRY AND HATE OF MAIL BOMBINGS, THE VANDALISM OF THE YESHIVA SCHOOL AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES WE'VE SEEN RECENTLY, AND SO MANY OTHER SAD, SAD INCIDENTS ARE NO MORE -- UNTIL THAT DAY, WE MUST REMEMBER: AMERICA WILL NOT BE A GOOD PLACE FOR ANY OF US TO LIVE UNLESS IT IS A GOOD PLACE FOR ALL OF US TO LIVE.\\\

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THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU. ((AND NOW, I AM PLEASED TO SIGN THE HATE CRIMES STATISTICS ACT INTO LAW.))

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WASH POST 4/24/90 A6

# Bush Signs Act Requiring Records on Hate Crimes

## *Law Called Fruit of 'Unprecedented Collaboration' of Civil Rights, Religious, Gay Groups*

President Bush, hailing a "significant step to help guarantee civil rights for every American," yesterday signed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which requires the federal government to collect and publish statistics on crimes motivated by hate.

Under the legislation, the Justice Department, beginning this year, will collect statistics on crimes motivated by prejudice based on race relations, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

The data, long sought by civil rights groups, will be made available to federal, state and local governments so that law enforcement officials can not only measure

trends but also develop enforcement programs and assign priorities.

The American Civil Liberties Union called the legislation the "fruit of an unprecedented collaboration" among law enforcement, civil rights, civil liberties, religious and gay and lesbian organizations.

Gay and lesbian groups in particular were vocal in their praise of the measure and of Bush for inviting a dozen or more gay and lesbian activists to the White House for the signing ceremony. Tim McFeeley, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a national lesbian and gay political organization, said the legislation marked "the first time in history that 'sexual orientation' will be included in a

federal civil rights law" and the first time in the memory of organized gay and lesbian activists that representatives of their groups had been invited to a White House ceremony.

"The president strongly supported this bill and we appreciate his support," McFeeley said.

Robert Bray of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force said, "We were stunned. No president has ever invited a group of gay and lesbian activists to the White House. We think the president sent a very clear message to bigots and bashers that he will not tolerate violence" against gays and lesbians.



After signing act, Bush congratulates Rep. Jack Brooks as Sen. Howard Metzenbaum watches.

BY RICH LIPSIK—THE WASHINGTON POST

## President Signs a Law To Study Hate Crimes

Appearing before liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans and the first homosexual rights advocates invited to a White House ceremony, President Bush signed a law ordering a study of crimes motivated by racial, ethnic or sexual prejudice.

He drew unusual praise from gay and lesbian organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other groups that have criticized him.

Article, page B6.

NY TIMES 4/24/90  
FRONT PAGE

NY TIMES B6 4/24/90

## President Signs Law for Study Of Hate Crimes

### Gay Rights Leaders Go to First Official Event

By ANDREW ROSENTHAL

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23 — Appearing before an audience that included liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans and the first homosexual rights advocates invited to a White House ceremony, President Bush today signed a law ordering a detailed study of crimes motivated by racial, ethnic or sexual prejudice.

"The faster we can find out about these hideous crimes, the faster we can track down the bigots who commit them," Mr. Bush said as he signed the law, which requires the Justice Department to conduct a five-year statistical study on crimes of hate.

"Enacting this law today," he said, "helps us move toward our dream of a society blind to prejudice, a society open to all."

Mr. Bush spoke at a ceremony in the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House, where he drew unusual praise from gay and lesbian organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other groups that have criticized his record on civil rights.

### Agreement Against Protests

The expectation of such praise and the public relations benefit that could come from it were part of the Administration's calculation when it decided to hold a public ceremony for the signing of the bill, officials said.

It was the first time a President has signed legislation that includes sexual orientation with more traditional groups like racial and religious minorities. It was also the first time that supporters of gay and lesbian rights had been invited to a White House event.

Administration officials and representatives of the homosexual organizations who took part said the White House had invited the advocates to the ceremony only after eliciting an agreement that they would not turn it into a protest against Mr. Bush's policy on Federal financing for AIDS research and treatment.

"Both sides agreed that this was a different issue," said Perry Jude Radecic, the legislative director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"This was the President inviting us to his house," she added. "But we also assured the White House that we would continue to speak out on the AIDS issue."

### Overwhelming Support for Bill

The National Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which was strongly backed by the Administration, was passed overwhelmingly by the House this month and by the Senate in February.

The law requires the Justice Department to spend five years gathering data on crimes motivated by prejudice about race, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation.

Administration officials have said the study will help Federal and local policy makers and law-enforcement officials decide whether they need to change laws or enforcement methods to deal with hate crimes.

Diann Y. Rust-Tierney, the legislative director for the A.C.L.U.'s Washington office, called the new law a sign of a "national consensus that the issue of hate crimes is important."

Particular praise for Mr. Bush came from the gay rights advocates, who had occasionally been brought to the White House quietly in the Administration of President Jimmy Carter to work on legislation but had never been included in a public event.

Senator Orrin Hatch, the Utah Republican who sponsored the bill in the Senate with Paul Simon, the Illinois Democrat, said the homosexual advocates who worked to have the words "sexual orientation" added to the original measure "certainly deserved to be there" today.

Mr. Hatch said he was startled when he arrived at the ceremony today and heard applause from groups with which he has had his share of political battles.

"I turned around to see who might have come in behind me," he said, "but to my amazement, it was me they were applauding."