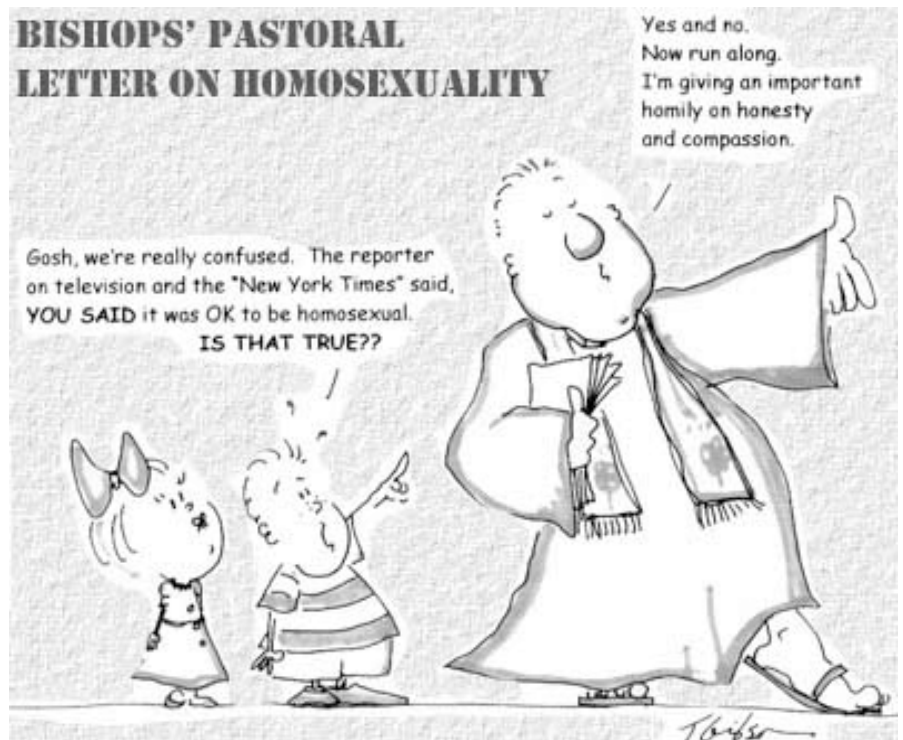


GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND HATE CRIMES

NATIONWIDE

According to the American Psychological Association, gender-based violence is a significant social and historical problem, with women as the predominant victims. Only recently, however, have these acts of violence been characterized as hate crimes. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998 would have made gender a category of bias-motivated crime and have made it easier for the government to intervene in such cases, but the bill was not passed in both 1999 and 2000.



Except for crimes against homosexuals, the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 does not collect data on gender. However, a recent national survey found that 7.2 of every 1,000 women each year are victims of rape. In a testimony for a Congressional hearing on domestic violence, University of Maryland psychology professor Dr. Lisa Goodman reported that two decades of research indicates that at least two million women in the United States may be victims of severe assaults by their male partners in an average 12-month period. At least 21% of all women are physically assaulted by an intimate male at least once during adulthood. More than half of all women (52%) murdered in the United States in the first half of the 1980s were killed by their partners. In light of these statistics, it is important that we consider gender as a subgroup of hate crimes.

With regards to sexuality, the most socially acceptable, and probably the most widespread, form of hate crime among teenagers and young adults are those targeting sexual minorities. There are typically four categories of assaulters involved in such crimes, as follows:

- **Ideology assailants** report that their crimes stem from their negative beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality that they perceive other people in the community share. They see themselves as enforcing social morals.
- **Thrill seekers** are typically adolescents who commit assaults to alleviate boredom, to have fun and excitement, and to feel strong.

- **Peer-dynamics assailants** also tend to be adolescents; they commit assaults in an effort to prove their toughness and heterosexuality to friends.
- **Self-defense assailants** typically believe that homosexuals are sexual predators and say they were responding to aggressive sexual propositions.

More specifically, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducted a survey of 496 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students from 32 states. This survey found that over 90% of LGBT youth reported that they sometimes or frequently heard homophobic comments in their schools. Over one-third of youth reported that no outside party ever intervened when homophobic remarks were made in their school environment, according to GLSEN's "National School Climate Survey."

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force "National Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization Report," concludes from its survey: 45% of gay males and 20% of lesbians surveyed reported having experienced verbal harassment and/or physical violence as a result of their sexual orientation during high school.

STATEWIDE

"Hate Crime in California, 2000" is the latest annual report issued by the Attorney General for crimes reported involving any criminal acts where there is a reasonable cause to believe the crime was motivated by the victim's race, ethnicity, religion, **gender, sexual orientation** or physical or mental disability. In 1999, 1,962 hate crimes were reported. Of these, sexual orientation was the bias motivation for 20.7 percent (405) of the events.

LOCALLY

On a local level, according to the Metropolitan News, the number of hate crimes in Los Angeles County rose by 8.6 percent last year compared to 1999 despite a slight statewide decline, a county commission reported yesterday. According to a report released by the Commission on Human Relations, 933 hate crimes were reported in the county in 2000, which is up from the 859 reported the previous year. Of the 933 crimes reported in 2000, 218 involved sexual orientation and three related to gender. Sexual orientation hate crimes saw a 17 percent decline in the number of cases reported last year, but commission Executive Director Robin Toma warned that the numbers were deceiving, saying last year's fall was preceded by a 17 percent increase in 1999.

Sources:

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