

STATE SENATOR • HANSEN CLARKE • 1ST DISTRICT

Clarke Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jul 23, 2008

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Clarke Announces New Hate Crime Legislation

Michigan Anti-Bias Crime Statute Will Improve Ability of Law Enforcement to Prosecute Hate Crimes

LANSING - Today Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) joined fellow legislators, officials from the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, police officers, prosecutors, and civil rights activists for a press conference introducing the Michigan Anti-Bias Crime Statute. This new legislation will replace the current criminal offense of “ethnic intimidation” with one more accurately entitled “bias motivated crime.”

“When an individual is attacked solely because of who they are or what they believe, that crime is an attack on the entire group to which that individual belongs,” said Clarke. “Today’s hate crimes, like the lynchings of the 19th and 20th centuries, have the potential to divide our nation. We need to promote acceptance, and send the message that crimes of hatred and prejudice will not be tolerated.”

The bill being offered expands the definition of a hate crime to include crimes motivated by actual or perceived disability, racial, religious, or ethnic affiliation, and sexual orientation, identity or expression. The bill will not only enhance the current Michigan hate crime law but will improve the ability of law enforcement and prosecutors to enforce it.

Michigan is the most segregated state in the country according to the U.S. Census, and has the third highest number of reported hate crimes according to the FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics. These startling statistics, coupled with the recent rash of hate crimes in the state, illuminate the need for stronger enforcement of the law.

Throughout his legislative career, Senator Clarke has sought to promote acceptance of people from all walks of life, including previous efforts to expand Michigan’s Ethnic Intimidation Act to include other hate-motivated crimes.

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