



## **Alleged Hate Crime Murder Provokes New Legislature**

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By Melissa Cordner

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A 72-year-old man fell victim to an alleged homophobic hate crime in Detroit last February. The attack has groups such as the Human Rights Campaign lobbying for a change in the federal law that states federal authorities have no jurisdiction to assist a hate crime investigation.

On Feb. 13, Andrew Anthos was repeatedly asked by a fellow passenger on a Detroit city bus whether he was gay. Anthos ignored the harassment; the other man followed him off the bus and bludgeoned him with a metal pipe. Anthos spent days at a hospital, but eventually died from his injuries.

Anthos' killer has not yet been identified.

Newspapers reported that police were "investigating the murder as a hate crime," and since Michigan does not have a specific hate crime law, the meaning of this statement is unclear. The current federal hate crimes statute states that federal authorities have no jurisdiction to assist in the investigation, regardless of the requests of local authorities. This means that, while federal authorities can assist in the investigation of a murder, a murder committed on the basis of prejudice can be investigated only by the local police force.

Equal rights groups like the Human Rights Campaign are demanding that the law be changed.

A statement by the HRC said, "We cannot stand by and let one more person go unprotected."

The HRC and other equality groups are calling for a "comprehensive" bill, urging House of Representatives to support the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This act is championed by the HRC as a "common sense, anti-bias crime measure which brings our nation's laws into the 21st century."

The act has so far been endorsed by civil rights organizations, law enforcement officials and religious organizations.

Hate crimes are committed due to the individual bias and essentially hatred of the perpetrator. They are usually violent attacks on a person or a person's property, although hate speech and harassment can sometimes be considered forms of hate crimes. A study funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in September of 2000 showed that 85 percent of law enforcement officials recognize hate crimes to be more violent and "serious" than "crimes not motivated by bias."

Anthos frequently rode the public bus during his efforts to convince politicians to "light up the Capital Dome in honor of America's veterans" according to the HRC. Anthos was "described as a loving, caring man who fought for his beliefs." Initial news reports stated that Anthos had been

paralyzed from the neck down by the attack, and would have to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Anthos died from his injuries on Feb. 16.

**Several gay rights groups, including the Triangle Foundation, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign reportedly offered to pay for Anthos' funeral.**