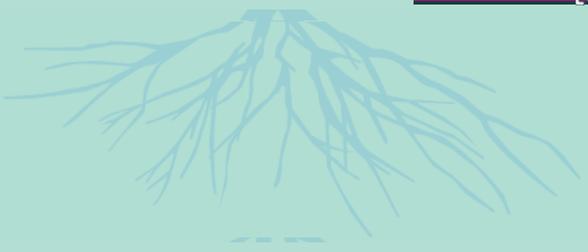




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Press Corner



Hate crimes against LGBTs increase in 2007

By Heather Tirado Gilligan

source: Bay Area Reporter

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Hate crimes against LGBTs in San Francisco increased by 7 percent last year, according to an analysis conducted by national anti-violence groups.

Nationwide, increases in violence were not all attributable to increased reporting. Michigan saw a stunning 207 percent increase in the number of hate crimes against LGBTs committed in 2007. NCAVP attributes this dramatic upsurge in hate crimes to a three-year-long campaign by the attorney general's office to end domestic partner benefits.

"In Michigan and elsewhere in the U.S., these highly visible attacks on LGBT communities reinforce the idea that it is acceptable to target LGBT persons with violence," the report states. "There is frequently a corresponding surge in anti-LGBT incidents of violence and crime as these campaigns play out in communities and in the national and local media."

Hate crimes increased 24 percent nationally. Bias-motivated murders doubled between 2006 (10) and 2007 (21). Rapes committed as hate crimes increased by 61 percent nationwide.

Hate crimes in the Midwest increased significantly. In addition to the Michigan increase, Minnesota saw a jump of 135 percent, while Kansas City saw an increase of 142 percent, according to the report.

Reported hate crimes dropped in New York City (14 percent decrease) and Colorado (27 percent decrease), the report stated.

NCAVP issues annual reports on hate crimes using the data collected by local member groups throughout the year. While the FBI also compiles hate crimes statistics, its numbers are based on crimes reported to the police. Police must then classify the crimes as bias-motivated crimes. In contrast, NCAVP's numbers are drawn directly from crimes reported to them, Ross said.

"Victims of bias crimes are more likely to report to community groups," Ross said.

"A lot of LGBT folks have had bad experiences with law enforcement," she explained.

Despite an overall decrease in the number of transgender people murdered in the Bay Area, CUAV still "feels that the transgender community is especially vulnerable to violence."

"We do a lot of work with the transgender community, remembering lives that have been lost and working with community advocacy," Ross said.