

Hate Crime bill passes California Senate committee

SB 1234 sponsored by Sen. Sheila Kuehl

by Steve Hansen

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — On Apr. 27 the California Senate Public Safety Committee



Openly lesbian California Sen. Sheila Kuehl sponsored the bill.

voted 4-0 in favor of SB 1234 by Sen. Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) and sponsored by Equality California. The legislation will create a uniform definition of a hate crime, clarify the law, and provide tools designed to reduce such crimes. The bill now moves

to California's Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in May.

"California has always led the nation in enacting effective protection for people who are victims of hate motivated crime," said Sen. Kuehl. "We took a first step to make hate crimes laws even more coherent and comprehensive by instituting uniform definitions of a hate crime across all our statutes and by strengthening training for our law enforcement personnel."

SB 1234 reflects the recommendations of several high profile commissions and studies of hate crimes in California. The bill is supported by a coalition of prominent organizations, like the Anti-Defamation League, Muslim Public Affairs Council, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and various other labor and LGBT organizations.

"Hate crimes laws are an unfortunate necessity for a state that prides itself on diversity," said Geoffrey Kors, executive director of Equality California. "This legislation will improve California's hate crimes law to ensure that it is an effective tool to prevent violence by those who would harm or intimidate people because of who they are or whom they love."

SB 1234 now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in May on its potential fiscal effect.

'March For Women's Lives' descends on U.S. Capitol

Record event cited as one of the largest protests in U.S. history

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Up to one million protesters descended on Washington, D.C.'s National Mall to show support for reproductive rights and opposition to the Bush administration policies on women's health issues in what could be the biggest demonstration in U.S. history.

Organizers for the March for Women's Lives said over 1 million people descended on the capital to protest what they see as an erosion of women's rights.

Protesters — many wearing pink and purple shirts — covered the Mall from the base of Capitol Hill a mile back to the base of the Washington Monument. They raised signs reading "Fight the Radical Right," "Keep Abortion Legal" and "U.S. Out Of My Uterus."

Celebrities, from entertainers to politicians to activists, took to two stages and addressed the crowd. Actors Cybill Shepherd, Whoopi Goldberg and Ashley Judd attended, as did singers Ani DiFranco, the Indigo Girls and Moby. Feminist icons Patricia Ireland and Gloria Steinem were there and so was labor rights activist Dolores Huerta. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and California Sen. Barbara Boxer also attended.

The abortion issue was the centerpiece of the march against Bush's policies, including his stance on funding international family planning. No U.S. funds may



Massive crowds rally in D.C. in support of women's reproductive rights.

be used for any family planning agency that mentions abortion to patients.

He also signed a ban on what critics call partial-birth abortion, doctors call late-term abortion, and the first federal law to endow a fetus with legal rights distinct from the pregnant woman.

The Bush administration also has not made it possible to obtain the "morning after" pill, also known as emergency contraception, without a prescription.

Bush stayed at Camp David in the Maryland mountains until late afternoon, when he returned to the capital. His spokesman Taylor Gross said, "The president believes we should work to build a culture of life in America."

— Report from democracynow.org

Watson says Buying or Selling a Home can be Elementary.

Experience the strength of The Rock® in Real Estate. I can provide the support and guidance you need to successfully carry you through your next real estate transaction.

Prudential

Carolinas Realty

Mark A. Watson, REALTOR®

Office 704-227-2543

Mobile 704-641-6605

Fax 704-542-1774

Email mark.watson@prudentialcarolinas.com

www.watsonsellshomes.com



Everyone is at risk.
And everyone needs to be tested.

Respect yourself. Protect yourself.

Free HIV & Syphilis Testing at

Charlotte Lesbian & Gay Community Center

Third Wednesday of every month

from 5-7 pm



Metrolina AIDS Project

For more information contact Metrolina AIDS Project at (704) 333-1435