

Clinton Proposes Expanding Hate Crime Law

Tuesday the president asked Congress to include crimes based on sexual orientation in the federal statute.

Staff and Wire Report

WASHINGTON — Decrying "the persistence of old, even primitive hatreds," President Clinton on Tuesday asked Congress to expand federal hate crime laws to include offenses based on sexual orientation.

Mary Smith, spokeswoman for the president, said the directive also sought to include gender and disability as criteria for federal protection.

The president also directed the departments of Education and Justice to collect and periodically publish data on hate crimes at colleges, including crime

statistics as well as surveys on students' racial attitudes.

Smith said this information would provide colleges with new insight on the beliefs and experiences of students, but she doubted the data would become available before the year 2000.

Clinton linked his announcement to the crisis currently going on in Kosovo, where hundreds-of-thousands of people are being killed or forced out by Serb authorities simply because they are ethnic Albanians. He said all Americans should resist such destructive, biased attitudes because they imperil the country's future.

"We have to be, in the United States, absolutely resolute about this," Clinton said. "Our diversity is a godsend for us. ... The number one security threat to that is the persistence of old, even primitive hatreds."

Clinton also endorsed a public-private partnership designed to educate middle school students against intolerance. The partnership will involve AT&T, Court TV, Cable in the Classroom, the National Middle Schools Association and the Anti-Defamation League working with the Justice and Education departments to develop curricula to combat intolerance.

Clinton announced the initiatives Tuesday in a Roosevelt Room ceremony with religious, education and law enforcement leaders who said the



In a speech to religious and political leaders Tuesday, President Clinton pushed for greater tolerance in America.

United States could not get so caught up in fighting the crisis in Kosovo that it neglected prejudice in this country.

"While we watch what is unfolding in Kosovo with ever increasing horror, we must not let those distant hate crimes distract us from the hate crimes here on our own soil," said the Rev. Jane Holmes Dixon, suffragan bishop of Washington.

Clinton issued an appeal for greater acceptance of gay people, saying it was wrong to refuse them a normal life based on attitudes "where you always get to think a little better of yourself because you've got someone you can dehumanize."

"That's really what this whole issue with gays is today in America," Clinton said.

"We're talking about whether people have a right, if they show up and work hard and obey the law and are good citizens, to pursue their lives in dignity,

free of fear."

The idea for the middle schools program grew in part from a White House conference on hate crimes that generated a lot of anecdotal information about ethnic and racial insensitivities among school children.

The aim, said a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity, was to "nip intolerance in the bud" by educating children about its consequences.

Clinton directed the Justice and Education departments to require that college campuses provide specific information about hate crimes in the campus crime statistics they provided to law enforcement each year.

The information will be used to generate data on how violent crimes relate to intolerance on college campuses.

Smith said Clinton's proposal had been in the works for some time now.

Campus Calendar

Wednesday

noon — The Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center presents an Around the Circle discussion: "Millions for Mumia: Get on the Bus!" Come find out why and how you can attend a rally in April 24 in Philadelphia for Mumia Abu Jamal.

12:15 p.m. — The Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering will present the next installment in its Environmental Engineering Teleconference Seminar Series. Dr. Carl F. Cerco of the U.S. Army Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg, Md., will discuss "Ecosystem Modeling in the Chesapeake Bay." The presentation will be broadcast from the G. Fred Mayes Telecommunications Center on the second floor of Rosenau Hall. The series is sponsored in cooperation with environmental programs at Appalachian State, East Carolina, N.C. Agricultural & Technical and N.C. State universities; UNC-Asheville and UNC-Charlotte.

3 p.m. to 5 p.m. — Morrison Residence Hall will be hosting the South Campus Majors Fair for all residents on South Campus. Department representatives will be available to provide information and answer questions about their academic departments in the lobby of Morrison.

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. — Dr. Joel Schwartz, associate professor at the Harvard School of Public Health's environmental epidemiology program, will discuss "The Distributed Lag Between Air Pollution, Mortality and Morbidity" in the Ibrahim Seminar Room, 1301 McGavran-Greenberg Hall.

4 p.m. to 6 p.m. — Games with residents of Carolina House Retirement Home as part of Senior Service Week. For more information, e-mail Lauren at lthrower@email.unc.edu.

5:30 p.m. — Student Night at the Battlehouse will feature a \$2 all-you-can-eat dinner followed by a program recognizing Sister Margaret.

Items of Interest

■ **The Lab! Theatre** is accepting directing proposals for the Fall of '99. Pick up a form at www.unc.edu/student/orgs/lab/direct.html. Any UNC undergrad can direct for the Lab!

■ **International student and scholar orientation counselor applications** are available at the International Center on the main floor of the Student Union. Please apply if you would like to help the International Center welcome newly arrived international students and scholars to UNC before classes begin in August.

■ **Davie Hall Psychological Services** will hold a relationship support group for women of color Wednesday nights. For more information, call 969-7016.

■ **Volunteer Orange!**, a service of the Triangle United Way, has immediate volunteer needs. Volunteer Orange! recruits and refers volunteers to more than 170 nonprofit and public organizations. If you are interested in volunteering, call 929-9837.

For The Record

Tuesday's story, "Toppling Light Pole Injures 3," should have stated that the truck, driven by 27-year-old Peter Weed, was traveling southbound.

Diana Campoli should have been identified as 39 years old. The Daily Tar Heel regrets the errors.

Tax Season Boosts Work Load

Area tax services say they expect business to increase as the April 15 deadline to file taxes nears.

By JOE MARGOLIS
Staff Writer

Local tax preparers are bracing themselves for a rush of last-minute tax filers who have just 8 more days until the April 15 deadline.

Harvey Sapir, a tax preparer for Jackson Hewitt Tax Service in Carrboro said business had increased from filers trying to beat the deadline.

"It's been busy," Sapir said. "This is the time a lot of people come in. It's starting to pick up."

He said his company offered seminars on taxes earlier in the year. "We offer a tax school that teaches people to file their own taxes. At this time our emphasis is helping clients file their own tax returns."

Sapir said his office had done 1,400 returns and expected to file 2,000 by the August extension deadline.

Prices range from \$35 to \$1,000

depending on the size of the return, he said.

But Sapir said Jackson Hewitt was not for everybody. He said he often sent clients to volunteer groups when using Jackson Hewitt was not cost effective.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, a tax-filing service of Orange County run by senior citizens, offers free services to those who need help with their taxes.

"(VITA) is provided by the IRS for people with low to middle incomes," said Cathy Porter, Orange County director of Retirement and Senior Volunteer Programs. "We do try to make sure people with special needs receive help."

Porter said VITA operated out of five locations in Orange County with two that specifically served employees of the county and UNC Hospitals. The other three offices in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough are free to the public.

Porter said she had some traffic from

students. "We advertise our programs in the papers," she said. "We do work with anybody of any age."

One client said he preferred VITA to a professional tax preparer.

"I was doing my taxes up until three years ago when things got complicated," said George Eberly, a computer consultant for Orange County. "I went to H&R Block and paid \$100 to do my taxes."

"Last year I tried the VITA program and was surprised to find out it was free."

VITA is fully computerized, which drastically decreases the chance of errors, said VITA Volunteer Director Charles Paddock. "We operate out of 25 donated 386 (personal computers)," he said.

Paddock said business was going well. "We started on the first February and it's been busy."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu

"At this time our emphasis is helping clients file their own tax returns."

HARVEY SAPIR
Jackson Hewitt Tax Service

Talk Examines Attitude Toward Mental Health

Mental health professionals spoke about the need for mental illness education at a forum Tuesday night.

By KATIE ABEL
Staff Writer

Although students have increased their overall awareness of mental health issues in recent years, they still attach negativity to mental illnesses, a panel of professionals said Tuesday.

Representatives from the Department of Psychiatry, Disability Services and Umstead Psychiatric Hospital addressed the topic of mental health at a forum sponsored by the Campus Y Special Populations Committee. "I think the stigma associated with mental illnesses still prevails but I don't think it is what it used to be," said James Kessler, director of disability services.

Mental illness came to the forefront of University concerns after former UNC law student Wendell Williamson shot and killed a UNC lacrosse player and Chapel Hill resident in 1995.

A grand jury found Williamson not guilty by reason of insanity and confined him to a psychiatric hospital.

Then last fall, Williamson won a \$500,000 monetary award in a civil lawsuit that he brought against Dr. Myron Liptzin, the Student Health Service psy-

chiatrist who treated him for mental health problems prior to the time Williamson committed the crime.

The jury found that the psychiatrist had been negligent while treating Williamson and that Williamson did not contribute to his own damage.

But Allen Hamrick, associate director of student psychological services, said students still depended on University psychiatric services to help them in dealing with mental health problems.

"We serve about 3,500 students each semester," he said. "Students are coming to us with a wide range of concerns."

Kessler said Disability Services worked with SHS to help students who faced mental health problems like depression in making adaptations in their daily lives.

He said once a student had been diagnosed with a problem like depression, Disabilities Services made his or her professors aware that the student had a medical problem but not specifically a mental illness. "There are certain classroom pressures we can relieve," he said.

Students who came to the forum said it was a good way to make more students aware of mental health issues.

"We feel that education about mental health is a good way to promote more interest in the issue," said Tracy Dobbins, special populations committee co-chairperson of the Campus Y.

Junior Ryan Trin said he came to the forum to learn more about mental health in general. "I think more people are opening their eyes to the issue."

The University Editors can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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