



Hate Crimes Vote in US Senate

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09/27/2007

As Gay City News went to press, a vote was expected on September 27 on a cloture motion to bring the federal hate crimes bill, the Matthew Shepherd Act, to the floor of the US Senate. People for the American Way called the 60 votes needed "attainable." The measure would include sexual orientation and gender identity among numerous protected categories.

The act is attached to the Department of Defense authorization bill, but President George W. Bush has said he will veto it if it includes the hate crimes legislation.

The House passed its version of the bill in May by a vote of 237-180, not enough of a margin to override a veto.

The bill is a top priority of the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Senator Ted Kennedy, liberal Democratic warhorse from Massachusetts and the co-lead sponsor of the measure, called hate crimes "a form of domestic terrorism."

Meanwhile, Kennedy's out gay Massachusetts colleague, Congressman Barney Frank, predicted that the House will pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, barring anti-gay and gender discrimination in the workplace, in the coming weeks, but told the Associated Press, "No predictions are possible about the Senate."