

WHAT THE HATE CRIMES LAW WOULD DO

by Chuck Colson; Monday, May 1, 2007

In George Orwell's classic novel 1984, the government Thought Police constantly spies on citizens to make sure they are not thinking rebellious thoughts. Thought crimes are severely punished by Big Brother.

1984 was intended as a warning against totalitarian governments that enslave and control their citizens. Never have we needed this warning more urgently than now, because America's Thought Police are knocking on your door.



Last week the House Judiciary Committee, egged on by radical homosexual groups, passed what can only be called a Thought Crimes bill. It's called the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. But this bill is not about hate. It's not even about crime. It's about outlawing peaceful speech — speech that asserts that homosexual behavior is morally wrong.

Some say we need this law to prevent attacks on homosexuals. But we already have laws against assaults on people and property. Moreover, according to the FBI, crimes against homosexuals in the United States have dropped dramatically in recent years. In 2005, out of 863,000 cases of aggravated assault, just 177 cases were crimes of bias against homosexuals — far less than even 1 percent.

Another problem is that in places where hate crimes laws have been passed, hate crimes have been defined to include verbal attacks — and even peaceful speech. The Thought Police have already prosecuted Christians under hate crimes laws in England, Sweden, Canada, and even in some places in the United States.

If this dangerous law passes, pastors who preach sermons giving the biblical view of homosexuality could be prosecuted. Christian businessmen who refuse to print pro-gay literature could be prosecuted. Groups like Exodus International, which offer therapy to those with unwanted same-sex attraction, could be shut down.

In classic 1984 fashion, peaceful speech will be redefined as a violent attack worthy of punishment.

This is the unspoken goal of activist groups. We know this because during the debate over the bill last week, Congressman Mike Pence (R) of Indiana offered a Freedom of Religion amendment to this hate crimes bill. It asked that nothing in this law limit the religious freedom of any person or group under the Constitution. The committee refused to adopt it. It also refused to adopt amendments protecting other groups from hate crimes — like members of the military, who are often targets of verbal attacks and spitting. They also shot down amendments that would protect the homeless and senior citizens, also often targeted by criminals. Nothing doing, the committee said — the only group they wanted to protect: homosexuals.

Clearly, the intent of this law is not to prevent crime, but to shut down freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of thought. Its passage would strike at the very heart of our democracy.

The full Congress may vote on this bill as early as this week. Unless you want Big Brother telling you what to say, what to think, and what to believe, I urge you to contact your congressman immediately, urging him or her to vote against this bill. If you visit the BreakPoint website, you'll find more information about this radical law.

If we do nothing, 1984 will no longer be fiction, and Big Brother will be watching you and me — ready to punish the “wrong” thoughts.