



June 25, 2009

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy:

I write today as a concerned clergy member and as a participant in the African American Ministers in Action (AAMIA) network of People For the American Way. I applaud your efforts to pass the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (S. 909), and thank you for holding this hearing today. Passage of S. 909 is a critical priority for your Committee and the Congress, and it is one that the President should sign into law this session. I have attached materials for the record of your hearing that should also be of use as this debate moves forward.

As a pastor and community leader in the city of Philadelphia I stand firmly against violence of any kind. I support S. 909 because the Lord has called for us to love our neighbor and to set at liberty them that are bruised. The religious right has dug up some dark and ugly tactics to prevent the passage of this bill, much of which are bold faced lies. I draw your attention to the materials I've submitted, especially the myths and facts from AAMIA.

Thank you again for your tireless efforts in support of the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (S. 909). Please consider me a resource in the future.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Robert P. Shine
Pastor and founder of Berachah Baptist Church
Philadelphia, PA

Rev. Dr. Robert P. Shine is the Pastor and Founder in the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia, where he has been the Pastor for seventeen years. Dr. Shine is a very well respected, visible church and community leader throughout the Philadelphia area. He is the President of the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity and President of the Pennsylvania State Wide Coalition of Black Clergy. He is the chairman of the African American Association for Corporate Responsibility, (AAACR) and chairman and Charter member of the World Communications Charter School. Dr. Shine is the Chairman of the Board of Manna bible Institute. Dr. Shine is a member of the Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission, (PAC), a member of the Board of the Campus Boulevard Corporation, (CBC), he's a member of the Advisory Board of the Barrister's Association of Philadelphia. He is also a member of the Philadelphia Association of Catholic Religious Investors, (PACRI). U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) appointed Dr. Shine as Congressional Black Caucus Chaplain and the National Association of Black State Legislators appointed him to head their Church.