



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

As a pastor and community activist in the city of Milwaukee I always stand for justice. Hateful violence has brought this country too much bloodshed and pain throughout our history. I support S. 909 because I have zero tolerance for acts of violence against a class of people because of who they are. Our opposition will flood you with lies and scare tactics to prevent the passage of this bill that just are not true. I draw your attention to the materials I've submitted, especially the myths and facts from AAMIA.

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.

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. Rolen Lewis Womack, Jr.
Pastor and founder of Progressive Baptist Church
Milwaukee, WI

Rev. Dr. Rolan Lewis Womack, Jr. is the founding pastor of Milwaukee's Progressive Baptist Church and is chair of our affiliate People For the American Way Foundation's African American Ministers Leadership Council. Dr. Womack has worked to define the ministry at Progressive Baptist Church in terms of social justice activism and community advocacy. His model for ministry is rooted in a strong liberation theology context, and features an Afrocentric frame of reference. Rev. Womack has been featured in several publications including his local paper, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, on several issues including the Jeremiah Wright controversy.