

We all abhor violent crime regardless of the offender's political, religious, or prejudicial motivation. The most effective way to ensure the safety and security of our communities is to apprehend, prosecute, and convict criminals, and make certain they are punished to the full extent of the law.

In general, hate crimes legislation, including H.R. 1592 and H.R. 254, seeks to establish new offenses and special penalties for crimes motivated because of the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender. Such legislation has the potential to further perpetuate various racial, religious, and other social tensions, because of the perception of unequal punishment for committing the same crime. I believe we ought to punish all violent crime the same way, in a swift, tough and harsh manner.

Unfortunately, on May 2, 2007, the House passed H.R. 1592. I voted against this legislation. Before this bill can become law, it must be passed by the Senate and signed by the President. However, the President indicated his opposition to H.R. 1592, and if the bill were presented to him for signature, he indicated he would exercise his constitutional power to veto the legislation.