



Straight Talk

by Muriel Sluyter

Some Bills are Just Plain Bad

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Greetings, Gentle Reader,

This is the season during which we elect our representatives. Sometimes someone sounds great, and we vote him in, only to find that he definitely is not great. He supports bills most of us don't want, or pushes an agenda that is against the principles of most of the electorate.

What can we do about such people? Two things; we can and should vote them out of office and replace them with someone who respects our values. Or we can put a referendum on the state ballot.

Many representatives do not like to have the people exercise that option. Too bad! We can and we should, whenever our elected representatives turn a deaf ear to our concerns.

Let me suggest an issue that would have been a good one to challenge: The bias crime bill, described in our newspaper as Senate Bill 9, which fortunately for us, was killed last week. This was a hate-crime bill. With hate-crime laws, if a murderer decides to kill a person, specifics about his victim dictate what penalty he must pay.

If his victim is a plain, middle-aged white man, he may get off reasonably easily. If it is a child, he will probably get off even more easily. But suppose he kills a homosexual man; hate-crime laws mandate that a murderer be punished more severely for killing him than either the first man or child. Now, let's suppose this man is not only homosexual, but black. Hate-crime laws would make him guilty of two types of crime rather than one, i.e., race and sexual orientation.

If the murderer rapes and kills a woman, he will be punished less severely if she is a straight white woman, rather than a black lesbian. The difference is that the latter qualifies as a hate-crime, whereas the former does not.

My question is: How does one quantify a human life? Is the life of a loving father and husband--adored by his family--of lesser value, simply because he is not a homosexual? Is the life of an innocent young woman who is raped and murdered of lesser value, because she is white and straight, than if she were black and lesbian?

Hate-crime laws mandate the assignment of value to human beings, relegating some to a status of lesser-value, while some gain greater-value, based on race and sexual orientation. This is wrong, purely and simply, and there is no way to get around the wrongness of it.

If a person is killed because he is of a particular race or sexual orientation, it is a crime, and the perpetrator should be punished severely. On the other hand, if a killer simply chooses someone of no particular race or sexual orientation, his victim is just as dead. The value of his life is no less; his family will grieve as much; they will be subjected to the consequences of his death as much as if he were homosexual or of a minority race.

These types of differentiations are unjust, though these laws are proliferating in our country. They mandate that a person, even if he is a criminal, a racist, or in fact a murderer, himself, increases in societal value, if he follows a homosexual lifestyle or is of a minority race. He, in fact, is of greater value than an innocent white child.

These laws make absolutely no sense, and are prime candidates for reversal by whatever means available to the electorate, the most effective of which is voting lawmakers who support such laws out of office, but if that fails, they can always be put on the ballot for the people to make the final decision.