

# **Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA**

**A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People  
Experiencing Homelessness 2008**



Published in August 2009



Bringing America Home

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

The National Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1982, is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission. That mission, our common bond, is to end homelessness. We are committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness. At the same time, we work to meet the immediate needs of people who are currently experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of doing so. We take as our first principle of practice that people who are currently experiencing homelessness or have formerly experienced homelessness must be actively involved in all of our work.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **The National Coalition for the Homeless**

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) thanks all of its advocates, service providers, and homeless individuals for providing information for the report. We are extremely grateful for the time and efforts of our volunteers, interns, and staff who have assisted in the publication.

*The following individuals and organizations assisted in the publication of this report:*

*Sean Cononie, Lois Cross, and Mark Targett* are homeless activists with the Homeless Voice/COSAC Foundation, located in Hollywood, Florida. All three have dedicated tremendous time and energy to stop hate crimes/violence against homeless people. Cononie's organization is the most active local organization nationwide doing work on the hate crimes/violence issue. He is viewed as both a local and national expert/spokesperson on this issue. Targett is best known for video broadcast work of the news to advocates across the United States on vicious attacks to the homeless by using the latest technology in multimedia means. Cross does all the media/public relations on this issue for both Helping People in America and assists the National Coalition for the Homeless in getting the word out to the media.

*Michelle Lee*, Webmaster/Graphic Designer, did the final editing and layout.

*Brian Levin*, director, Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, served as an advisor for the report.

*Michael O'Neill*, director of Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau. He speaks on hate crimes and violence issues to thousands of young people across the country annually.

*Adam C. Sloane*, an attorney with Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw LLP, provided pro bono legal assistance for this 2008 report, plus the nine previous reports published from 1999 through 2007.

*Michael Stoops*, executive director of NCH, provides ongoing staffing support for the Civil Rights Work Group/Grassroots Organizing Committee, a nationwide network of homeless advocates committed to documenting and stopping civil rights violations of homeless individuals plus documenting hate crimes/violence against homeless people. He is also the project director for NCH's National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NCHROP). He has served as the overall editor of this 2008 report and the nine previous hate crimes/violence reports published from 1999 through 2007.

The following NCH interns: *Tony Taylor*, American University, *Aaron Gaide*, Dartmouth College, and *Sam Bowhay*, Grinnell College, provided necessary research, editing, and lobbying assistance.

*Stephany Whitaker*, Emerson National Hunger Fellow of the Congressional Hunger Center, did research, writing, and editing.

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NCH would like to also thank the numerous named and unnamed interns and volunteers who have worked on this report throughout 2008 and the first half of 2009.

Special gratitude is also extended to members of NCH's Civil Rights Work Group/Grassroots Organizing Committee for their news reports, continued dialogue, and tireless work and dedication to preventing and stopping hate crimes/violence against people experiencing homelessness.

The National Coalition for the Homeless also extends its appreciation to the following funding sources: Presbyterian Church (USA)/Small Church and Community Ministry and the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust.

**Report on**  
**Hate Crimes and Violence**  
**Against People Experiencing Homelessness**  
**in 2008**

**National Coalition for the Homeless**

Published in August 2009

## **DEDICATION**

This report is dedicated to all of the victims who have been attacked because of their homeless status, those who have lost their lives in the struggle to survive in the face of inadequate living conditions, and the people who continue to speak out against the crimes that are committed against homeless individuals. As we continue to strive for a better America, we sincerely thank those who are trying to make a difference by giving a face and a voice to homelessness.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crimes of hate and violence have continued to plague the forgotten and most vulnerable members of our society: homeless people. Since 1999, the National Coalition for the Homeless has been tracking the cataclysm of violent crimes that have been committed against homeless persons. The National Coalition for the Homeless has for the tenth year published this report that documents the unfortunate trend of violence towards the homeless.

People who are homeless are more vulnerable to attacks because they live outside in public spaces. Most of our communities do not have adequate, affordable housing or shelter space to meet the need, leaving many homeless people to live outside. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 41.8% of our homeless population is unsheltered.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, this percentage is higher as current economic issues have brought about high unemployment (9.5%)<sup>2</sup> and foreclosure rates (up 18% from January 2008)<sup>3</sup>. Without proper action to deal with the crisis of homelessness as a whole, our homeless neighbors will continue to be vulnerable to brutal attacks.

Some cities and states have taken action to address the hate and violence faced by our homeless neighbors. This report highlights: positive steps being taken around the country to combat the growing trend of attacking the homeless, recommendations for advocates, policy makers, and members of the public to help end the violence faced by homeless persons.

While some cities and states have taken positive steps, there are still many parts of the United States that continue to dehumanize homeless persons by creating and enforcing laws that criminalize their homeless status. These laws contain restrictions on sitting, sleeping, storing property, or asking for money in public spaces<sup>4</sup>. Laws that criminalize the homeless encourage the belief that homeless persons are not human, are unworthy of respect, and attacks against the homeless will go unnoticed.

Samples of headlines from the report showcase the violence and horror of the crimes endured by the homeless:

- 16 Year-old Boy Beats Homeless Man to Death with Baseball Bat
- Homeless Veteran Killed in Middle of Marketplace During the Day
- Homeless Man Robbed and Set on Fire
- Homeless Men Violently Harassed with Chainsaw on Numerous Occasion
- Homeless Man Beaten with Nail Studded Board
- Twin Brothers Terrorize Homeless Community

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Planning & Development, U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, *The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* (Jan. 2008).

<sup>2</sup> United States Unemployment Rate. Trading Economics. 2009, July 10. 2009, July 13, 2009. <<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Economics/Unemployment-rate.aspx?Symbol=USD>>

<sup>3</sup> The Latest Updated Foreclosure Rates. RealtyTrac. 4/4/09. 2009. <<http://www.realtytrac.com/foreclosure/foreclosure-rates.html>>

<sup>4</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and National Coalition for the Homeless. *Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*. Released: July 14, 2009.

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Over the past ten years, hundreds of homeless people have been attacked and killed. While this report provides alarming numbers, the fact remains that countless attacks go undocumented each year. Homeless individuals are treated so poorly by society that their attacks are often forgotten or unreported. Knowing some cases are missing, the attacks that are accounted for over the past ten years are still shocking:

- 880 acts of violence have been committed against homeless individuals
- The attacks have happened in 46 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC
- 244 homeless individuals lost their lives in the brutal attacks

The victims of these attacks have faced injustices greater than the scars and pain they endure; they have had to cope with humiliation, tattered self-esteem, and battered respect for themselves as humans.

In 2008, violent acts against the homeless leave much room for improvement:

- 106 homeless persons were victims of violent attacks
- 27 of those 106 persons were killed as a result of those attacks

The perpetrators of these attacks have shown an overwhelming trend to be young men and teen aged boys. Over the past ten years, the majority of attacks against the homeless have been committed by teenage boys and youth as young as ten years old. In 2008:

- 43% of attacks against homeless people were committed by teens aged 13-19
- 73% of the accused/convicted attackers were ages 25 and younger

Some of the accused/convicted have been quoted as saying: “It was just a vagrant”, “it was fun”, or they did it because they “could”. The motives to all attacks are not all clear, but it is obvious that many attacks were committed because the victim was homeless or because the homeless are more vulnerable than housed individuals. In addition, the perpetrators’ characteristics, motive, and weaponry are very similar to perpetrators who commit hate crimes against all other hate crime victim groups. Whether or not the crime was committed out of bias or hatred for the homeless, the fact remains that our homeless neighbors fall victim to an alarming number of attacks each year.

These brutal attacks happened all across the United States; some states accumulated far more attacks than others:

- Florida had the most attacks committed- 30
- California also had a high number of attacks- 22

With this growing problem becoming more and more apparent in communities around the country, some states, cities, and advocacy groups are doing something positive to address the issue.

- California passed a law in 2004 mandating police officer training on hate crimes against homeless persons, particularly those with disabilities.

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- Maine passed a law in 2006 that allows judges to take into consideration a victim's homeless status when considering sentencing for the offender. This was the first state to give homeless people any protection under hate crimes laws.
- A statewide public education project in Florida to educate people about homelessness was initiated in 2007 by the National Coalition for the Homeless in conjunction with AmeriCorps\*VISTA Volunteers. This project has now expanded to Georgia and South Carolina.
- The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust has created a curriculum/video about homelessness that is shown in schools throughout the county to give young people a greater understanding of homelessness.
- Puerto Rico, in 2007, passed a law to create a council that would address the discrimination of homeless individuals and strive to restore basic human rights and needs to the homeless population.
- Alaska added homeless status to a law creating more protection for vulnerable populations
- Seattle amended the city's malicious harassment statute to criminalize particular acts, including malicious and intentional injury or threats against a person, or destruction of or damage to the person's property, because of the perception that the person is homeless
- Los Angeles passed a resolution requiring homelessness awareness to be taught at the high school level, trainings for police officers dealing with possible hate crimes against the homeless, and tracking of hate crimes committed against homeless individuals.
- Maryland became the first state to non-discretionally add homeless persons to the existing hate crime law.
- Cleveland, OH passed an ordinance dictating that repercussions for "intimidating" or harassing a homeless person due to their status would be more severe<sup>5</sup>.
- Washington, DC City Council approved a bill adding homeless people to its hate crimes law. It was signed into law by the Mayor on August 6, 2009.

In addition, several legislative initiatives are currently underway to address this growing problem.

- A bill (H.R. 3419) was introduced on July 30, 2009 in this session of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives by U.S. Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and 13 other co-sponsors which seeks to amend the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes against the homeless.
- A bill, David Ray Ritcheson Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 262) was also introduced in this session of Congress in the U.S. House of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX). The bill seeks to provide support to victims of hate crimes, including housing assistance for homeless individuals.
- Bills to add homeless persons as a protected class to state hate crime statutes are currently being considered in California, Florida, and South Carolina.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance No. 830-08. Intimidation of a Homeless Person. Passed: 8-6-08, effective: 8-12-08

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Even though the trend of violence against homeless persons has risen over the past decade, there are steps that we can take to put an end to this terrible trend. Advocates, service providers, policymakers, and members of the public can take a stand by:

- Supporting bills, such as H.R. 3419 and H.R. 262.
- Supporting state legislative efforts to add homeless persons as a protected class to state hate crime statutes.
- Initiating police trainings to help law enforcement officers better understand homelessness in general and how to prevent and manage hate crime against homeless persons.
- Engaging in public education initiatives in schools to educate young people about homelessness and to humanize homeless neighbors.
- Advocating against city measures that criminalize homelessness and for more constructive approaches to homelessness.
- Advocating for more affordable housing and permanent supportive housing to bring an end to homelessness for those homeless members of our communities.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

The main objective of this report is to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public about the problem of hate crimes and violence against homeless people in order to instigate change and ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. As part of its mission, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to end homelessness. A major component of these changes must include the societal guarantee of safety and protection and a commitment by lawmakers to combat the hate crimes and violent acts against people who experience homelessness.

## METHODOLOGY

The data on violent acts committed against homeless individuals in this report was gathered from a variety of sources. A number of narratives were derived from published news reports (nationally and locally). Information was also provided by homeless advocates and service providers across the country dedicated to raising awareness about violence against homeless individuals. Lastly, this report relied on the voices of homeless individuals, and formerly homeless individuals, in self-reporting incidents they experienced first hand.

Upon receipt of each incident, a rigorous fact checking process was completed to evaluate and verify accuracy. This process entailed multiple follow-ups with those closely involved with the incident. Cross comparisons were also made with other news sources reporting the incident.

While we could not always identify the motive for each attack based on our sources of information, some of these attacks were perpetrated due to a bias against the victim because of his or her homeless status. Other attacks may have been perpetrated merely because the homeless person was in a vulnerable position to be attacked, due to the nature of homelessness. Only attacks committed by housed individuals against homeless individuals were evaluated. Crimes committed by homeless individuals against other homeless individuals were excluded from this report.

While NCH has made every effort to verify the facts regarding each incident used in our report, new information about cases sometimes becomes available after publication. NCH comprehensively researches and reviews all included data. As new, additional evidence emerges about the classification of prior, new or previously unknown cases, it is the policy of NCH to adjust tabulations accordingly.

### THE REPORTS

Over the past ten years (1999-2008), homeless advocates/direct service providers from around the country have seen an alarming, nationwide sustained increase in reports of homeless men, women and even children being killed, beaten, and harassed. In response to these concerns, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has produced eight reports documenting these acts. The National Coalition for the Homeless collaborated with the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP) on the ninth report documenting hate crimes and violence against homeless individuals in 2007. NCH produced this tenth report to document hate crimes and violence against homeless people that occurred in 2008.

- 1999:** *No More Homeless Deaths! Hate Crimes: A Report Documenting Violence Against Men and Women Homeless in the U.S.*
- 2000:** *A Report of Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Who Are Homeless in the United States in 2000*
- 2001:** *Hate. A Compilation of Violent Crimes Committed Against Homeless People in the U.S. in 2001*
- 2002:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 1999-2002*
- 2003:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 2003*
- 2004:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2004*
- 2005:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 2005*
- 2006:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2006*
- 2007:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2007.* Published by NCH & NLCHP.
- 2008:** *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2008*

This latest report continues to maintain the same goals and objectives as the previous ones:

1. To compile the incidents of hate crimes and violence that NCH has received and reviewed in order to document this alarming trend against people who experience homelessness.
2. To raise awareness among lawmakers and the general public about this serious issue.
3. To recommend proactive measures to be taken.

### INTRODUCTION

In 2008, homeless individuals in America faced another year of brutality that ranged from assault to killings. Regrettably, these gruesome accounts are just a few of many that demonstrate the hate/violence faced by people experiencing homelessness each year. The following report documents 106 violent acts that occurred in 2008, collected from news articles and reports from advocates and victims across the country.

Living outside in public spaces, people who are homeless are more vulnerable to attacks. Most of our communities do not have adequate, affordable housing or shelter space to meet the need, leaving many homeless people to live outside. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 41.8% of our homeless population is unsheltered.<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly, this percentage is higher as current economic issues have brought about high unemployment (9.5%)<sup>7</sup> and foreclosure rates (up 18% from January 2008)<sup>8</sup>. Without proper action to deal with the crisis of homelessness as a whole, our homeless neighbors will continue to be vulnerable to brutal attacks.

While some cities and states have taken positive steps, there are still many parts of the United States that continue to dehumanize homeless persons by creating and enforcing laws that criminalize their homeless status. These laws contain restrictions on sitting, sleeping, storing property, or asking for money in public spaces<sup>9</sup>. Laws that criminalize the homeless encourage the belief that homeless persons are not human, are unworthy of respect, and attacks against the homeless will go unnoticed.

Narratives in this report emphasize the atrocious acts of violence and discrimination faced every day by the homeless in the United States. Here are a few illustrative cases:

**February 14:** Frederick, Maryland. William Sigler, 49, a repeat offender of assault, drug possession, reckless endangerment, sexual assault, and battery, was found guilty of the fatal attack of Samuel Webster Hood Jr., 57, a homeless man living in Frederick. Police were called to respond to an unconscious Hood with his skull cracked open from the attack. Authorities report evidence of strangulation and severe trauma to the head and neck from repeated assault. A witness reportedly saw Sigler standing over Hood shouting to call 911, but said Sigler left before authorities arrived.

Evidence found at the scene showed blood marks on the wall of the alley as well as on a windowsill. Police were led to Sigler's apartment, where a search produced blood spattered sneakers, blue jeans, and a hat.

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<sup>6</sup> Office of Planning & Development., U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, *The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* (Jan. 2008).

<sup>7</sup> United States Unemployment Rate. Trading Economics. 2009, July 10. 2009, July 13, 2009. <<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Economics/Unemployment-rate.aspx?Symbol=USD>>

<sup>8</sup> The Latest Updated Foreclosure Rates. RealtyTrac. 4/4/09. 2009. <<http://www.realtytrac.com/foreclosure/foreclosure-rates.html>>

<sup>9</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and National Coalition for the Homeless. *Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*. Released: July 14, 2009.

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In December, pleading guilty to second-degree murder, Sigler was sentenced by County Circuit Court Judge G. Edward Dwyer Jr. to 30 to 50 years in the Maryland Division of Corrections. The Frederick News-Post reported, “It was the maximum sentence Dwyer could hand down.” After trial, there remains to be no motive for the crime. When Sigler was told that the victim was Sammy Hood, he said, “Oh him, he’s just a beggar, a vagrant.”

**March 23:** Bartlett, Tennessee. Two homeless men were the victims of an attack on Easter Sunday in Bartlett, Tennessee. Brenner Holloman, one of the victims, was unhurt from the attack but witnessed everything. The attackers, adult males ages 19-22, used Molotov cocktails, a homemade concoction that consists of a bottle filled with gasoline and set on fire. Holloman claimed the flames only made the attackers laugh harder, and “they thought it was funny all right, they absolutely did.” Holloman now says he can hardly recognize his friend, Jeffery Martin, 37. “It made me ill, he reports. “I just saw him yesterday, his head ballooned out to there...his scalp was taken off, his right hand is completely bandaged up...” Martin reports that it “was the worst pain I’ve ever been in, in my life.” Martin sustained second and third degree burns to his head, neck, ears, shoulders and hands. Police found the attackers to be 20 year-old Michael Grace, 19 year-old Andrew Colin Hicks, 22 year-old John Tyler Eggleston, 19 year-old Wesley Ray, and 19 year-old Zach Addison Parrish. All four have been charged with attempted aggravated arson, and Parrish was charged with the additional attempted second degree murder, as police suspect he threw the flaming bottle at the victims. Eggleston and Grace pleaded not guilty to the charges and waived their preliminary hearing.

**June 26:** Kansas City, Missouri. Rolando Aaron and Paul W. Simmons, both 19, were charged with first degree robbery for attacking a 54 year-old homeless man in Kansas City with a brick and robbing him. The victim, a Vietnam veteran, told authorities that he woke up Thursday morning and found someone searching through his pockets. Six different males surrounded him and told him that it was just a “simple robbery.” The victim stood and tried to fight them off. The suspects hit him in the head and back using a brick. They tried to run away in a pick-up truck, taking his cell phone, a pair of shoes and \$500. The victim jumped into the truck after the suspects and struggled with them until they pulled into a QuikTrip parking lot where he got out and phoned the police. Officers found five of the attackers and the victim identified them, after which the two juveniles were taken to the juvenile jail. A third suspect was released.

Despite the dehumanizing anti-homeless laws in some parts of the country, there are some cities and states that have taken action to address the hate and violence faced by our homeless neighbors. This report highlights: positive steps being taken around the country to combat the growing trend of attacking homeless people, recommendations for advocates, policy makers, and members of the public to help end the violence faced by homeless persons.

**Hate, Violence, and Death  
on  
Main Street USA**

**A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People  
Experiencing Homelessness 2008**

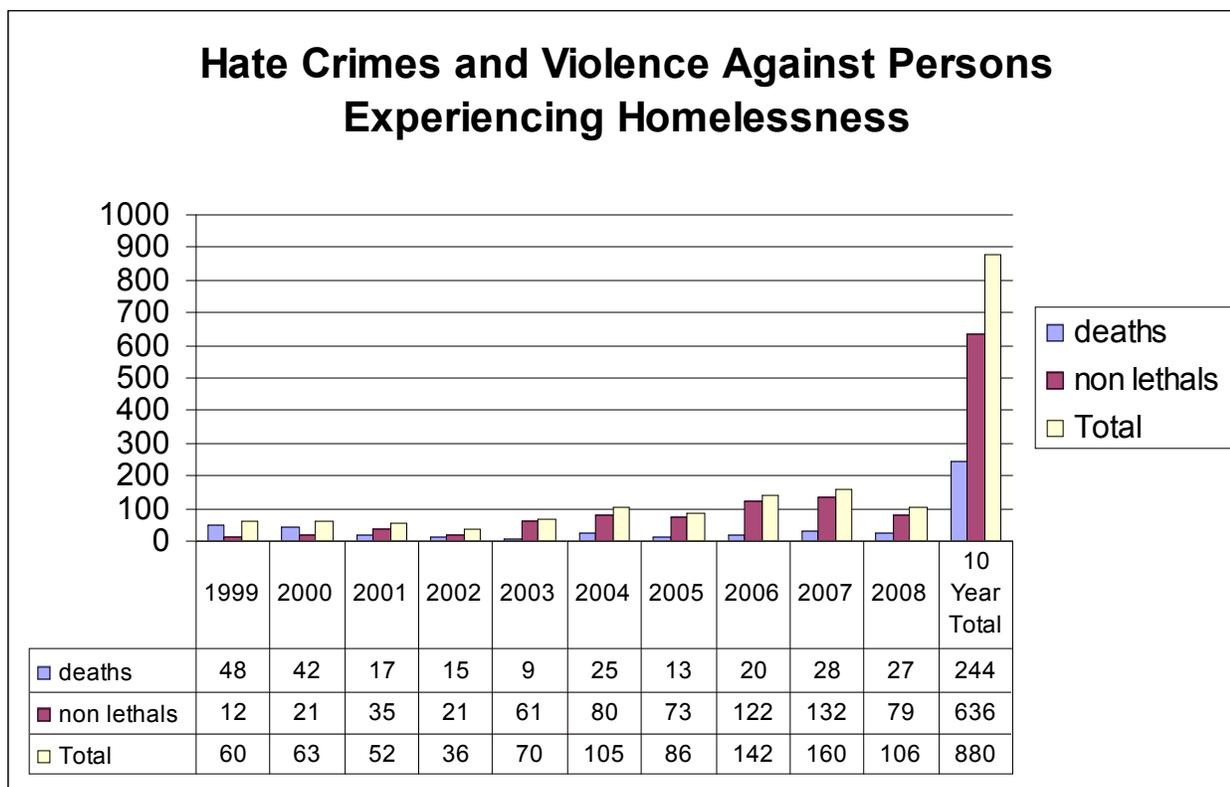


# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE DATA OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD (1999-2008):

Over the past decade, advocates, homeless shelter workers, and the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) all began to recognize that reports of hate crimes and violent acts against people experiencing homelessness were increasing with frequency and brutality. As a result, in 1999, the NCH began publishing annual reports documenting hate crimes and violent attacks against people experiencing homelessness. These annual reports have not only served to document the number of deaths and non-lethal attacks, but have included the individual stories of the victims of these crimes. This annual study makes evident the great number of crimes as well as the large geographic area in which they occur.



**Total number of violent acts of 10 years: 880**

**Total number of deaths over 10 years: 244**

**Total number of non-lethal attacks over 10 years: 636**

**Total Number of cities where crimes occurred over 10 years: 263**

**Total number of states where crimes occurred over 10 years: 46, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.**

**Age range of the accused/convicted: 10 to 75 years of age**

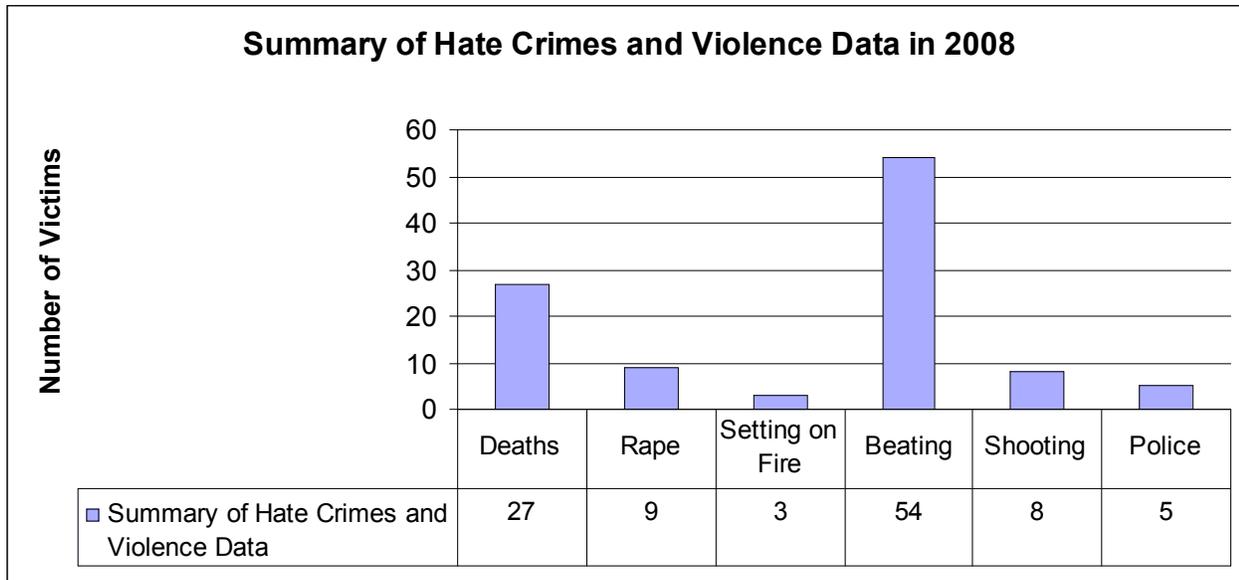
**Age range of the victims: 4 months to 74 years of age**

**Gender of victims: Male: 547 Female: 80**

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## SUMMARY OF HATE CRIMES AND VIOLENCE DATA IN 2008:



**Total Number of Violent Acts in 2008: 106**

**Total Number of Lethal Attacks: 27**

**Total Number of Non-Lethal Attacks: 79**

### **Breakdown of Non-Lethal Attacks:**

**Total Number of Rapes/Sexual Assaults: 9**

**Total Number Setting on Fire: 3**

**Total Number of Beatings/Assault: 54**

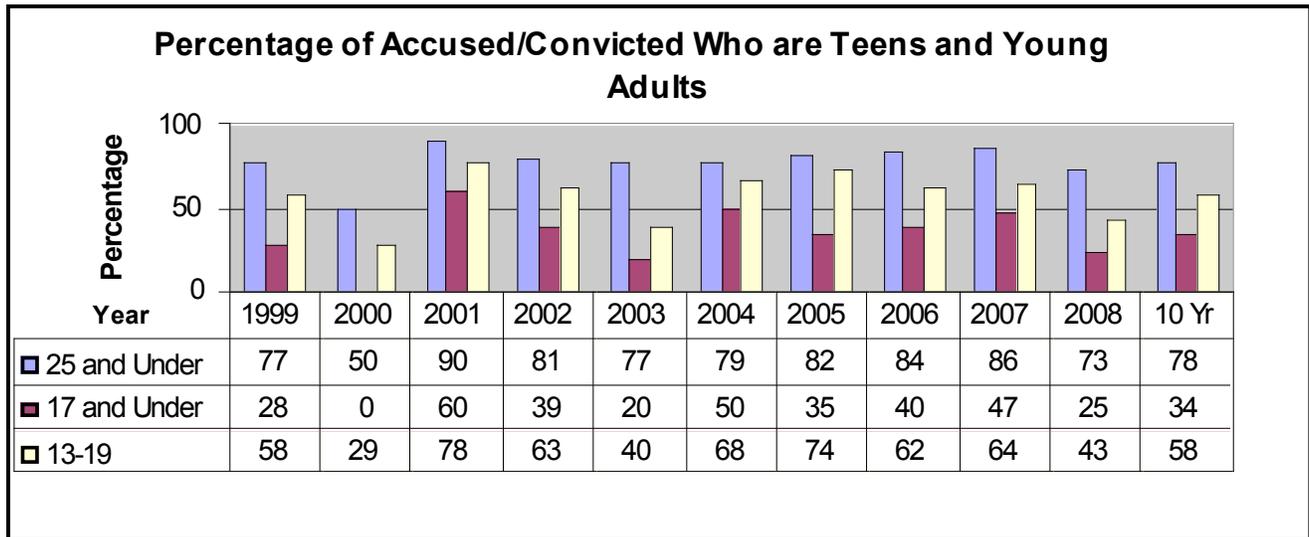
**Total Number of Shootings: 8**

**Total Number of Incidents involving Police Harassment/Brutality: 5**

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## SUMMARY OF TEEN/YOUNG ADULT INVOLVEMENT IN HATE CRIMES/VIOLENT ACTS OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD (1999-2008):



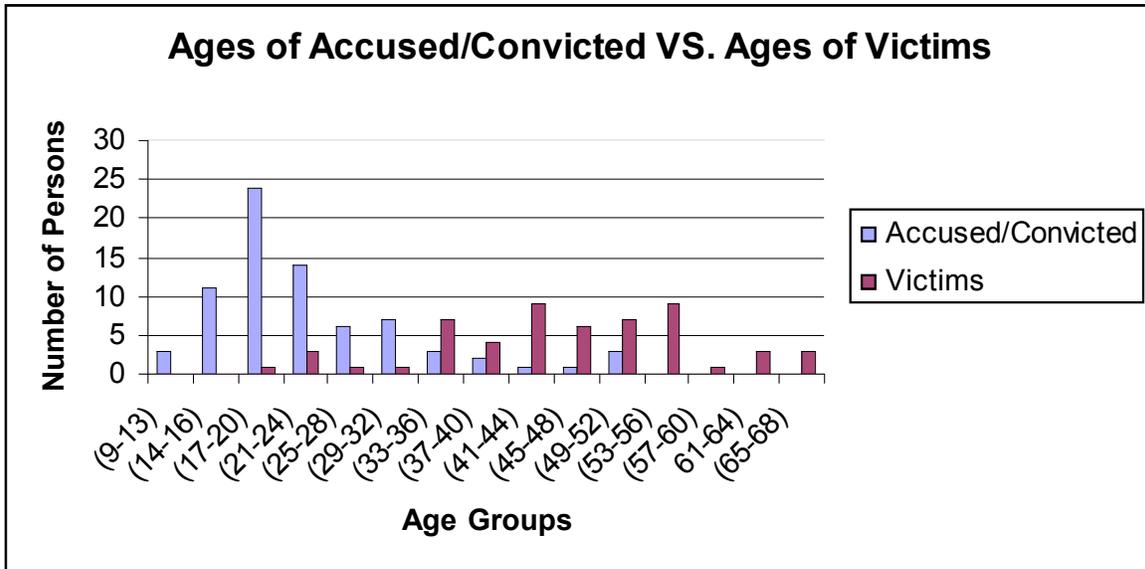
**Age Ranges of the Accused/Convicted in 2008:** 12, 13(two), 14(three), 15 (two), 16(six), 17(five), 18(four), 19(ten), 20(five), 21(two), 22(three), 23(six), 24(three), 25(three), 26, 28(two), 29(two), 30(three), 31(two), 34, 35, 36, 37(two), 41, 45, 49(two), 50.

**Gender of Accused/Convicted in 2008:** Male: 106      Female: 3

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## SUMMARY OF AGES OF ACCUSED VS. AGES OF VICTIMS:



**Age ranges of the victims in 2008:** 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 31, 33(two), 34, 35(two), 36(two), 37, 39(two), 40, 41(four), 42(three), 43, 44, 46(two), 47, 48(three), 49 (two), 50(three), 51, 52, 53(three), 54(two), 55(four), 57, 61, 62, 64, 65(two), 68.

**Gender of Victims in 2008:** Male: 84      Female: 14

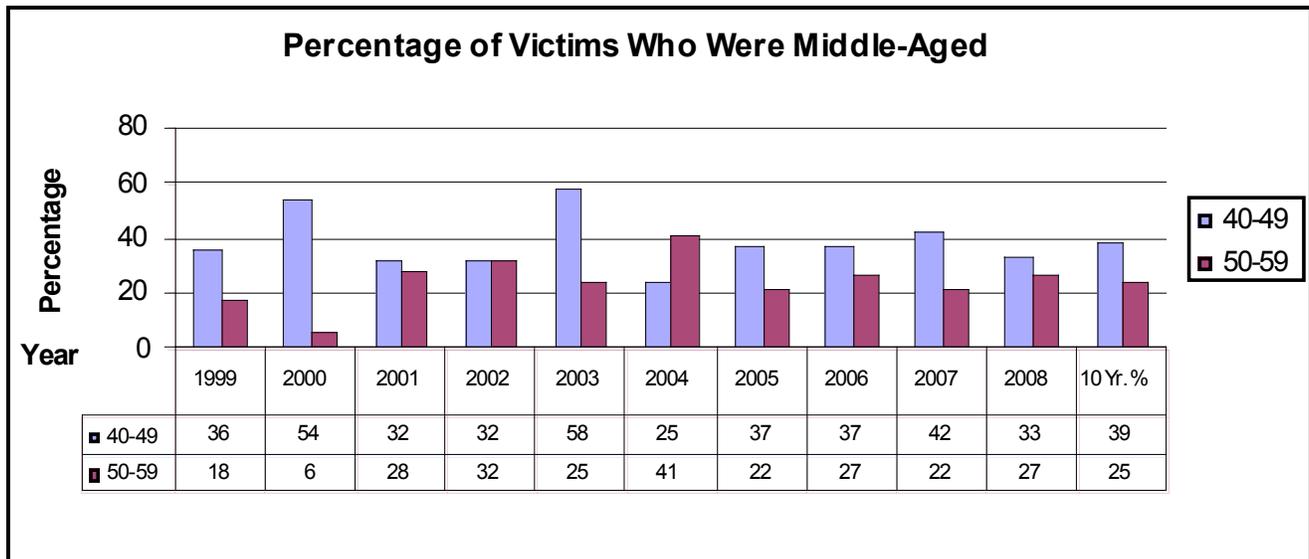
**Age Ranges of the Accused/Convicted in 2008:** 12, 13(two), 14(three), 15 (two), 16(six), 17(five), 18(four), 19(ten), 20(five), 21(two), 22(three), 23(six), 24(three), 25(three), 26, 28(two), 29(two), 30(three), 31(two), 34, 35, 36, 37(two), 41, 45, 49(two), 50.

**Gender of Accused/Convicted in 2008:** Male: 106      Female: 3

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## SUMMARY OF VICTIMS WHO WERE MIDDLE-AGED:



**Age ranges of the victims in 2008:** 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 31, 33(two), 34, 35(two), 36(two), 37, 39(two), 40, 41(four), 42(three), 43, 44, 46(two), 47, 48(three), 49 (two), 50(three), 51, 52, 53(three), 54(two), 55(four), 57, 61, 62, 64, 65(two), 68.

**Gender of Victims in 2008: Male: 84 Female: 14**

## CITIES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED IN 2008:

### Total Cities: 55

Akron, Ohio—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Annapolis, Maryland—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Athens, Georgia—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Bartlett, Tennessee—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
Bolin, California—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Boston, Massachusetts—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Cambridge, Massachusetts—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
Cleveland, Ohio—3 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts  
Colorado Springs, Colorado—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Columbus, Ohio—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Costa Mesa, California—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Cumberland, Maryland—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Dania Beach, Florida—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Elgin, Illinois—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida—3 separate incidents resulting in 7 non-lethal acts  
Frederick, Maryland—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Glen Burnie, Maryland—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Hayward, California—5 separate incidents resulting in 5 non-lethal acts  
Honolulu, Hawaii—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Indianapolis, Indiana—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Isla Vista, California—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Jacksonville, North Carolina—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Kansas City, Missouri—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Key West, Florida—2 separate incidents resulting in 3 non-lethal acts  
Lakewood, Colorado—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Long Beach, California—1 incident resulting in 5 deaths  
Los Angeles, California—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act  
Manatee County, Florida—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Miami, Florida—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
Monroe, Louisiana—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Nashville, Tennessee—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
New York, New York—5 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts  
North Little Rock, Arkansas—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Panama City, Florida—3 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts  
Peoria, Illinois—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Pompano Beach, Florida—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts  
Pontiac, Michigan—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

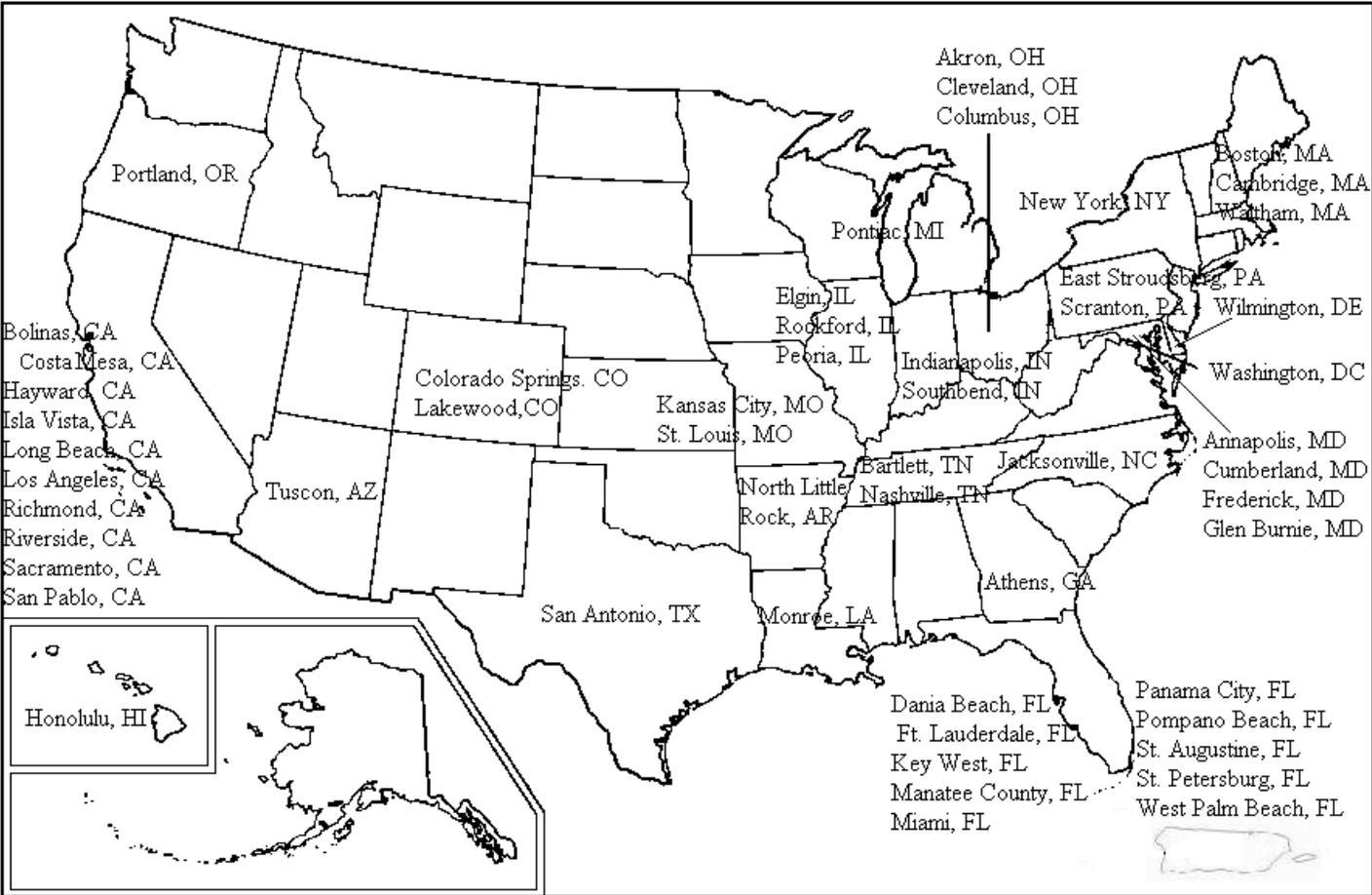
2008

Portland, Oregon—5 separate incidents resulting in 5 non-lethal acts  
Richmond, California—3 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act  
Riverside, California—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Rockford, Illinois—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
Sacramento, California—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
San Antonio, Texas—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
San Pablo, California—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Scranton, Pennsylvania—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts  
South Bend, Indiana—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
St. Augustine, Florida—1 incident resulting in 3 non-lethal acts  
St. Louis, Missouri—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
St. Petersburg, Florida—2 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts  
Tucson, Arizona—1 incident resulting in 1 death  
Waltham, Massachusetts—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act  
Washington, District of Columbia—3 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts  
West Palm Beach, Florida—2 incidents resulting in 2 deaths  
Wilmington, Delaware—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

**2008**

**MAP OF CITIES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED IN 2008:**



# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## STATES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED IN 2008:

**Total Number of States:** 22 and Washington, DC

Arizona—1 incident in 1 city (Tucson) resulting in 1 death

Arkansas—1 incident in 1 city (North Little Rock) resulting in 1 death

California—17 separate incidents in 10 cities (Bollinas, Costa Mesa, Hayward, Isla Vista, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Richmond, Riverside, Sacramento, San Pablo) resulting in 10 deaths and 12 non-lethal acts

Colorado—2 separate incidents in 2 cities (Colorado Springs, Lakewood) resulting in 2 non-lethal acts

Delaware—1 incident in 1 city (Wilmington) resulting in 1 non-lethal

Florida—21 separate incidents in 10 cities (Dania Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Key West, Manatee County, Miami, Panama City, Pompano Beach, St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, West Palm Beach) resulting in 3 deaths and 27 non-lethal acts

Georgia—1 incident in 1 city (Athens) resulting in 1 non-lethal act

Hawaii—1 incident in 1 city (Honolulu) resulting in 1 non-lethal act

Illinois—3 separate incidents in 3 cities (Elgin, Peoria, Rockford) resulting in 4 non-lethal acts

Indiana—2 separate incidents in 2 cities (Indianapolis, Southbend) resulting in 2 non-lethal act

Louisiana—1 incident in 1 city (Monroe) resulting in 1 non-lethal act

Maryland—4 separate incidents in 4 cities (Annapolis, Cumberland, Frederick, Glen Burnie) resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts

Massachusetts—3 separate incidents in 3 cities (Boston, Cambridge, Waltham) resulting in 1 death and 3 non-lethal acts

Michigan—2 separate incidents in 1 city (Pontiac) resulting in 2 deaths

Missouri—2 separate incidents in 2 cities (Kansas City, St. Louis) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act

New York—5 separate incidents in 1 city (New York) resulting in 2 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

North Carolina—1 incident in 1 city (Jacksonville) resulting in 1 death

Ohio—5 separate incidents in 3 cities (Akron, Cleveland, Columbus) resulting in 1 death and 4 non-lethal acts

Oregon—5 separate incidents in 1 city (Portland) resulting in 5 non-lethal acts

Pennsylvania—2 separate incidents in 2 cities (East Stroudsburg, Scranton) resulting in 3 non-lethal acts

Tennessee—2 separate incidents in 2 cities (Bartlett, Nashville) resulting in 3 non-lethal acts

Texas—1 incident in 1 city (San Antonio) resulting in 1 death

Washington, DC—3 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## MAP OF STATES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED IN 2008:



| State      | # of Acts | Population of State <sup>10</sup> | State          | # of Acts | Population of State |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Arizona    | 1         | 6,500,180                         | Massachusetts  | 4         | 6,497,967           |
| Arkansas   | 1         | 2,855,390                         | Michigan       | 2         | 10,003,422          |
| California | 22        | 36,756,666                        | Missouri       | 2         | 5,911,605           |
| Colorado   | 2         | 4,939,456                         | New York       | 7         | 19,490,297          |
| Delaware   | 1         | 873,092                           | North Carolina | 1         | 9,222,414           |
| Florida    | 30        | 18,328,340                        | Ohio           | 5         | 11,485,910          |
| Georgia    | 1         | 9,685,744                         | Oregon         | 5         | 3,790,060           |
| Hawaii     | 1         | 1,288,198                         | Pennsylvania   | 3         | 12,448,279          |
| Illinois   | 4         | 12,901,563                        | Tennessee      | 3         | 6,214,888           |
| Indiana    | 2         | 6,376,792                         | Texas          | 1         | 24,326,974          |
| Louisiana  | 1         | 4,410,796                         | Washington, DC | 3         | 591,833             |
| Maryland   | 4         | 5,633,597                         |                |           |                     |

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau 2008 American Fact Finder Population Finder, available at <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation>.

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## LIST OF CITIES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED 1999-2008

**Total Cities:** 263

|                     |                       |                        |                     |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Abilene (TX)        | Champaign (IL)        | El Sobrante (CA)       | Huntsville (AL)     |
| Akron (OH)          | Camden (NJ)           | Elgin (IL)             | Hyattsville (MD)    |
| Albany (NY)         | Carolina (PR)         | Ellenton (FL)          | Indianapolis (IN)   |
| Albuquerque (NM)    | Cave Junction (OR)    | Eureka (CA)            | Indio (CA)          |
| Allentown (PA)      | Charlotte Co. (FL)    | Ewing (NJ)             | Inglewood (CA)      |
| Anchorage (AK)      | Cheyenne (WY)         | Fairbanks (AK)         | Isla Vista (CA)     |
| Ann Arbor (MI)      | Chicago (IL)          | Fairfield (CA)         | Jacksonville (NC)   |
| Annapolis (MD)      | Cincinnati (OH)       | Fairfax (VA)           | Jeffersonville (IN) |
| Apopka (FL)         | Clay (WV)             | Fayetteville (NC)      | Kalamazoo (MI)      |
| Arlington (VA)      | Cleveland (OH)        | Filley (NE)            | Kansas City (KS)    |
| Aspen (CO)          | Clinton Township (MI) | Fort Lauderdale (FL)   | Kansas City (MO)    |
| Athens (GA)         | Costa Mesa (CA)       | Fort Myers (FL)        | Keizer (OR)         |
| Atlanta (GA)        | Colorado Springs (CO) | Fort Smith (AR)        | Kent (WA)           |
| Augusta (GA)        | Colton (CA)           | Fort Worth (TX)        | Key West (FL)       |
| Aurora (IL)         | Columbia (SC)         | Frederick (MD)         | Kissimmee (FL)      |
| Austin (TX)         | Columbus (OH)         | Fredericksburg (VA)    | Lafayette (IN)      |
| Baltimore (MD)      | Corona (CA)           | Gainesville (FL)       | Laguna Beach (CA)   |
| Bangor (ME)         | Corpus Christi (TX)   | Galveston (TX)         | Lakeland (FL)       |
| Bartlett (TN)       | Cortez (CO)           | Gastonia (NC)          | Lakeside (CA)       |
| Battle Creek (MI)   | Corvallis (OR)        | Gettysburg (PA)        | Lakewood, (CO)      |
| Bay Point (CA)      | Covington (KY)        | Gibsonton (FL)         | Lancaster (PA)      |
| Bayamon, (PR)       | Cumberland (MD)       | Glen Burnie (MD)       | Las Vegas (NV)      |
| Bedford (NH)        | Dade County (FL)      | Gold Beach (OR)        | Lauderhill (FL)     |
| Bend (OR)           | Dale City (VA)        | Granite City (IL)      | Lawrence (KS)       |
| Berkeley (CA)       | Dallas (TX)           | Greenville (NC)        | Lawrenceburg (TN)   |
| Bernalillo (NM)     | Dania Beach (FL)      | Hamilton (OH)          | Leesburg (FL)       |
| Bloomington (IL)    | Davenport (IA)        | Hamilton Township (NJ) | Little Rock (AR)    |
| Bolinas (CA)        | Daytona Beach (FL)    | Hartford (CT)          | Livingston (LA)     |
| Boston (MA)         | Deland (FL)           | Haverhill (MA)         | Loiza (PR)          |
| Bradenton (FL)      | Delray Beach (FL)     | Hayward (CA)           | Lompoc (CA)         |
| Bremerton (WA)      | Deltona (FL)          | Highland Park (MI)     | Long Beach (CA)     |
| Broward County (FL) | Denver (CO)           | Hilo (HI)              | Los Angeles (CA)    |
| Buena Park (CA)     | Detroit (MI)          | Holiday (FL)           | Louisville (KY)     |
| Buffalo (NY)        | Duluth (MN)           | Holly Hill (FL)        | Manatee Co. (FL)    |
| Bunnell (FL)        | East Palatka (FL)     | Hollywood (FL)         | Manchester (NH)     |
| Burlington, NC      | East Stroudsburg (PA) | Honolulu (HI)          | Maple Valley (WA)   |
| Burton (MI)         | El Cerrito (CA)       | Houston (TX)           | Medford (OR)        |
| Cambridge (MA)      | El Paso (TX)          | Huntington (WV)        | Melbourne (FL)      |

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

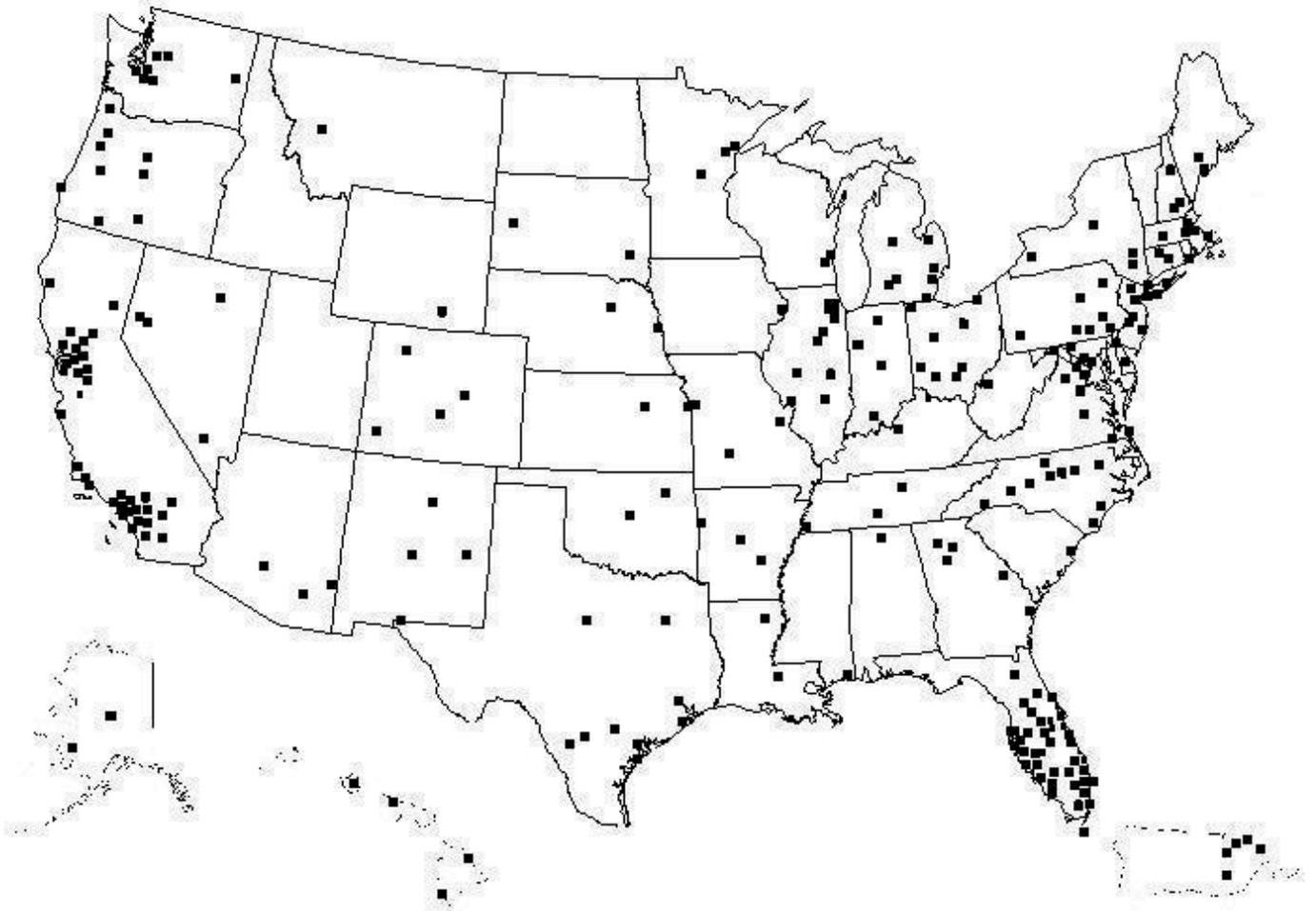
## LIST OF CITIES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED 1999-2008 (cont...)

|                        |                      |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Memphis (TN)           | Portland (OR)        | St. Augustine (FL)   |
| Merritt Island (FL)    | Providence (RI)      | St. Louis (MO)       |
| Miami (FL)             | Raleigh (NC)         | St. Paul (MN)        |
| Milwaukee (WI)         | Ramona (CA)          | St. Petersburg (FL)  |
| Milwaukie (OR)         | Rapid City (SD)      | Staten Island (NY)   |
| Minneapolis (MN)       | Redding (CA)         | Statesville (NC)     |
| Missoula (MT)          | Redlands (CA)        | Stockbridge (GA)     |
| Modesto (CA)           | Reno (NV)            | Suffolk (VA)         |
| Monroe (LA)            | Richmond (CA)        | Suffolk County (NY)  |
| Monticello (AR)        | Richmond (VA)        | Sun Valley (CA)      |
| Mount Kisco (NY)       | Rio Piedras (PR)     | Superior (WI)        |
| Myrtle Beach (SC)      | Riverside (CA)       | Syracuse (NY)        |
| Nashville (TN)         | Riviera Beach (FL)   | Tacoma (WA)          |
| Nashua (NH)            | Rockford (IL)        | Takoma Park (MD)     |
| New Britain (CT)       | Roosevelt (NY)       | Tampa (FL)           |
| New York (NY)          | Ruskin (FL)          | Toledo (OH)          |
| Norristown (PA)        | Sacramento (CA)      | Toms River (NJ)      |
| North Little Rock (AR) | San Antonio (TX)     | Tucson (AZ)          |
| Oakland (CA)           | San Diego (CA)       | Tulsa (OK)           |
| Ocala (FL)             | San Francisco (CA)   | Vancouver (WA)       |
| Oceanside (CA)         | San Jose (CA)        | Ventura (CA)         |
| Oklahoma City (OK)     | San Juan (PR)        | Virginia Beach (VA)  |
| Omaha (NE)             | San Luis Obispo (CA) | Waltham (MA)         |
| Orlando (FL)           | San Pablo (CA)       | Waipahu (HI)         |
| Oxnard (CA)            | Santa Ana (CA)       | Washington (DC)      |
| Painesville (OH)       | Santa Cruz (CA)      | Waverly (OH)         |
| Panama City (FL)       | Santa Fe (NM)        | Westminster (CA)     |
| Pascagoula (MS)        | Santurce (PR)        | West Palm Beach (FL) |
| Passaic (NJ)           | Sarasota (FL)        | Weymouth (MA)        |
| Paterson (NJ)          | Savannah (GA)        | Wilmington (DE)      |
| Peoria (IL)            | Scranton (PA)        | York City (PA)       |
| Philadelphia (PA)      | Seattle (WA)         |                      |
| Phoenix (AZ)           | Sioux Falls, (SD)    |                      |
| Pima Co. (AZ)          | South Bend, (IN)     |                      |
| Pittsburgh (PA)        | Sparks (NV)          |                      |
| Pompano Beach (FL)     | Spokane (WA)         |                      |
| Ponce (PR)             | Springfield (IL)     |                      |
| Pontiac (MI)           | Springfield (MA)     |                      |
| Port Charlotte (FL)    | Springfield (MO)     |                      |
| Portland (ME)          | Springfield (OH)     |                      |

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## MAP OF CITIES WHERE HATE CRIMES/VIOLENCE OCCURRED 1999-2008



# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## COMPARISON OF HATE CRIME HOMICIDES vs. FATAL ATTACKS ON HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS 1999-2008

### COMPARISON OF HATE CRIMES HOMICIDES vs. FATAL ATTACKS ON HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS 1999-2008

| <b>YEAR</b>          | <b>Homicides Classified as Hate Crimes<br/>(FBI Data)</b>                                            | <b>Fatal Attacks on<br/>Homeless Individuals<br/>(NCH Data)</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1999</b>          | <b>17</b><br>(9 racially, 2 religiously, 3 sexual orientation, 3 ethnically motivated)               | <b>48</b>                                                       |
| <b>2000</b>          | <b>19</b><br>(10 racially, 1 religiously, 2 sexual orientation, 6 ethnically motivated)              | <b>42</b>                                                       |
| <b>2001</b>          | <b>11</b><br>(4 racially, 1 religiously, 4 sexual orientation, 2 ethnically oriented)                | <b>17</b>                                                       |
| <b>2002</b>          | <b>10</b><br>(4 racially, 1 sexual orientation, 5 ethnically motivated)                              | <b>14*</b>                                                      |
| <b>2003</b>          | <b>14</b><br>(5 racially, 6 sexual orientation, 2 ethnically, 1 anti-disability motivated)           | <b>8*</b>                                                       |
| <b>2004</b>          | <b>5</b><br>(3 racially, 1 religiously, 1 sexual orientation motivated)                              | <b>25</b>                                                       |
| <b>2005</b>          | <b>6</b><br>(3 racially, 3 ethnically motivated)                                                     | <b>13</b>                                                       |
| <b>2006</b>          | <b>3</b><br>(3 racial- 2 anti-white, 1 anti-black)                                                   | <b>20</b>                                                       |
| <b>2007</b>          | <b>9</b><br>(5 sexual orientation motivated, 1 anti-black, 1 anti-multi-ethnicity, 2 anti-hispanic,) | <b>28**</b>                                                     |
| <b>2008</b>          | (FBI Data unavailable at this time)                                                                  | <b>27</b>                                                       |
| <b>10 Year Total</b> | <b>94</b>                                                                                            | <b>242</b>                                                      |

\*Note: Upon receipt of further information, these numbers have been decreased by one.

\*\*Note: Upon receipt of further information, these numbers have decreased by three.

Chart compiled by using data from the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism (California State University, San Bernardino): Analysis of Data from the F.B.I. and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

## NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF HATE CRIMES/VIOLENT ACTS AGAINST HOMELESS PEOPLE

### ABC'S "PRIMETIME" RAISES AWARENESS ON "BUM-BASHING" THROUGH STREET EXPERIMENT

Your commute from work is going just as it would any other day when you notice a group of teenagers, with bats, bottles, and chains, hovering around a homeless individual. As you walk closer, you notice the gathering of adolescents verbally abusing and striking the vulnerable adult. What would you do?

That question has become the basis of a new ABC show that captures public reactions to ethical dilemmas. In the March 4, 2008 episode, hired actors simulated physical and verbal abuse towards a homeless individual on the streets of New Jersey. Hidden cameras captured the responses of local residents.

In the first experiment, teenagers convincingly staged an attack on a homeless man.

Within moments of beginning the experiment, ABC cameras captured a variety of reactions. Some pedestrians stared in shock. Some walked off to enlist help. Others quickly mobilized and challenged the dehumanization of a member of their society.

"What are you doing? Put that bat down. That's a human being." A middle-aged woman shouted at the teens participating in the experiment. Another elderly man reached for the bat and scolded the young boys for their lack of respect.

In another convincing simulation, the homeless man was replaced by a homeless woman. The change in the victim's gender yielded faster responses from community members. Spectators were quicker to risk their personal safety and resort to physical intervention. In comparison to the male victim, additional community members followed-up with the homeless woman with concerns for her well-being.

After being informed of the experiment, many of those that were pro-active in stopping the abuse communicated a sense of communal justice and basic human rights as their rationale for action. To watch post-experimental interviews and behind the scenes footage, visit <http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/WhatWouldYouDo>.

Despite the broadcast of this communal justice in action, many homeless individuals continue to fall victim to unprovoked and violent attacks from other members of society, particularly male teenagers. According to Mary Brosnahan, the executive director of New York City's Coalition for the Homeless, many individuals have gone beyond viewing people without homes as homeless to viewing them as subhuman. The result has been a promotion of sports and activities that incite violence against a demographic that lacks a shelter for protection.

## VIDEO EXPLOITATION OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

By: Samuel Bowhay, Grinnell College

The fascination with “bum bashing” continues to grow. On YouTube in July 2009, people have posted 85,900 videos with “bum” in the title, an increase of 15,600 videos since April 2008. Further, 5,690 videos can be found with the title “bum fight,” representing, again, an increase of 1,460 videos since April 2008. In contrast, other derogatory terms; such as, those used in regards to African Americans, the “n” word is found in 25,900 video titles while the “f” word used in regards to homosexual persons can be found in 66,600 videos. It should not astonish us that, out of these derogatory words, “bum” has the most videos associated with it as we continue to view the shameless abuse of homeless individuals as less than a hate crime. The use of the word “bum” has become desensitized, even commonplace, in the language used in our day-to-day lives.

Beginning in 2001, four videos were produced and placed on a website promoting “bum fighting.” Today, over 6.8 million copies of the Bumfights DVDs and videos have been sold. As a result, teenagers began mocking the videos by recording themselves beating up homeless individuals just for the thrill of it. A majority of the time, participating homeless individuals were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Some were even lured into participating with money. In early 2008, the “bum fighting” website was shut down due to a civil lawsuit filed by the homeless individuals that were involved. The settlement also forced the company to provide financial compensation to its victims.

These videos represent a new form of dehumanization and exploitation against homeless individuals. NCH strongly discourages the use and purchase of these videos as the homeless people involved are manipulated into performing these outrageous acts.

Sadly, with the release of these videos, violent attacks against homeless individuals have soared across the nation and others have become inspired to model the videos. In early 2007, a video of two homeless men fighting while a crowd cheers surfaced in Daytona Beach, Florida. Advocates fear the promotion of the video will spur the production of similar videos.

Although major retailers have stopped selling bum fighting products, some smaller companies continue to do so. Additionally, these videos remain popular videos on sharing websites. We must act now to reverse this trend.

### **Example of a dehumanizing “Bum Fight” Video:**

TITLE: “Bum Fights”

LENGTH: 2:20

CONTENT: Producers pay homeless individuals with alcohol to perform humiliating acts. The homeless individuals then complete the following tasks: one individual is pushed down a rocky hill on a skateboard (in slow motion), another person jumps into a full dumpster from a rooftop, and two homeless people fight. In addition, the video portrays the homeless people chugging the alcohol payments before undertaking these tasks and explicit images of injuries received while completing these dangerous tasks. These explicit images and the use of slow motion effects add greatly to these moments of dehumanization.

RATING: 4 of 5 stars (4,902 ratings)

VIEW COUNT: 4,134,123

## **Recognizing Anti-Homeless Violence As Hate Crime**

By Professor Brian Levin

Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, California State University, San Bernardino

Even before a new expanded federal hate crime law wound its way through Washington, DC this year, history of another sort was quietly being made in another capital about 30 miles away. Maryland, one of the first states in the country to implement laws and statewide data collection mandates relating to hate crime in the 1980s, became the first state to non-discretionally add homeless status to its hate crime law on May 7, 2009 with the strong and persistent leadership of State Senator Alex Mooney (R- Frederick, MD). Other jurisdictions such as Los Angeles County, Seattle, Cleveland, California, Maine, Puerto Rico, and Alaska have also taken various steps to recognize homeless status in their laws or procedures, in recent years, but Maryland's action is the most sweeping of any jurisdiction to date. In almost one dozen other states, including California, Texas, and Florida, legislation has been introduced over the past four years to amend their hate crime statutes to include homeless status as a category as well. On July 31, the District of Columbia passed a bill to protect the homeless in its hate crime law. On August 6, it was signed into law by the Mayor.

### **Hate Crime Definition**

Hate crimes are discriminatory crimes where a substantial part of the motive is the actual or perceived status characteristic of another. Discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of people based on their membership in a group. The term "hate crime" itself is somewhat of a misnomer, because in the United States, abstract non-threatening expressions of bigotry are not criminally punishable. In the over 45 states that have hate crime laws, intentionally selecting a crime victim due to a socially recognizable status characteristic is either a distinct criminal offense itself or a factor that increases one's sentence upon conviction for an underlying offense like assault. Virtually every state statute initially protected on the basis of race, religion and ethnicity. As time passed state legislatures began to recognize that the protections in their hate crime laws excluded various other groups singled out for prejudice related violence. The next phase of hate crime legislation was to increase the number of protected groups in both existing statutes and proposed legislation. Currently, about 32 states protect on the basis of sexual orientation, 28 on the basis of gender and less than 10 include disability. A key provision of the Mathew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 was the addition of various protected categories such as sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability to federal hate crime law. In 2007, the FBI reported 7,624 hate crimes on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Of the 9,535 victims targeted, 10 were killed. A 2005 Bureau of Justice Statistics study put the number of annual hate crime incidents at a much higher level, 191,000-largely owing to obstacles relating to reporting and recordation. In 2008, the National Coalition for the Homeless reported that 106 homeless people were victims of hate crimes, 27 of which resulted in death.

### **The Origins of Hate Crime Laws**

The precursors of contemporary hate crime statutes extend back to the post Civil War period when civil rights laws were enacted to protect the exercise of various rights from racially based violence and intimidation. Over time some laws revolved around punishing interference with the exercise of various basic rights, such as using public thoroughfares, voting and housing without reference to the

group characteristic of a potential victim. In other instances, laws focused less on the right a victim was exercising, but instead on his or her group status characteristic. It is noteworthy to the contemporary discussion of homeless status to recognize that housing and the use of thoroughfares has been a longstanding protected civil right.

While a small number of older state statutes resembled the federal models, modern state statutes tended to be broader in their application. These laws include protection on the basis of a victim's real or perceived group status. Structurally, hate crime laws are of two main types, those that enhance the penalty for underlying offenses, and those that can be charged independently without the necessity of levying another charge. In *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 508 U.S. 476 (1993), the United States Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the constitutionality of properly drafted hate crime penalty enhancement laws. In the case, *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000), the Court ruled that in most instances discriminatory victim selection must be established beyond a reasonable doubt.

### **Invisible Hate Crimes: The Homeless People**

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of homelessness is the astronomical level and frequency of violent attack that these individuals face. Studies from the United States and Canada indicate that homeless individuals face an annual risk of criminal victimization as high as 66% to 82%, about the highest for any subgroup in the industrialized world. Some of the victimizations against homeless people relate to their actual physical lack of shelter, their location in higher crime areas, disability, as well as risks associated with relationships and activities that occur on the street.

However, over the last ten years a clear and alarming pattern has emerged that show the homeless population face an additional risk of extreme violence. Unprovoked targeted attacks by predominantly domiciled young males assailants that do not involve robbery, personal disputes, or drug dealing have claimed the lives of over 200 men and women nationally over the past decade. Methods include blunt force trauma, shootings, maiming, drowning, stabbings, and the burning of victims alive. Some of these individual cases and sporadic media coverage have brought the problem of bias-related violence against homeless people to the attention of legislators. However, an important partnership between advocacy groups such as National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) and researchers has shed additional light on the severe extent of the problem. Our Center in conjunction with NCH has found that there were twice as many homeless people killed in apparent bias related attacks than the combined total of every other hate crime category reported by the FBI in the last decade. This anti-homeless data actually excludes some of the other deadly violence that homeless people experience because attacks involving drugs, personal disputes, robbery, insurance fraud and homeless on homeless violence are not tabulated. While there have been many more non-homicide attacks, including rapes and aggravated assaults, the homicide data, which also represents a probable undercount, is considered the most reliable of all offense data.

Class-based violent prejudice against homeless people has become so entrenched in youth culture that it spawned a series of popular mass marketed videos, internet web pages, amateur youtube videos and its own sport label: "bum hunting." Moreover, class-based anti-homeless prejudice is frequently overlaid on top of other prejudices such as race, gender, homophobia, and mental illness

in the target selection process. Many homeless people are women, disabled, veterans, 59% are people of color, and many are gay youths forced from their homes<sup>11</sup>.

## **Making the Case: Anti-Homeless Violence As A Hate Crime**

The intentional bias based selection of homeless people by domiciled assailants is a hate crime that should be covered by applicable statutes. There are myriad facts to support this contention. A primary justification for doing so relates to the fact that the key rationales for enacting hate crime laws in general also specifically apply to the inclusion of homeless status. First, is the rationale that certain socially identifiable group characteristics relating to one's actual or perceived identity produce a heightened risk of criminal victimization beyond that of the general population. This is likely more true for the homeless than for many other protected groups. Another reason for including homeless status is the importance of deterring violent bigotry when it significantly burdens an identifiable victim group. Class based prejudice is not only a key motivational component of these attacks; it is actually a more accepted form of prejudice today than most others, thus making its acknowledgement by the law particularly compelling from both a symbolic and deterrence standpoint. A related rationale is that both victim subgroups and democratic society as a whole suffer when socially identifiable status groups are singled out for prejudiced based violence.

As research about the nature and extent of the attacks improved nearly all of North America's most influential and widely cited hate crime scholars have endorsed the idea of homelessness being a covered category in hate crime laws.

## **The Mutability Argument**

A frequent, though inaccurate, justification for excluding homeless status from hate crime laws is the fact that unlike race, homeless status is mutable, or changeable. While race is indeed an immutable characteristic, and racial discrimination was an initial harm that civil rights law continues to address, mutability itself has never been a preclusive factor for the inclusion of a group in civil rights laws. Constitutional scholar John Hart Ely pointed out that the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment, a significant and more rigid precursor of modern civil rights statutes, was itself left open ended, and not merely limited to race. As civil rights and later, hate crime protections evolved it has become clear that people are targeted for discrimination and violence based on various mutable characteristics as well. Even in the related and more stringent area of constitutional protection, the direction of analysis has broadened to include whether discreet and insular minorities that face stereotyping and discrimination are covered. Whatever the eventual outcome of the more narrow textual constitutional debate, the judicial and legislative record is quite clear that states have wide authority to enact civil rights protections beyond merely immutable characteristics. Hate crime categories like religion, nationality, gender, age or disability are either mutable or potentially so. The fact that one's religion can be altered does not make it less worthy of statutory protection-and for that reason it is covered in virtually every state statute. Furthermore, the

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<sup>11</sup> HUD's Annual Homeless Assessment Feb. 2007. <[http://www.huduser.org/publications/povsoc/annual\\_assess.html](http://www.huduser.org/publications/povsoc/annual_assess.html)>

fact that a particular status characteristic, like disability, is one that many would not choose has not precluded its inclusion in many state statutes either.

As a practical matter mutability is a diversion from proper analysis of whether a characteristic should be covered in hate crime laws, because many currently covered categories are in fact mutable. The main reasons for coverage are an increased risk of victimization and discriminatory victim selection. With most other types of non-hate crimes, financial gain or personal motive form the basis of victimization—thus allowing for a better opportunity at prevention, or at the very least, compliance to prevent escalation. However, when one is attacked because of an identity characteristic the risk of attack is enhanced because victims are not only attacked for what they do, but because of who they are.

Homeless people face notable other difficulties as crime victims. The lack of shelter, the effects of the elements, and frequently disability, make them more vulnerable to attack and defending themselves harder. Some have suggested that the vulnerability of homeless people make them better suited for vulnerable victim statutes. Vulnerability is a common characteristic of many hate victim groups because they are often targeted for group or surprise attacks. Like attacks against Orthodox Jews on the way to services or homophobic street violence, however, anti-homeless violence must also be punished and recognized for the underlying discriminatory motive which labels them as appropriate targets for attack in the first place.

Increasing penalties for anti-homeless attacks through hate crime laws is important for another reason. The homeless lack the legal protections available to people of means. Criminal statutes punish more severely those who illegally invade homes, trespass private property or who steal expensive items. However, because homeless people own little and are without housing, their aggressors often make realistic threats of retaliation and face a smaller range of sanctions if they are caught.

From a purely criminological perspective physical bias-motivated attacks against homeless people in this country, are indistinguishable from other hate crime—with one major exception. Homeless people face a rate of victimization that far exceeds that of traditionally covered groups. Offender characteristics, motive, deterrence, injury levels and weaponry are basically analogous to those found with all other hate crime victim groups. Assailants are often juveniles or young adults armed with imprecise weapons of opportunity like bricks, bottles or bats. Most rely on biased soft-core prejudiced stereotypes that are triggered into action by a desire for thrill seeking, turf protection, peer validation, or notions of group superiority. Also telling is the fact that among the most hard-core hate mongers, like neo-Nazi skinheads, prejudice and violence against homeless people is a notable part of their subculture as well.

Homeless people are among the most victimized groups in the nation, but often fail to report crimes. While many crimes against homeless people involve motives other than prejudice, many in fact do. Just as it is absurd to deny the discriminatory component of hate attacks done on the basis of other characteristics, such is the case regarding homeless status. For this reason, legal barriers are coming down as Republican and Democrat alike across the nation are working to combat the scourge of one of the remaining brutal forms of stealth hate violence.

## LEGISLATION

### I. Current Federal Law Addressing Hate Crimes

Federal hate crime laws do not currently include homeless individuals as a protected class. However, these laws form the backdrop for proposed expansions in federal hate crime law and serve as a template for reform proposals in the states. Three federal statutes are relevant.

The 1968 Civil Rights Act, 18 U.S.C. § 245, establishes a number of criminal penalties for the use of force or intimidation to prevent the free exercise of civil rights on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin. The Act provides penalties for whoever, “by force or threat of force willfully injures, intimidates or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with” another (1) “because of” that person’s “race, color, religion or national origin,” and (2) “because [that person] is or has been” attending a public school, serving as a juror in state court, traveling in a facility of interstate commerce, making use of a public accommodation, seeking or taking employment, or making use of the benefits of any state program. *Id.* § 245(b) (2). The Act also establishes penalties for whoever, “by force or threat of force willfully injures, intimidates or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with” another person for (1) “participating” in federal programs or civil duties “without discrimination on account of race, color, religion or national origin,” or (2) “affording another person or class of persons opportunity or protection to so participate.” *Id.* §245(4) (A), (B).

State and local law enforcement agencies are expressly authorized to enforce the Act. Federal prosecutions are also permitted, although these require “the certification in writing of the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the Associate Attorney General, or any Assistant Attorney General specially designated by the Attorney General that in his judgment a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice....” 18 U.S.C. §245(1).

The 1990 Hate Crime Statistics Act<sup>12</sup>, codified as a note to 28 U.S.C. § 534, requires the Attorney General to collect data on certain “crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, including where appropriate the crimes of murder, non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation; arson; and destruction, damage or vandalism of property.” The Act also directed the Attorney General to establish guidelines for the collection of such data. The Attorney General delegated this task to the F.B.I., which has defined a hate crime as a “bias crime”—that is, a crime “committed against a person or property which is *motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias* against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or

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<sup>12</sup> Pub. L. No. 101-275, Apr. 23, 1990, 104 Stat. 140, as amended Pub. L. No. 103-322, § 320926, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2131 (inserting “disability”); Pub. L. No. 104-155, § 7, July 3, 1996, 110 Stat. 1394 (reauthorizing the Act). The Act directs the Attorney General to use authority granted under 28 U.S.C. § 534 to acquire hate crime data.

ethnicity/national origin.”<sup>13</sup> Under these guidelines, crimes based on bias should be reported to the FBI by local law enforcement agencies if there is *objective* evidence that the crime was motivated wholly or partially by bias.<sup>14</sup> The guidelines themselves provide a non-exhaustive list of twelve factors that might be considered “objective evidence” that the offender was motivated by bias.<sup>15</sup>

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994<sup>16</sup>, codified as a note to 28 U.S.C. § 994, directed the United States Sentencing Commission to “promulgate guidelines or amend existing guidelines to provide sentencing enhancements of not less than 3 offense levels for offenses that the finder of fact at trial determines beyond a reasonable doubt are hate crimes.” Under guidelines issued under this statute, a “hate crime” is defined as a “crime in which the defendant *intentionally selects* a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.”<sup>17</sup> (Emphasis added).

This is a far narrower definition than applies in the context of the data collection statute. In order for the enhancement to apply, the court or, in a jury trial, the jury, must find beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant intentionally selected his or her victim because of the race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of the victim or another person. If the defendant pleads guilty or no contest, the Sentencing Guidelines recommend that the court finds such facts beyond a reasonable doubt before applying the enhancement. *Id.*

As the Supreme Court has recently made clear, the Guidelines are only advisory and federal

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Dept of Justice, Fed. Bureau of Investigation, Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines 2 (1999) [hereinafter Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines]. Notably, the Act itself refers only to “ethnicity,” however the Department of Justice has interpreted ethnicity to include both ethnicity and national origin. *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines, *supra* note 2, at 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 4-5. These factors are: (1) the offender and victim are of a different race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and/or ethnicity/national origin; (2) oral comments, written statements, or gestures indicating bias were made by the offender; (3) drawings, markings, symbols or graffiti indicating bias were left at the crime scene; (4) objects, items, or things indicating bias were used in the commission of the offense; (5) the victim belongs to a racial, religious, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic/national origin group that is “overwhelmingly outnumbered by other residents in the neighborhood where the victim lives and the incident took place”; (6) the victim was visiting a neighborhood where hate crimes against other members of the victim’s racial, religious, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic/national origin group occurred and tensions remained high; (7) other similar incidents occurred in the same locality against victims who shared the victim’s group affiliation; (8) “a substantial portion” of the community in which the crime occurred believe the incident was motivated by bias; (9) the victim was engaged in activities promoting his or her group through participation in an advocacy organization or by attending demonstrations; (10) the incident coincided with a holiday or day of importance to the victim’s group; (11) the offender had prior involvement in a similar hate crime or is a member of a hate group; and (12) there are indications of hate-group involvement. *Id.* at 5.

<sup>16</sup> Pub. L. No. 103-322, § 280003, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2096.

<sup>17</sup> United States Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 3A1.1(a) (2006). Note, however, that the Sentencing Guidelines only apply in federal court, where the defendant has committed a federal crime, a crime on federal land (including on Indian reservations), or is otherwise subject to penalties under federal law.

sentencing judges are required to take into account other factors when sentencing defendants.<sup>18</sup> The impact of the sentencing enhancement law going forward may therefore be reduced.

## II. Proposed Hate Crime Legislation in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress

In 2009, a number of proposals were introduced to expand federal hate crime law. Two pieces of legislation have been introduced that specifically includes homeless people in hate crime laws.

### A. Hate Crime Legislation Directed Toward Crimes Against Homeless Persons

In 2009, two hate-crimes bills mentioned the homeless, specifically, so far. H.R. 3419 was introduced on July 30. This bill seeks to amend the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes against the homeless. U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and 13 other U.S. Representatives co-sponsored this bill. The bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

H.R. 262, the David Ray Ritcheson Hate Crime Prevention Act, was introduced by U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX). The bill provides support to victims of hate crimes. Those victims who lose their jobs due to the attack can claim unemployment insurance. If a victim loses their house, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development can use grants to provide housing for victims including those who were homeless before the attack and are now in need of assistance because of the attack.

### B. Hate Crime Legislation Directed Toward Crimes Against Other Persons

As in sessions of Congress, the bill that has made the most progress toward enactment is the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, known in the Senate as the Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This Act would, among other things, add a new section to the federal code entitled “Hate Crime Acts,” which would create penalties for certain kinds of completed or attempted willful injury against a person because of the person’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See *United States v. Booker*, 543 U.S. 220, 245-46 (2005) (declaring unconstitutional the statute creating mandatory Guidelines and holding Guidelines should only be applied in an advisory fashion as one of several factors to consider at sentencing); see also *Gall v. United States*, \_\_\_ S. Ct. \_\_\_, 2007 WL 4292116, at \*7 (Dec. 10, 2007) (holding the Guidelines’ sentencing range is a starting point for determining a defendant’s sentence, but the district court should not presume the range is reasonable). The factors the sentencing court must consider are enumerated in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(1)-(7).

<sup>19</sup> The Act breaks out “offenses involving actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin” and “offenses involving actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.” See, e.g., H.R. 1592, sec. 6(a)(1), (a)(2) (as approved by the House). In order to legitimize federal action and invoke federal jurisdiction, the bill requires that offenses against individuals in the latter group have a relationship to interstate or foreign commerce, thereby implicating Congress’s power to regulate under the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. See H. Rep. No. 110-113 at 14-15 (2007) (explaining bill includes requirement of a nexus between crimes

Like the 1968 Civil Rights Act, this legislation would permit federal enforcement, but only if a “certifying” federal official indicates there is “reasonable cause to believe the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability” was a motivating factor underlying the defendant’s alleged conduct; even then, federal prosecution is permitted only after the certifying federal official consults with state or local law enforcement and determines that the state has asked the federal government to assume jurisdiction, has requested the federal government assume jurisdiction, or that a prior state prosecution has left “demonstrably unvindicated the Federal interest in eradicating bias-motivated violence.”<sup>20</sup>

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act would also authorize the Attorney General to provide non-financial assistance, including technical, forensic, and prosecutorial assistance, to state, local, and tribal law enforcement to aid in investigation and prosecution of violent felony crimes “motivated by prejudice based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim,” and would authorize \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to provide federal grants of up to \$100,000 per entity per year to state, local, and tribal law enforcement for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes.<sup>21</sup>

On April 29, 2009, the House passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, H.R.1913. This bill allows federal law to include crimes against people based on a persons’ gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability as a hate crime. The bill will improve the resources of state and local law enforcement agencies to prevent, investigate, and prosecute hate crimes.<sup>22</sup> On July 24, 2009, the U.S. Senate approved S. 1390, the Department of Defense Authorization legislation-and the vehicle for the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) by a vote of 87 to 7. The next step is a conference between the House and Senate to reconcile their different versions of this legislation.

In 2009, H.R. 823, introduced by U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney of New York (D-NY), would

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of prejudice based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability and Congress’s power to regulate commerce in order to alleviate concerns about the provision’s constitutionality). The nexus between commerce and offenses based on race/color and interstate commerce is not required, however, because the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution has been interpreted to explicitly authorize Congress to regulate violence committed on this basis. *See* H. Rep. No. 110-113 at 14. Finally, religion and national origin are included in both groupings because, “to the extent that there may be open questions regarding the precise contours of the range of circumstances under which the enforcement provision of the 13th amendment authorizes Congress to criminalize hate crimes committed on the basis of religion [and national origin], the legislation has included hate crimes based on religious beliefs [and national origin] in both sections.” *Id.* at 15 & n.21.

<sup>20</sup> *See, e.g.*, H.R. 1592, sec. 6(b). “Certifying” federal officials are “the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the Associate Attorney General, or any Assistant Attorney General specially designated by the Attorney General.” *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> The non-financial assistance portion of the legislation provides federal assistance not only for offenses that qualify as hate crimes under federal law, but also for crimes that are “a violation of [] State, local, or Tribal hate crime laws.” *See, e.g.*, H.R. 1592, sec. 3(a)(C) (as approved by the House). The potential incorporation of this language into federal law underscores the importance of state- and local-level legislative action.

<sup>22</sup> H.R. 1913. The Local Law Enforcement Act, as introduced by John Conyers Jr [R-MI].

amend the Hate Crime Statistics Act to add crimes based on gender to the types of crimes on which the FBI is obligated to collect hate crime data.

### **III. Adopted City/County/State Legislation/Resolutions Directed Toward Crimes Against Homeless Persons**

Four states, four cities, and Puerto Rico have enacted laws addressing hate crimes against homeless persons. First, in 2004, California passed a law requiring the Commission on Peace Officer Standards to develop a two-hour telecourse to be made available to all law enforcement agencies in California on crimes against homeless people and how to deal effectively and humanely with homeless people, including those with disabilities. The telecourse is to include information on multi-mission criminal extremism, which includes crimes committed in whole or in part because of the victims' actual or perceived homelessness. In developing the telecourse, the commission is to consult subject-matter experts including, but not limited to, homeless and formerly homeless person in California, homeless service providers and advocates for homeless people in California, experts on the disabilities that homeless people commonly suffer from, the California Council of Churches, the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Senate Office of Research, and the Criminal Justice Statistics Center of the California Department of Justice.<sup>23</sup>

In 2006, the Maine Legislature amended its criminal code to permit courts to take into account for sentencing purposes a defendant's selection of a victim or target property because of the "homelessness of that person or of the owner or occupant of the property."<sup>24</sup> This was the first discretionary hate crime law to include homeless people. It is at the discretion of the judge to determine if the crime was of hate and if the perpetrator should receive a harsher punishment.

In 2007, Puerto Rico passed legislation that was designed to give much needed support to homeless people. Encompassed in this law, is a section emphasizing that homeless people should not be discriminated against for any reason. Anti-discrimination will be addressed through the creation of a council (Multi-Sector Homeless Population Support Council) that will take action to support homeless individuals<sup>25</sup>.

In 2008, Alaska enacted SB 211. This bill added homeless status to an existing law creating

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<sup>23</sup> Cal. Penal Code § 13519.6(b)(6), (7) (2007) (enacted 2004). Per Section 13519.6, the California Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training requires four hours of training on hate crimes as part of law enforcement officers' regular basic training course and special investigators' basic training course, but does not mandate the use of a particular curriculum. See Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training, State of California, Legislative Mandates, <http://www.post.ca.gov/Training/Mandates.asp> (updated 8/2004). Note, however, that California's formal definition of "hate crime" does not include homeless persons as a target classification. See Cal. Penal Code, § 422.55 (encompassing disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and the "association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics"). Recent legislative efforts have focused on expanding the definition of hate crimes to include crimes based on homeless status. See Cal. S.B. 122 (introduced Jan. 22, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Me. Rev. Stat. Ann. Tit. 17-A, § 1151(8)(B) (2006) (enacted 2005). "Homelessness" is not defined in the Maine Criminal Code.

<sup>25</sup> Law 130. Concilio Multisectorial en Apoyo a la Poblacion sin Hogar. Approved September 27, 2007.

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

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more protection for vulnerable populations.<sup>26</sup>

On May 7, 2009, Maryland SB 151 was signed into law by Governor O'Malley<sup>27</sup>. This bill adds the homeless as a protected class to its hate crimes law. It is, officially, the first state in the US to non-discretionally acknowledge attacks against homeless people as hate crimes. This law takes effect on October 1, 2009.

Finally, four localities adopted city/county wide ordinances to criminalize malicious harassment against homeless individuals.

On December 10, 2007, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to amend the city's malicious harassment statute to criminalize particular acts, including malicious and intentional injury or threats against a person, or destruction of or damage to the person's property, because of the perception that the person is homeless.

On August 12, 2008, Cleveland, OH passed an ordinance dictating that repercussions for "intimidating" or harassing a homeless person due to their status would be more severe<sup>28</sup>.

In March of 2009, the Los Angeles Board of County Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution requesting the following from the Human Relations Commission: incorporate awareness of homelessness into high school and youth programs to encourage respect and humanization of the homeless, create trainings for law enforcement to investigate crimes against the homeless with an eye out for evidence of bias or discrimination against the victim due to disability, track crimes of hate against the homeless in the Commissions database and monitor trends to educate the community, encourage the Sheriff, District Attorney, and city/county prosecutors to track and report crimes against homeless people to help in developing actions to prevent and stop these violent acts, and finally to work with all Human Relations Commissions across the county to create better practices and data collection.<sup>29</sup>

The Washington, DC City Council approved a bill adding homeless people to its hate crimes law. It was signed into law by the Mayor on August 6, 2009.

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<sup>26</sup> Aggravating Factor: Homelessness. Alaska SB 211. Alaska State Legislature. 6/6/08(enacted).

<[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_bill.asp?bill=SB%20211&session=25](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=SB%20211&session=25)>

<sup>27</sup> Sponsors: Senators Mooney, Haines, Jacobs, Kittleman, Munson, Simonaire, and Stone. Hate Crimes - Prohibitions and Protected Classes - Expansion to Homeless Persons and Groups and Gender. SB 151. 4/16/09 (enrolled).

<<http://mlis.state.md.us/2009rs/billfile/SB0151.htm>>

<sup>28</sup> City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance No. 830-08. Intimidation of a Homeless Person. Passed: 8-6-08, effective: 8-12-08

<sup>29</sup> Yaroslavsky and Knabe. Motion By Yaroslavsky and Knabe. Homelessness and Human Relations Committee. AGN. NO. 11. March 24, 2009.

## IV. Proposed State and City Laws Directed Toward Crimes Against Homeless Persons

In 2009, five states—California, Florida, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas—considered adding homeless individuals to categories of persons protected by state hate crime statutes.<sup>30</sup> Although the details and scope of the proposed legislation in each state/city differs, each proposal, if enacted, would result in enhanced penalties for crimes based on the victim’s “homelessness” or “homeless status.” The legislation in California, South Carolina and Florida is still pending. The legislation in Texas and Ohio has failed. Massachusetts, Ohio, and Nevada introduced bills in 2007 and 2008, but did not succeed in passing them, and currently have not introduced any new versions.

In addition, some of the states’ proposals would have gone further. For example, the Nevada bill would have given victims of hate crimes who are injured the ability to recover punitive damages and attorney’s fees from the perpetrator in addition to the ability to collect actual damages;<sup>31</sup> it also would have added “status of a homeless person” to the state’s hate crime statistics reporting system.<sup>32</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

The National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty recommend the following:

1. Inclusion of housing status in the pending state and federal hate crimes legislation.

### **H.R. 3419**

Introduced by U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) in the current session of Congress

**Purpose:** To amend the Hate Crime Statistics Act to include crimes against homeless persons

### **H.R. 262- David Ray Ritcheson Hate Crime Prevention Act**

Introduced by U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) in the current session of Congress

**Purpose:** To provide support to victims of hate crimes

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<sup>30</sup> The proposed bills are: California Senate Bill 122, section 1 (amending California Penal Code Sections 422.55 & 422.56, California’s hate crime statute, to add “homeless status” to the list of “actual or perceived” characteristics protected under that legislation); Nevada Assembly Bill 83, sections 1 & 2 (amending Nevada Revised Statutes Sections 193.1675 & 207.185, to add “status as a homeless person” to the state’s statute providing enhanced penalties for hate crimes); Texas Senate Bill 228, section 1.

<sup>31</sup> Nevada Assembly Bill 83, sections 1 & 2 (amending Nevada Revised Statutes Sections 193.1675 & 207.185, to add “status as a homeless person” to the state’s statute providing enhanced penalties for hate crimes); Nev. A.B. 83, sec. 4 (amending Nev. Rev. Stat. § 41.690).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.* sec. 5 (amending Nev. Rev. Stat. § 179A.175).

2. Awareness training at police academies and departments nationwide for trainees and police officers about the causes and solutions to homelessness and how to deal effectively and humanely with people experiencing homelessness in their communities.
3. Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureaus (made up of homeless and formerly homeless people) become established in communities around the country. Speakers would visit both public and private schools in communities for the purposes of information and education, as young people perpetrate a significant portion of the violence against homeless persons. With support from AmeriCorps\*VISTA, NCH has established Speakers' Bureaus in Florida and Georgia. NCH plans to launch bureaus in more states in 2009. For more help and technical assistance in establishing a local Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau in your community, contact Michael O'Neill, Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau Project Director at: Ph. (202) 462-4822 Ext. 222; Email: [moneill@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:moneill@nationalhomeless.org), or visit <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/faces/index.html>
4. A public statement by the U.S. Department of Justice acknowledging that hate crimes and/or violence against people experiencing homelessness is a serious national problem.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice issues guidelines for local law enforcement on how to investigate and work with people experiencing homelessness based on recommendations from the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. The U.S. Department of Justice recommends improvements to state laws on how to better protect against violence directed at people experiencing homelessness, including tougher penalties.
6. With the assistance of the National Coalition for the Homeless, the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, and criminal justice professionals, add "housing status" information to the checklist of data maintained as part of the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) maintained by the FBI. Similar efforts should be undertaken by state uniform crime reporting (UCR) agencies.
7. A governmental study into the nature and scope of hate crimes and/or violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. This proposed study will address the following:
  - Causes of hate crimes/violence.
  - Circumstances that contribute to or were responsible for the perpetrators' behavior.
  - Beliefs held by the perpetrators of these crimes and how their beliefs have changed since conviction.
  - Thoughts and advice from the perpetrators to others who are considering hate crimes/violence against the homeless population.
  - Factors in the community that may be contributing to targeting of homeless persons, such as measures that criminalize homelessness.

- Contributing factors to homeless persons' vulnerability, such as lack of adequate shelter or housing, and ways to address those factors.
  - Community education, prevention, and law enforcement strategies.
8. Cities should implement more constructive approaches to homelessness and not implement or enforce criminalization of homelessness measures.
  9. The federal, state, and local governments should prioritize creating and providing adequate affordable housing and services to bring an end to homelessness in our communities.

## MODEL CITY/COUNTY/STATE LEGISLATION/RESOLUTIONS

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) collaborated with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) to promote the following legislation.

On the federal level, in 2009, there are two bills being considered in the U.S. House of Representatives.

U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and 13 other U.S. Representatives introduced H.R. 3419. The bill seeks to amend the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes against homeless people. The other co-sponsors are (as of July 30, 2009): Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Rep. James McGovern (D-MA), Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), and Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL).

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) introduced H.R. 262, the David Ray Ritcheson Hate Crime Prevention Act, which provides support to victims of hate crimes. Those victims who lose their jobs due to an attack can claim unemployment insurance. If the victim loses their house, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development can use grants to provide housing for victims including those who were homeless before the attack and are now in need of assistance because of the attack.

With hate crimes/violence against homeless people escalating, NCH and NLCHP are asking local homeless advocates/direct service providers to have legislation introduced in your respective state legislatures and/or city/county legislative bodies. Below is a model piece of legislation that we recommend.

- There are four states (Alaska, California, Maryland, and Maine) that have passed pieces of this proposed model legislation. Maryland was the first and only state to non-discretionally add homelessness to its hate crimes law. Legislation is currently pending in California, Florida, and South Carolina. The Washington, DC City Council approved adding homeless people to its hate crimes law on July 31, 2009. It was signed into law by the Mayor on August 6, 2009.

For help and advice in getting this model legislation introduced in your city/county/state legislative body, please contact:

Michael Stoops, Executive Director, NCH  
Ph: (202) 462-4822 x234; Email: [mstoops@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:mstoops@nationalhomeless.org)  
and

Tulin Ozdeger, Civil Rights Program Director, NLCHP  
Ph: (202) 638-2535 x212; Email: [tozdeger@nlchp.org](mailto:tozdeger@nlchp.org)

If you succeed in getting legislation introduced, please let us know right away. We can then mobilize our grassroots members in your state to assist in the lobbying efforts.

## **Model Language for City/County/State Legislation/Resolutions**

Whereas, hate crimes and violence against homeless persons has become a nationwide epidemic, with 880 reported cases of violence against homeless people over the past decade (1999-2008), resulting in 244 deaths;

Whereas, the scope of prohibitions against the commission of hate crimes against certain groups of persons should include homeless persons;

Whereas, understanding violent crimes committed against homeless persons and adequate punishment for such crimes play key roles in preventing and managing violence against homeless persons; and

Whereas, law enforcement needs proper training to handle and prevent violent crimes against homeless persons;

Be it enacted:

- (1) Definition of Homeless Person – For purposes of this section, “homeless person” refers to an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - (a) A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
  - (b) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including motels, hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing; or
  - (c) Housing of other persons in which the individual is temporarily staying due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- (2) The state hate crimes statute shall be expanded to include homeless persons as a protected class.
- (3) Prohibition on Hate Crimes against Homeless Persons – The following acts shall be deemed a hate crime and prohibited when carried out against a person on the basis that person’s status as a homeless person:
  - (a) Assault, aggravated assault, battery, or aggravated battery upon the person; or

- (b) Acts that deface, damage, or destroy or attempt to deface, damage, or destroy the personal property of the person; or
  - (c) Acts that result in the death of the person; or
  - (d) Any other crime against the person.
- (4) Punishments for Hate Crimes Against Homeless Persons –
- (a) A person convicted of aggravated assault or aggravated battery upon a homeless person based on the victim's status as a homeless person shall be sentenced to a minimum term of 3 years and fined not more than \$10,000. The person shall be ordered by the sentencing judge to make any restitution to the victim of the offense and to perform 500 hours of community service work. Restitution and community service work shall be in addition to any fine or sentence that may be imposed and shall not be in lieu thereof.
  - (b) Whenever a person is charged with committing an assault or aggravated assault or a battery or aggravated battery upon a homeless person based on the victim's status as a homeless person, the offense for which the person is charged shall be reclassified as follows:
    - (i) In the case of aggravated battery, from a felony of the second degree to a felony of the first degree.
    - (ii) In the case of aggravated assault, from a felony of the third degree to a felony of the second degree.
    - (iii) In the case of battery, from a misdemeanor of the first degree to a felony of the third degree.
    - (iv) In the case of assault, from a misdemeanor of the second degree to a misdemeanor of the first degree.
- (5) State Office of the Attorney General Study -
- (a) The Office of the Attorney General shall assess the extent of the problem of crimes against homeless persons and develop a plan to prevent these crimes and apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes.
  - (b) In developing the assessment and plan, the Office of the Attorney General shall consult homeless persons, service providers and advocates for homeless persons and law enforcement agencies with experience investigating crimes against homeless persons.

- (6) Law Enforcement Training on Hate Crimes against Homeless Persons –
- (a) The lead state law enforcement agency shall develop a telecourse that shall be made available to all law enforcement agencies in the state. Every state, local, and correctional law enforcement agency shall certify that each of its officers has taken the course. The telecourse shall address crimes against homeless persons and methods of dealing effectively and humanely with homeless persons. The course shall include instruction on each of the following topics:
- (i) Information about homelessness, including causes of homelessness, its impact, and solutions to homelessness.
  - (ii) Indicators of hate crimes.
  - (iii) The impact of these crimes on the victim, the victim’s family, and the community.
  - (iv) The assistance and compensation available to victims.
  - (v) The laws dealing with hate crimes and the legal rights of, and the remedies available to, victims of hate crimes.
  - (vi) Law enforcement procedures, reporting, and documentation of hate crimes.
  - (vii) Techniques and methods to handle incidents of hate crimes.
  - (viii) The special problems inherent in hates crimes against homeless persons and techniques on how to deal with these special problems.
- (b) The lead state law enforcement agency shall develop a protocol that law enforcement personnel are required to follow, including, but not limited, to the following:
- (i) Preventing likely hate crimes by, among other things, establishing contact with persons and communities that are likely targets, and forming and cooperating with community hate crime prevention and response networks.
  - (ii) Responding to reports of hate crimes, including reports of hate crimes committed under color of legal authority.
  - (iii) Providing victim assistance and follow up, including community follow up.
  - (iv) Reporting methods and procedures to track hate crimes against homeless persons.

- (c) In developing the telecourse, the lead state law enforcement agency shall consult subject matter experts including, but not limited to, the following:
- (i) Homeless and formerly homeless individuals;
  - (ii) The National Coalition for the Homeless and National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty;
  - (iii) Other local homeless service providers and advocates for homeless people;
  - (iv) Experts on the disabilities homeless persons commonly experience; and
  - (v) Law enforcement agencies with experience investigating hate crimes against homeless people.

## I. ADOPTED CITY/COUNTY/STATE LEGISLATION/RESOLUTIONS

Legislators and advocates in different parts of the country have come up with some concrete, practical ways to address the growing trend of violence against homeless people. These models can be used to implement similar measures in other states and communities.

### CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION

Senate Bill 1234, which was introduced in February of 2004 by State Senator Kuehl, became public law in September of the same year and went into effect in July of 2005. It is now California Penal Code 13519.64.

#### **California Penal Code 13519.64:**

(a) The Legislature finds and declares that research, including "Special Report to the Legislature on Senate Resolution 18: Crimes Committed Against Homeless Persons" by the Department of Justice and "Hate, Violence, and Death: A Report on Hate Crimes Against People Experiencing Homelessness from 1999-2002" by the National Coalition for the Homeless demonstrate that California has had serious and unaddressed problems of crime against homeless persons, including homeless persons with disabilities.

(b) (1) By July 1, 2005, the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, using available funding, shall develop a two-hour telecourse to be made available to all law enforcement agencies in California on crimes against homeless persons and on how to deal effectively and humanely with homeless persons, including homeless persons with disabilities. The telecourse shall include information on multimission criminal extremism, as defined in Section 13519.6. In developing the telecourse, the commission shall consult subject-matter experts including, but not limited to, homeless and formerly homeless persons in California, service providers and advocates for homeless persons in California, experts on the disabilities that homeless persons commonly suffer, the California Council of Churches, the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Senate Office of Research, and the Criminal Justice Statistics Center of the Department of Justice.

(2) Every state law enforcement agency, and every local law enforcement agency, to the extent that this requirement does not create a state-mandated local program cost, shall provide the telecourse to its peace officers.

### MAINE LEGISLATION

This law implements the recommendations of the Attorney General's working group regarding the advisability of implementing aggravating sentencing factors for crimes against persons who are homeless, which was established pursuant to Public Law 2005, chapter 393. The law amends the purpose section of the general sentencing provisions of the Maine Criminal Code by adding homelessness to the list of factors, such as the age, religion and sexual orientation of a victim that a court considers in determining the gravity of an offense in sentencing.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

Sec. 1. 17-A MRSA §1151, sub-§8, ¶B, as enacted by PL 1995, c. 149, §1, is amended to read:

B. The selection by the defendant of the person against whom the crime was committed or of the property that was damaged or otherwise affected by the crime because of the race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or homelessness of that person or of the owner or occupant of that property.

## ALASKA LEGISLATION

SB 211 was enacted in 2008. This bill added homeless status to an existing law creating more protection for vulnerable populations.

**Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Alaska:**

Section 1. AS 12.55.155(c)(5)

(5) the defendant knew or reasonably should have known that the victim of the offense was particularly vulnerable or incapable of resistance due to advanced age, disability, ill health, homelessness, or extreme youth or was for any other reason substantially incapable of exercising normal physical or mental powers of resistance;

## MARYLAND LEGISLATION

SB 151 was signed into law on May 7, 2009, by Governor O'Malley (D-MD). Upon signing, Maryland became the first state to non-discretionally include homeless people in its hate crimes law. The law is set to become effective October 1, 2009.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland, that the laws of Maryland read as follows:**

Because of another's race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin, or because another is homeless, a person may not:

- (i) commit a crime against that person;
  - (ii) damage the real or personal property of that person;
  - (iii) deface, damage, or destroy, or attempt to deface, damage, or destroy the real or personal property of that person; or
  - (iv) burn or attempt to burn an object on the real or personal property of that person; or
- (2) commit a violation of item (1) of this section that:
- (i) except as provided in item (ii) of this item, involves a separate crime that is a felony; or
  - (ii) results in the death of the victim.

10-305.

A person may not deface, damage, or destroy, attempt to deface, damage, or destroy, burn or attempt to burn an object on, or damage the real or personal property

connected to a building that is publicly or privately owned, leased, or used, including a cemetery, library, meeting hall, recreation center, or school:

- (1) because a person or group of a particular race, color, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin, or because a person or group that is homeless, has contacts or is associated with the building; or
- (2) if there is evidence that exhibits animosity against a person or group, because of the race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin of that person or group or because that person or group is homeless

## PUERTO RICO LEGISLATION

Puerto Rico passed legislation that was designed to give much needed support to homeless people. Encompassed in this law, is a section emphasizing that homeless people should not be discriminated against for any reason. Anti-discrimination will be addressed through the creation of a council (Multi-Sector Homeless Population Support Council) that will take action to support homeless individuals. It was approved September 27, 2007.

Due to the length and nature of the law, an excerpt is not available. Seek Puerto Rico's Legislature page: <http://www.oslpr.org/english/master.asp?NAV=LEYES>. Search for Law 130.

## SEATTLE, WASHINGTON LEGISLATION

Council Bill 116025 was signed by the Mayor of Seattle on December 13, 2007. This ordinance added homeless persons as a protected class to a standing city ordinance regarding malicious harassment.

### **Be it ordained by the City of Seattle as follows:**

An ordinance relating to the criminal code and amending Section 12A.06.115:

A. A person is guilty of malicious harassment if he or she maliciously and intentionally commits one (1) of the following acts because of his or her perception of another person's gender identity, homelessness, marital status, political ideology, age, or parental status:

1. Causes physical injury to another person; or
2. By threat places another person in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property or harm to the person or property of a third person; provided however, that it shall not constitute malicious harassment for a person to speak or act in a critical, insulting, or deprecatory way so long as his or her words or conduct do not constitute a threat of harm to the person or property of another person; or
3. Causes physical damage to or the destruction of the property of another person.

B. "Threat" means to communicate, directly or indirectly, the intent to:

1. Cause bodily injury to another; or
2. Cause damage to the property of another; or
3. Subject another person to physical confinement or restraint.

C. For purposes of this section:

1. "Gender identity" means a person's identity, expression, or physical characteristics, whether or not traditionally associated with one's biological sex or one's sex at birth, including transsexual, transvestite, and transgendered, and including a person's attitudes, preferences, beliefs, and practices pertaining thereto.

2. "Homelessness" means the status or condition of being without a home, including, but not limited to, the state of living in the streets.

D. Every person who, in the commission of malicious harassment, shall commit any other crime, may be punished therefore as well as for the malicious harassment, and may be prosecuted for each crime separately.

## LOS ANGELES RESOLUTION

In March of 2009, the Los Angeles Board of County Supervisors passed a unanimous resolution requesting the following from the Human Relations Commission: incorporate awareness of homelessness into high school and youth programs to encourage respect and humanization of the homeless, create trainings for law enforcement to investigate crimes against homeless people with an eye out for evidence of bias or discrimination against the victim due to disability, track crimes of hate against homeless people in the Commissions database and monitor trends to educate the community, encourage the Sheriff, District Attorney, and city/county prosecutors to track and report crimes against homeless people to help in developing actions to prevent and stop these violent acts, and finally to work with all Human Relations Commissions across the county to create better practices and data collection.

**The Los Angeles Board of County Supervisors requests the Human Relations Commission to:**  
AGN. NO. 11

- 1.) Integrate the issues of prejudice and violence against the homeless into its zero hour human relations model high school initiative and its other youth projects to promote a greater understanding of how people become homeless, and to humanize the challenges of homelessness to counter the lack of respect and compassion;
- 2.) Include in all Commission hate crime trainings conducted for law enforcement professionals an emphasis on investigating whether a crime against a homeless person is motivated by discriminatory attitudes or bias against a disability, including mental or physical disabilities, and to track such crimes;
- 3.) Create a new category in the Commissions hate crime database for those targeting the homeless, and include such occurrences in the Commission's annual hate crime report, in order to identify

patterns in location, times, type of crime, and motivation, and notify law enforcement and community members of such trends;

4.) Request the Sheriff and District Attorney, as well as city/county prosecutors to track and report all crimes against the homeless, so as to be able to determine whether ant-homeless crime and violence is becoming more or less frequent, what types of crimes they are, and where they are taking place in order to assist efforts to develop strategies and actions to prevent and reduce such crime;

5.) Coordinate and communicate with Human Relations Commissions countywide to maximize any opportunities for collaboration;

## **CLEVELAND, OHIO ORDINANCE**

On August 6, 2008 the Cleveland, OH City Council passed an ordinance dictating that repercussions for “intimidating” or harassing a homeless person due to their status would be more severe.

### **The City of Cleveland Codified Ordinance: 623.161 Intimidation of a Homeless Person: Ord. No. 830-08**

(a) As used in this Section, “homeless person” means either of the following:

(1) An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence;

(2) An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that meets any of the following criteria:

(i) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

(ii) An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized;

(iii) A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular accommodation for human beings.

(b) No person shall violate Sections 2903.05, 2903.13, 2903.14, 2903.21, 2903.22, 2903.211, 2903.31, 2905.03, 2905.12, 2907.06, 2909.03, 2909.06, 2909.07, 2913.01, 2913.02 of the Revised Code or Sections 619.04, 621.01, 621.03, 621.04, 621.06, 621.07, 621.071, 621.08, 621.09, 621.14, 623.01, 623.02, 623.03, 625.01, 625.05 of the Codified Ordinances if the offender commits the violation with the intent to cause harm to any victim of the violation because that victim is a homeless person.

(c) Whoever violates this section is guilty of intimidation of a homeless person. Intimidation of a homeless person is an offense of the next higher degree than the offense the commission of which is a necessary element of intimidation of a homeless person. If the offense committed under section (b) is a misdemeanor of the first degree, Intimidation of a Homeless Person is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(Ord. No. 830-08. Passed 8-6-08, eff. 8-12-08)

## **Washington, DC Legislation**

Washington, DC City Council approved a bill adding homeless people to its hate crimes law. It was signed into law by the Mayor on August 6, 2009

## II. PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES

### FACES OF HOMELESSNESS SPEAKERS' BUREAUS

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau is one of the most effective public education and organizing tools of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Its mission, in keeping with that of NCH, is to bring people together to identify issues to be tackled in the movement to end homelessness. By discussing the stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions of homelessness, we can begin to move past our obstacles, get to the root causes of poverty, and figure out how we can prevent its worst outcomes.

In addition to accomplishing this educational goal, participating in a Faces Panel empowers people who have experienced homelessness. Members of the Speakers' Bureau feel the satisfaction of making a difference in their own lives and the lives of others by helping people to understand a highly misunderstood situation. Using their own experiences, speakers put a human "face" on homelessness and inspire individuals to become involved in the struggle to end homelessness on both the local and national level.

Typically, the Speakers' Bureaus present to middle school, high school, and college students, civic organizations, religious groups, and at other special events.

The standard presentation format includes a short video about homelessness in America, up to three homeless or formerly homeless panelists, and a moderator to facilitate the discussion and a brief question and answer session. Participants are strongly encouraged to ask questions throughout and to engage in conversation.

We can help anyone set up a Speakers' Bureau anywhere in the nation. We provide assistance with everything from recruiting and training speakers and moderators to planning and holding events. For more information, contact Speakers' Bureau Project Director, Michael O'Neill at 202-462-4822; Ext. 222. You can also reach him via email at [moneill@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:moneill@nationalhomeless.org).

## HOMELESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Below is a synopsis\* of the curriculum adopted by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It was created by Miami-Dade County Public Schools in collaboration with the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust to capture students' attention and foster an appreciation of the challenges that homeless people face.

### **Pre-K and Kindergarten:**

Lesson Plan: An Understanding of Homelessness

To give children an understanding of the needs that we all have to be comfortable and comforted.

### **Grades 1-3:**

Lesson Plan: An Understanding of Homelessness

Encourage predictions and assumptions from children about why people carry bags and suitcases.

### **Grades 4-5:**

Lesson Plan: A Car for a Home/Shelter in a Box

Encourage predictions and assumptions from children about why people sleep in boxes or on the street. Provide students with an understanding of the extent of the problem of homelessness.

### **Grades 6:**

Lesson Plan: Who are they/should we care/what does it mean?

Students will compare and contrast the definition of what it means to be homeless and identify strategies that can raise sensitivity for anyone in the group.

### **Grades 7-8:**

Lesson Plan: What is Homelessness?

This lesson will provide students with an understanding of what homelessness is, who it can affect, and how they can make a difference.

### **Grades 9-12**

Lesson Plan: Homelessness: Fact or Myth

Students will examine their preconceived notions of the homeless, learn who the homeless are, understand philanthropic efforts to improve the conditions of homeless children, and explore ways to help the homeless.

\*Lesson plans and descriptions were taken directly from Project Upstart Homeless Children & Youth Program's Homeless Education Curriculum Manual.

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The case summaries of violent acts committed against homeless individuals were gathered from a variety of sources. These sources included, but were not limited to, three main areas: published narratives found in news reports, information gathered by homeless advocates across the country, and self-reported incidents from homeless or formerly homeless individuals. While we could not always identify the motives behind each attack based on our sources of information, some of these attacks were perpetrated due to a bias against the victim because of his or her homeless status. Other attacks may have been perpetrated merely because the homeless person was in a vulnerable position to be attacked, due to the nature of homelessness. Only attacks committed by housed individuals toward homeless individuals were included; crimes committed by homeless individuals toward other homeless individuals were excluded from this report.

## **CASE DESCRIPTIONS OF DEATHS BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:**

### **TOTAL DEATHS: 27**

#### **FEBRUARY**

##### **Frederick, Maryland**

###### *Homeless Man Murdered*

**February 14:** William Sigler, 49, a repeat offender of assault, drug possession, reckless endangerment, sexual assault, and battery, was found guilty of the fatal attack of Samuel Webster Hood Jr., 57, a homeless man living in Frederick. Police were called to respond to an unconscious Hood with his skull cracked open from the attack. Authorities report evidence of strangulation and severe trauma to the head and neck from repeated assault. A witness reportedly saw Sigler standing over Hood shouting to call 911, but said Sigler left before authorities arrived.

Evidence found at the scene showed blood marks on the wall of the alley as well as on a windowsill. Police were led to Sigler's apartment, where a search produced blood spattered sneakers, blue jeans, and a hat.

In December, Sigler pleading guilty to second-degree murder Sigler was sentenced by County Circuit Court Judge G. Edward Dwyer Jr. to 30 to 50 years in the Maryland Division of Correction. The Frederick News-Post reported, "It was the maximum sentence Dwyer could hand down." After trial, there remains to be no motive for the crime. When Sigler was told that the victim was Sammy Hood, he said, "Oh him, he's just a beggar, a vagrant."

#### **MARCH**

##### **Richmond, California**

###### *Two Homeless Men Attacked and Robbed in Separate Incidences on the Same Morning*

**March 29:** The violent streak occurring in Richmond, CA is continuing at full force, with two more robberies and shootings of homeless men. One homeless man was robbed of \$100 and a case of beer at 1:20 a.m. on March 29<sup>th</sup> by two men. The two men then shot him twice in the back; police reported that the 35 year-old man's injuries were not life threatening. The second victim, Oscar Alejandre, 42, was shot at 6 a.m. on Saturday and died shortly after. Witnesses report that he was robbed before two attackers shot him. Police were unsure if the two shootings and robberies were related; no arrests were made in either case.

## APRIL

### Tucson, Arizona

#### *Homeless Man Beaten to Death Under Overpass*

**April 13:** In April, Steven Paul Gedatus, 62, was beaten to death by two men while he was sitting underneath a highway overpass in April. Scott Allen King, 18, was convicted of negligent homicide on July 24, 2009, and is facing 4-8 years in prison. Adam Scott King, 29, faces trial in August and may receive 10-22 years in prison. An autopsy report found that Gedatus died from blunt force trauma and had sustained multiple injuries including five broken ribs and a ruptured spleen during the attack. Adam King was convicted of murder and is now serving time.

### New York, New York

#### *Three Men Charged in Death of Homeless Man*

**April 25:** Shamod Murray, 33, a homeless man living in New York City, was found dead in the hallway of a Harlem apartment complex. Three tenants, Dean Fuller, 45, Stephan Fuller, 37, and Roger McFarland, 41, have been charged with the crime. Murray was found by the three men urinating in the hallway of the apartment building, and all three men claim that they were just trying to convince Murray to clean up the mess. Dean Fuller reports that Murray "blew a gasket and attacked us." Dean and Stephan tied Murray up with a rope and called the police, but when they arrived he was already dead. A city official said that the medical examiner's report, as to the cause of death, is still being investigated. A relative of Murray's, Monique Murray-Harrington, claims that the men strangled her cousin and wants "these men to pay for what they did to my cousin. He did not deserve to leave us like that."

### Glen Burnie, Maryland

#### *16 Year-old Boy Beats Homeless Man to Death with Baseball Bat*

**April 29:** Brian Michael Myers, 49, was beaten to death with an aluminum baseball bat by a teenager, Christian John Schellenschlager Jr, 16. In a Capital Online report, police state that after a brief argument, Mr. Schellenschlager went and got the bat, moved toward Mr. Myers from behind, and struck him in the head. Mr. Myers was taken to a Baltimore hospital and passed away on May 14. Mr. Schellenschlager was initially charged with premeditated first-degree murder, but those

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charges were downgraded to second-degree murder after a grand jury declined to indict him. Mr. Schellenschlager will be tried as a Juvenile, where he is pleading self defense.

## MAY

### **West Palm Beach, Florida**

*Two homeless men killed in two separate incidences in one week*

**May 17:** In West Palm Beach, Florida, there have been two different homeless men slain during the course of a week. One man, Rolando Longoria, 27, was riding his bicycle in a shopping plaza and was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting; eye witnesses report the shooter being male driving a black car. Police say that Longoria had a confrontation with the driver behind the Starfish Game Room located in the West Palm Plaza. Sheriff spokeswoman Teri Barbara said detectives believe there were witnesses in the area.

Prior to the shooting, the Medical Examiner's Office performed an autopsy on a homeless man; the report ruled the cause of death "homicide" due to a fatal gunshot wound. The victim, David Roland Ulmer, 41, was found by a woman at about 10:50 am. It is believed that the two incidents may be related.

### **Isla Vista, California**

*Homeless Man Severely Beaten*

**May 31:** 53 year-old Gregory Ghan was found to be severely beaten in front of the Isla Vista Neighborhood Clinic, a facility that treats uninsured and underprivileged people. "Someone repeatedly said, 'Why do you gotta kick somebody while they're sleeping?' A witness, known as Shadow, reported hearing a different male then said, "You want to fucking die?" Shadow claims to have heard a bottle breaking and saw a young man hopping around like a boxer and running off. Sometime afterward, a group of five people ran past the clinic entrance, and one reportedly said, 'You're messing with our frat brother.'" Ghan was transported to the hospital, but died shortly thereafter.

## JUNE

### **Jacksonville, North Carolina**

*Homeless Man Endures Multiple Attacks; the Last is Fatal*

**June 23:** Mike Kozak, 41, was found June 23<sup>rd</sup> in the woods behind Piney Green Shopping Center in Jacksonville North Carolina, state medical examiner Dr. Cynthia Gardner reports that he died of "multiple blunt and sharp force trauma injuries to the head and torso." After further investigation, it has become know that Kozak's stomach was cut open with a beer bottle and his "guts were ripped out". His attackers, Jason Allen Blackmon, 21, Jay Oldaker, 28, and Dustin Newcome, 23, were

arrested for murder. Oldaker pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in February and promised to testify in the trial. He received a sentence of 12 ½ to 16 years in prison. Newcome pleaded guilty in April to second-degree murder in April and was sentenced to 24 to 29 years in prison. Blackmon pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. He received a sentence of 37 ½ to 46 ½ years in prison. Police report that the three men were acquainted with Kozak prior to his attack. Kozak, who had a home with his sister, chose to live in the woods behind Jeff's Automotive on Piney Greene Road and according to the owner Jeff Santiago, he "never bothered anyone." Employees working at USA Discounters said that Kozak's dog would not stop barking and eventually someone went to check on Kozak, who was found dead. David Maready, who lives in Piney Green and knew Kozak, said that a week before his death he had been beaten very badly, and that he "had black eyes and it looked like his nose had been broken." However, these injuries were unrelated to his attack.

### **Cleveland, Ohio**

#### *Mother's Heart is Broken, when Homeless Son is Brutally Murdered*

**June 25:** At least three teenagers brutally beat Anthony Waters, 42, in Cleveland, Ohio on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2008. Waters was on his way to visit his mother who lives in the area, taking side streets because he fears harassment from local residents. A security camera outside G&M Towing Company, where the beating took place, caught passing cars slowing down as they saw Waters being attacked, but nobody stopped to help until employees at G&M ran to Waters' aid. Waters' mother, Joyce Watkins, says that her son has been battling alcoholism and that he often stayed at a men's shelter near her house, but that they always stayed in contact with each other. "He may have been hurting himself with his drinking, but he would never do anything to hurt another person," his mother said. "This is ridiculous and I can't understand why they would beat him like that. My heart is broken." Lt. Thomas Stacho, a Cleveland Police Department spokesman said that the attackers appeared to be between the ages of 13-18 and all wore white shirts. Waters suffered from a lacerated spleen and broken ribs, He later died at a hospital.

## **JULY**

### **Boston, Massachusetts**

#### *Homeless Veteran Killed in Middle of Marketplace During the Day*

**July 4:** Timothy Finch, 40, a homeless veteran, was killed in Boston. Despite the attack taking place in broad daylight, many people who were in the area said that they didn't see anything or hadn't heard about the incident. According to an article by the Boston Globe, Lee Diamond, a 20 year-old who frequents the area where the attack took place, says that there are a lot of homeless people in the area but "its like, 'Don't ask, Don't tell,' most people walking by wouldn't stop and look. You'd just keep walking." Police are searching for clues as to what happened to Finch, and have been asking witnesses and people in the area on the day of the attack. One witness, as reported by the Globe, said that she saw four men beating Finch, one of them holding a sack that looked as though it was filled with a solid object. Elaine Driscoll, a spokeswoman for the Boston

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Police Department, says that “every homicide is of great concern to us, but certainly when one occurs in broad daylight we find it troubling.” Finch has been reported as registering at a homeless shelter a number of years ago, and in 2001 he enrolled in a program at the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans, but advocates say that they haven’t seen him since 2005 when he returned for emergency shelter.

## **San Pablo, California**

### *Homeless Man Shot in Park in Broad Daylight*

**July 15:** 20-year-old Ryan Hutchins was shot in the head in Davis Park at 4:57 p.m. in San Pablo, CA. Hutchins was immediately rushed to a near-by medical center, but he died the following day. Two people were arrested for the crime, Brandon Christopher Loveyaeger, 22, and India Coleman, 37. Both San Pablo residents were charged with homicide. Police Detective Bradley Lindobolm stated that witnesses identified Coleman as being present at the shooting. Loveyaeger turned himself in soon thereafter and was identified as the shooter.

## **Richmond, California**

### *Homeless Woman Beat to Death*

**July 23:** 50 year-old Leslie Valdez, a homeless woman, was found badly beaten on Fifth Street and taken to a local medical center. She died four days later. Police are currently pursuing two individuals, 23 year-old Richmond residents Joaquin Orozco and Alexis Renney, who are prime suspects in the case. Investigators believe two additional youths were also accomplices in the crime.

## **AUGUST**

## **Panama City, Florida**

### *Teen Stabs man to Death*

**August 2:** Jose Gonzalez, 17, has been charged with 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder and faces a life in prison sentence. Gonzalez was convicted for stabbing Timothy Humphries, 49, to death one evening. He is said to have pulled Humphries off his bike when he was on his way to his cousin’s house.

## **New York, New York**

### *Homeless Man Brutally Attacked Outside Sikh Temple*

**August 8:** The victim, who was in his 50s, was found dead outside the Sikh temple in Queens around 6 a.m. The man’s face was unrecognizable due to the fact that it had been beaten with a broomstick. The blows to his face were not fatal; however, a stab wound did prove to be the cause of death. People living in the area said that they had previously seen teenagers hassling the victim; although, it is unknown if there is any connection between these two events. There is no information known on the attackers, but there was a bloody footprint left that the police will use to further their investigation.

## **Pontiac, Michigan**

### *A Group of Teenagers Attack Two Homeless Men*

**August 26:** Three teenage boys between the ages of 14 and 15, who all attended Jefferson Middle School, attacked two homeless men in a span of three days. Two of the boys were identified as Thomas J. McCloud Jr., and Dontez Marc Tillman. The first victim, Wilford Hamilton, died of head injuries a couple days later when he was taken off life support. Another homeless man, Heffern Hoffman, 65, was attacked the following day, he became unconscious from the beating and went into a coma. He was brought to the hospital to undergo surgery. On October 14, Hoffman died after being in a vegetative state since August.

According to Kevin Braddock, the police spokesman, “just the severity of the crime, the injuries, they’re brutal for juveniles”. After they attacked the two homeless men, they also attacked two pedestrians. The pedestrians’ ages were 33 and 52. The three teenagers were caught, and were charged with the first-degree murder of Wilford Hamilton. Thomas McCloud, who was charged in the killing of Heffern Hoffman, was charged as an adult in the beating death of Mr. Willford Hamiton. Both teens are currently being held without bail. If convicted, the boys could face life in prison.

## **St. Louis, Missouri**

### *Homeless Man Killed at Bus Stop*

**August 31:** A homeless man who appeared to be in his 60’s was attacked during the night at a south St. Louis bus stop. The man, who has yet to be identified, died, and may have suffered a heart attack during the attack. Gregory Bean, who witnessed the attack, saw that the victim was punched in the head and in the stomach. The perpetrator of the crime has not yet been identified.

## **SEPTEMBER**

## **North Little Rock, Arkansas**

### *Homeless Man Beaten to Death with Baseball Bat*

**September 27:** Homeless man Anthony Patterson, 50, was found beaten, bloodied and dead on Main St. of the upscale Argenta section of North Little Rock. Police followed a trail of blood to the house of Donald Scott Grace, 50, and found him with blood still on his clothes and the bloody bat in the foyer. According to Patty Lindemann of Hunger Free Arkansas, Grace was arrested and charged with pre-meditated murder.

However, after the crime was committed, the Argenta community was outraged at the bail posted for the crime. North Little Rock District Judge Jim Hamilton set Grace’s bail at \$25,000, which was one of the lowest for a homicide in the local court’s history. It was one of only two bails set below \$100,000 for a homicide since 2006. Currently charged with first-degree murder, Grace awaits trial.

## OCTOBER

### Los Angeles, California

#### *Homeless Man Set on Fire and Burned to Death*

**October 9:** John Robert McGraham, 55, a homeless man, was drenched in gasoline and set on fire at 9:30 p.m. on the side of the road on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in the Mid-Wilshire area. He was brought to a hospital and then pronounced dead. Benjamin Martin, 30, was linked to the murder by DNA evidence and witness accounts. Deputy Chief Charlie Beck commented on Martin's motive saying Martin had, "straight-up personal dislike and little bit of crazy" toward homeless people. McGraham, or simply "John", as he was known to many in the community, was said to have never bothered anyone and rarely asked for money, according to the Los Angeles Times. On the evening of Sunday, October 12, a group of 200 plus people gathered at the spot where McGraham was killed and created a memorial for him at the site.

## NOVEMBER

### Long Beach, California

#### *Five Homeless Gunned Down*

**November 1:** Five victims were gunned to death in a homeless "hot spot" off interstate 405 in Long Beach California on Saturday November 1st. Alongside bags of belongings, were four unrelated and homeless victims. It was later found that victim Vanessa Malaepule lived with her mother and six children. The shooting took place sometime between late afternoon and night, according to a compilation of witness accounts. "Some neighbors reported hearing gunfire, yelling and a car speeding off," reported Thomas Watkins of The Associated Press. Three men and two women were found dead the next day, and "some had been shot more than once". Identified victims include: Lorenzo Perez Villicana, 46, and Vanessa Malaepule, 35, Katherine Lynn Verdun, 24, Frederick Doyle Neumeier, 53, and Hamid Shraifat, 41. The suspects remain unknown, however were considered armed; "the people who did this were not homeless." On the events, Commander Farinelli of the Long Beach Police Department commented that, "violence against and among homeless people had long been a problem". And for Don Morgan, Long Beach resident and friend of the five victims, the tragedy was "a case (that) shines a light on violence against the homeless," a case that will hopefully make the public more aware.

### San Antonio, Texas

#### *Homeless Man Burned to Death by Two Teenagers*

**November 19:** 18 year-old Juan Gutierrez and 19 year-old Carlos Portillo were out partying the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> of November before they stabbed, beat, and eventually burned an innocent homeless San Antonio man to death. Johnny Pena was a barber three years ago before he hit the streets. Minding mostly to himself, Johnny was considered by his neighbors to be harmless. That night, authorities say, "he was sleeping in an alley when two teenagers encountered him". At that

time, Gutierrez and Portillo continued to, “kick Pena repeatedly, stabbed him with a pocketknife, and then hit him with a metal pipe”. Before he died, Johnny was doused with flammable liquid and lit on fire. Gutierrez and Portillo have been charged with the murder.

## DECEMBER

### Washington, District of Columbia

#### *Frequent December Attacks on Homeless*

**December 24:** Yoshio Nakada, 61, was murdered in his sleep this Christmas Eve. With chop wounds splitting his fractured skull, it is believed Nakada suffered blows to the head from a hatchet. Often characterized as “sweet in nature” and “sweetest of all people”, Nakada was found dead due to head injuries near the Watergate Complex in Washington DC. Of the 2, 859 recorded homeless individuals in the D.C. area, 34 % say they have fallen victim to some type of violent crime. Currently there is a \$25,000 reward for information about the one responsible for Yoshio Nakada’s death.

## CASE DESCRIPTIONS OF NON-LETHAL ATTACKS INVOLVING RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:

**TOTAL ATTACKS: 9**

### FEBRUARY

#### **Hayward, California**

*California Serial Rapist*

**February- October:** Hayward resident Damon D. Williams, 30, was arrested on October 28<sup>th</sup> for being the suspect of 5 reported attempts of rape against homeless women. The first reported attack was on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, when the attacker came up from behind the homeless woman and “threatened to ‘slice’ and shoot her before raping her”. He also took her cell phone and wallet, which was later found in Williams’ Kelly Hill neighborhood residence. Another attack occurred on June 4th, when a homeless woman “was sleeping on a porch of the Veterans Memorial Building on Main street about 2:30 a.m. when a man grabbed her by the hair and lifted her to her feet.” The incident was further described by police saying, “He told her he had a gun and threatened to kill her, then raped her.” This victim identified Williams in a photo lineup. The third attack happened on August 8<sup>th</sup> when “a woman was walking to work on A Street when she was attacked from behind.” The victim struggled to keep the attacker off of her, and was thankfully freed when a passer-by frightened the perpetrator. Again, Williams was later identified in a photo lineup. The next incident occurred on October 20<sup>th</sup>, when a woman was searching for a bathroom. She asked Williams, later indentified, where she could find a restroom. Williams led her to the side yard and proceeded rape her. Finally on October 28<sup>th</sup>, “a woman was sitting on a curb in a parking lot near Jackson Street and Mission Boulevard was grabbed from behind ... her attacker tried to drag her into some nearby bushes, and pulled her jacket and shirt over her head, threatening to shoot her if she screamed.” In this last case, however, Williams didn’t get away. Two witnesses broke up the incident, and told the police the direction that Williams fled; “a short time later”, Williams was caught by police. According to *InsideBayArea.com*, “ In addition to rape, charges levied against Williams include kidnapping to commit another crime, assault with intent to rape, penetration with a foreign object and forcible oral copulation.” Williams is being held in Santa Rita Jail without bail, and is expected to appear in Hayward Justice Hall court on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### **Dania Beach, Florida**

*‘Blood’ arrested after trying to rape homeless woman*

**February 9:** According to the Broward Sheriff’s Office, David Gervin, 26, attempted to rape a 55 year-old homeless woman at knifepoint. As the report shows, Gervin forced her into an alley, and started assaulting her. At that point the woman had screamed for help, and police were notified. Deputy Eric Rodriguez serviced the scene and tased Gervin when he tried to escape. Gervin, know to be a “bloods” gang member, is now being charged with armed kidnapping and attempted sexual battery.

## **St. Petersburg, Florida**

*Man attacks homeless couple sleeping at a campsite*

**February 15:** Jesus Escudero, 31, was arrested in St. Petersburg, Florida for attacking a homeless couple at about 1 a.m. Detectives suspect Escudero of approaching the couple, who were sleeping at a campsite, and attacking the man, 48, with a brick. Escudero then struck the woman, 42, in the head. The male victim attempted to call 911, but when he came back to the campsite he learned that the female victim had been raped and that the attacker had fled. Deputy Jake Viano and his search dog found Escudero a half hour after arriving at the scene of the crime. Escudero was arrested and charged with two counts of aggravated battery, one count of sexual battery, battery on a law enforcement officer, petty theft, and providing a false name to a police officer. He was also arrested on an outstanding warrant for failing to appear in court on a grand theft charge. The female victim was transported to a hospital, but the male victim refused treatment. According to Sgt. Jim Border, “there was no indication that the suspect and the victims were acquainted before the attack took place”.

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **Pompano Beach, Florida**

*Man Rapes Homeless Woman*

**September 2:** The Broward County Sheriff’s Office reported that Guy Cherubin, 31, was charged for armed sexual battery against a 48 year-old homeless woman on the night of September 2<sup>nd</sup>. At 5 a.m. that morning, BSO detectives said, Cherubin, “attacked and raped a homeless woman in Pompano Beach ... he covered the 48 year-old woman’s face, forced her to the ground and placed a knife against her side, threatening to kill her if she didn’t have sex with him.” Cherubin was involved in a similar attack a few days earlier at which time he kicked and raped a 39 year-old Boca Raton homeless woman, leaving her with several broken ribs. He is being held without bond in the Broward County Sheriff’s Office.

### CASE DESCRIPTIONS OF NON-LETHAL ATTACKS INVOLVING SETTING ON FIRE BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:

#### TOTAL ATTACKS: 3

#### MARCH

##### **New York, New York**

##### *Homeless Man Robbed and Set on Fire*

**March 3:** Larry Oxedine, a homeless man and client of Client Advocacy Program based in New York, was attacked on the L train on his way to visit family in Brooklyn. Five teenagers took his wallet, doused him with cigarette lighter fluid and then set him on fire. Two transit workers saw him enflamed when the train pulled into the station and came to his aid. The EMS and police were contacted, and Oxedine pointed out the youths as they fled the station, allowing for transit workers to follow them. Oxedine was airlifted to a hospital, and was treated for second degree burns over his left leg. Police have arrested the five adolescents and convicted them of robbery and assault in the first degree.

##### **Bartlett, Tennessee**

##### *Two Homeless Men Attacked by Teens*

**March 23:** Two homeless men were the victims of an attack on Easter Sunday in Bartlett, Tennessee. Brenner Holloman, one of the victims, was not injured in the attack from the attack but witnessed everything. The attackers, adult males ages 19-22, used Molotov cocktails, a homemade concoction that consists of a bottle filled with gasoline and set on fire. Holloman claimed the flames only made the attackers laugh harder, and “they thought it was funny all right, they absolutely did.” Holloman now says he can hardly recognize his friend, Jeffery Martin, 37. “It made me ill, he reports. “I just saw him yesterday, his head ballooned out to there...his scalp was taken off, his right hand is completely bandaged up...” Martin reports that it “was the worst pain I’ve ever been in my life.” Martin sustained second and third degree burns to his head, neck, ears, shoulders and hands. Police found the attackers to be 19 year-old Wesley Ray, 19 year-old Andrew Hicks, 19 year-old Zachary Parrish, and 20 year-old Michael Grace, and 22 year-old John Eggleston. All five have been charged with attempted aggravated arson, and Parrish was charged with the additional attempted second degree murder, as police suspect he threw the flaming bottle at the victims. On July 31, 2009, Eggleston and Parrish pleaded guilty and were sentenced to eight years in prison. Ray, Grace and Hicks are to appear in court in September.

### CASE DESCRIPTION OF NON-LETHAL BEATINGS BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:

**TOTAL ATTACKS: 54**

#### **JANUARY**

##### **Monroe, Louisiana**

*Homeless Man Beaten and Stabbed*

**January 3:** Jared Horne, 22, pleaded guilty to charges of attempted second-degree murder and the commission of a hate-crime on Walter Ford, a homeless man. Ford was beaten, stabbed, suffered internal bleeding and a collapsed lung. Horne testified that he stabbed Ford in the back and showed no apparent signs of remorse toward the victim. Horne was sentenced to 15 years in prison for second-degree murder and an additional 5 years for a hate crime against the homeless.

. Anthony Cascio, 19, was also arrested in January for the hate crime. Cascio received a 10-year sentence, but he will only end up serving less than 11 months due to previous time spent in jail and a punishment suspension.

##### **Akron, Ohio**

*Two Arrested for Assaulting Homeless Man*

**January 18:** Maurice Elliot Willis, 24, and Heather Susan Hiner, 25, were charged with kidnapping, felonious assault and aggravated robbery on a homeless man in Akron, Ohio. Police officers in Akron say that they and four other people tied John A. Rice, 36, to a chair on January 18<sup>th</sup>. They burned him with a lamp and kicked and punched him, according to Lt. Rick Edwards. Willis and Hiner were arrested and brought to the Summit County Jail. Anna M. King, 19, Mitchell L. Collins, 29, Donald Shaffer, 26, and Andrew Worley, 24, were previously arrested for the crime. Rice spent three days in the hospital and police say he will need continued medical treatment.

##### **Manatee County, Florida**

*Homeless Man Hurt in Robbery*

**January 20:** Joshua Joe Smith, 28, was drunk and malicious on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> when after trying to steal a car from D&L Auto Sales in Manatee, Florida, he tried robbing a nearby homeless man who was sleeping. According to the Sheriff's report, "the intoxicated suspect was found in the process of robbing a homeless man who had been sleeping on the back porch".

##### **Athens, Georgia**

*Homeless Man Attacked by Five Men*

**January 22:** A homeless man was leaving the room he had rented in a private home in Athens, Georgia when he was attacked by five men. Police say the homeless victim did not think that the person who rented him the room was responsible for the attack, but he did suspect that he had set it

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up. The men, who attacked at 10pm on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, stole the victim's wallet and shoes, a value totaling \$105.00.

## FEBRUARY

### Cambridge, Massachusetts

#### *Homeless Couple Attacked During the Night*

**February 1:** A Cambridge, Massachusetts homeless man and his girlfriend were attacked in Central Square on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. The victim, 41, told police that he and his girlfriend, 33, who both stay in shelters in the Cambridge area, were walking around Mass. Ave at 12:50 a.m. when he was attacked. He was taken to a Boston hospital for treatment. The suspects, whom the victim won't identify for fear of further retaliation, are described as men, aged 20-30.

### Honolulu, Hawaii

#### *Homeless Man Attacked in a Restroom with a Broken Glass Bottle*

**February 7:** A 54 year-old homeless man in a restroom of a Honolulu park was attacked by a 24 year-old man who entered the restroom and kicked his shopping cart, then kicked him in the head and the side. He came back a short time later with a broken beer bottle and stabbed the man in the face, head, and arms. The man ran away when a bystander came into the restroom but he was arrested a short time later and is being held on a first degree assault charge.

### Peoria, Illinois

#### *Three Youths Cause Serious Head Injuries to Homeless Man*

**February 20:** In Peoria, Illinois, officers responded to a call from employees at a McDonalds saying that a man was inside the restaurant and was bleeding from his head. The victim, 39, was not alert, according to police, and only responded to questions when the police officers spoke loudly or shook him. The information that the authorities managed to gather was that the man was attacked and kicked in the head by three youths, but he could not recall what the boys looked like or where the attack happened. The man was taken to a medical center for treatment.

### Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

#### *Homeless Man Brutally Attacked*

**February 25:** February saw a sharp increase in homeless attacks in South Florida. The latest attack was on Leander Williams, 68, which left him bleeding on the streets with severe head injuries. Sean Cononie, of the Homeless Voice, and Michael Stoops, of the National Coalition for the Homeless, say that homeless people who are still on the streets should seek shelter and stay in well-lit areas until there is more information about the frequent attacks.

## APRIL

### **Ft. Lauderdale, Florida**

#### *Homeless Men Violently Harassed with Chainsaw on Numerous Occasion*

**April 5:** Stephen Sticht, 49, of Ft. Lauderdale Florida has been ordered by Broward Circuit Judge Julio Gonzalez, Jr. to stay away from five homeless men and to surrender all weapons to authorities. The homeless men have complained to the police department on several occasions that Sticht chases them with chainsaws, pistols, and the homeless men believe he has put up "Wanted" posters of the men around town with captions reading "crack head, prostitute, and self-serving type." Sticht defends his actions, saying that the homeless men are consistently around his property and that he has tried to get them to leave the area. He says that the men are lying and making up their accusations. "It's a witch hunt. These guys are crack heads. All these allegations are fabrications. Its like they came up with this grandiose story and now I am made out to be the bad guy." The five homeless men claimed that Sticht walked around the area where they slept at night with a spotlight, brandishing a knife and firing a gun. The men believe that Sticht put up the Wanted Posters because they saw him taking their photographs. While several of the homeless men have criminal records, one of the men says "We might have colorful pasts or addictions, but we do have rights, same as [Sticht] does." Sticht has also been arrested for trespassing with a dangerous weapon in 1999, but the charge was reduced to misdemeanor trespassing. Several large organizations, including the NAACP, ACLU, and Public Defender Howard Finklestein have created a coalition to try and get the Ft. Lauderdale police to protect the homeless population better. President of the Broward NAACP, Marsha Ellison, says "surely, another homeless person doesn't have to die before the police do something." The court date has been set for April 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Cumberland, Maryland**

#### *Teens Nearly Kill Homeless Man with Baseball Bat and Knives*

**April 10:** A Cumberland, Maryland woman responded to screams for help beneath the McMullen Bridge at 4 a.m., and ran to a nearby gas station to call the police. When officers arrived to where a homeless man had been badly beaten, they found Benjamin Berry, 23, Brian Shafer, 20, and a 16 year-old boy nearby. Berry and Shafer have been charged with attempted first degree murder and assault. If the 16 year-old is tried as an adult, he will face the same charges. A baseball bat, three knives and a steel bar were found at the scene. The woman, according to Lt. Greg Leake, saved the homeless man's life. The homeless man was treated at a local hospital for severe injuries.

### **Cleveland, Ohio**

#### *Homeless Man Beaten with Nail Studded Board*

**April 12:** Eugene Clemens, 55, a homeless man in Ohio, was beat by a couple males aged 19-20 with boards containing nails for five minutes and then passed out in a nearby cafeteria. He was told by police not to submit a report because he couldn't identify the attackers and the police couldn't arrest anyone. He was taken to the hospital to be treated for a broken wrist, but the gaping wounds

that were also on his body were not treated and they are now infected, according to an incident report form from the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless.

### **Key West, Florida**

#### *Two Homeless Men Assaulted Outside Fast Food Restaurant*

**April 27:** Two teenagers attacked two homeless men outside a Wendy's fast food restaurant in Key West, Florida at 1:20 a.m. One of the teenagers had a dark Mohawk, and is known on the street as "Lucky." The other teen has not been identified, but is thin with tattoos on his head and neck. The two teens started arguing with the homeless men as they walked out of the restaurant, and one of the teens pulled out a knife. The two victims were found walking down the street injured.

## **MAY**

### **Sacramento, California**

#### *Two Homeless Men Attacked for Their Transgender Status*

**May 27:** William Lee Johnson, 34, attacked two transgender homeless men on May 27<sup>th</sup> in Sacramento, California. Johnson was arrested after one of his victims stabbed him in the leg, inflicting a non-life threatening injury. According to police, Johnson is a "validated skinhead." He was taken to Sacramento County Jail on the suspicion of robbery, battery against a peace officer, and committing what is commonly referred to as a hate crime.

### **Nashville, Tennessee**

#### *Homeless Man Attacked by Teenagers*

**May 28:** A 50 year-old homeless man was attacked by a group of adolescents, hitting him on the head with bottles. The man lives in the Nashville, TN area and was taken to the hospital and then to the Guest House for recovery.

### **Waltham, Massachusetts**

#### *Homeless Man Stabbed and Rushed to Hospital*

**May 30:** Thomas Vasile, 20, from Waltham, MA, was arraigned yesterday in district court for the stabbing of Richard Schroter, 36. Vasile claims that Schroter insulted him and his mother who were both waiting outside Labor Ready looking for work. Schroter and Vasile knew each other before this incident, when Schroter lived with Vasile before he was evicted by his mother, according to court documents. Schroter had serious injuries from the attack and was taken to Boston Medical Center for treatment and emergency surgery. A knife believed to have been used during the attack was found under a parked car near the Tiki Bar entrance. A judge ordered Vasile to go to a Bridgewater facility for 20 days and then will return to court.

## JUNE

### **Bolinas, California**

#### *Interactive Homeless Man Attacked by Teens*

**June 23:** Ricky Green, of Bolinas, California, was punched and stabbed on June 23<sup>rd</sup> by four men. Green, 23, was attacked by the men on Brighton Avenue near the beach. Ryan Lorne, 23, Thoren Manetta, 19, Lamont Elkins, Jr., 21, and Stefan Do, 16 were charged with attempted murder. Police found Green after the attack; unconscious and bleeding from numerous injuries on his body. Green was well known in the small town of Bolinas, and residents spoke of his passion for martial arts and U2 songs, which he sang during open mike nights at a local bar. Authorities have not disclosed a motive for the attack, but they did say it did not appear to be robbery.

### **Kansas City, Missouri**

#### *Homeless, Vietnam Veteran is Robbed and Attacked*

**June 26:** Rolando Aaron and Paul W. Simmons, both 19, were charged with first degree robbery for attacking a 54 year-old homeless man in Kansas City with a brick and robbing him. The victim, a Vietnam veteran, told authorities that he woke up Thursday morning and found someone searching through his pockets. Six different males surrounded him and told him that it was just a “simple robbery.” The victim stood and tried to fight them off. The suspects hit him in the head and back using a brick. They tried to run away in a pick-up truck, taking his cell phone, a pair of shoes and \$500. The victim jumped into the truck after the suspects and struggled with them until they pulled into a QuikTrip parking lot where he got out and phoned the police. Officers found five of the attackers and the victim identified them, after which the two juveniles were taken to the juvenile jail. A third suspect was released.

## JULY

### **New York, New York**

#### *Teenagers Attack LGBT Shelter Residents*

**July 10:** Four youth attacked residents at Carmen’s Place, a shelter who serves the LGBT population. The priest who runs the shelter, Reverend Louis Braxton, reported that he returned to the shelter in Queens, New York, at about 10:30 p.m. when he witnessed a group of young people hitting a resident of the facility on the head with a bag of garbage. Braxton shouted at the attackers and they eventually fled, but four of them returned with a paint bucket, a miter box, steel brackets and a belt. Two residents of Carmen’s Place were punched in the face and body. In addition to the residents, the youth attacked the priest when he told them to vacate the premises.

### **Elgin, Illinois**

#### *Homeless Man Beat and Stabbed by Teenagers*

**July 25:** Four teenagers have been arrested for their involvement with a physical attack on Robert Robbins, a 22 year-old homeless man. According to the Elgin Police, “Robbins . . . was surrounded by the subjects, beaten and stabbed.” Arlan Stone, 17, was charged with aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, aggravated battery with great body harm, and aggravated battery on a public way. Corey Hunter, 17, was also charged with three counts of aggravated battery. Two other men were arrested on intimidation charges. Police said that the teens also threw Robbins to the ground, punched and kicked him, and then stabbed him. Robbins was brought to a nearby hospital with a gash in his back, treated, and later released.

## August

### Wilmington, Delaware

#### *Homeless Man Attacked by Teens*

**August 2:** An unidentified homeless man was harassed by two young men outside the Bannerman Station in Wilmington at 2 a.m. The suspects, both males and in their 20s, threw elements from flower pots, urinated on, stole \$200 from, and continuously jumped on, the man. The victim was unable to identify his attackers due to the fact that he was intoxicated during the time of the assault. The police have video surveillance of the assault and are hoping that the public will be able to help identify the attackers.

### St. Augustine, Florida

#### *Three Homeless Men Beaten by Teens*

**August 25:** Three homeless men were attacked by a group of teenagers underneath a railroad bridge at approximately 11:15 p.m. Two of the men, Andrew Christianson, 43, and Andrew Robert, 53, were hospitalized and were placed in critical condition. Robert and Christianson suffered serious head injuries after enduring many blows with a board, a shopping cart and rolled-up fencing. The third man, Michael McMeans, 31, only suffered minor injuries and was able to get back to a nearby restaurant and receive help.

Police arrested 17 year-olds Jonate Anderson and Reginald Anderson and charged them with aggravated battery and attempted robbery. Both teenagers were brought to the state Department of Juvenile Justice. Police questioned two other teenagers, a 16-year-old male and a 17 year-old female who have not been charged with crimes as of now.

### Scranton, Pennsylvania

#### *Homeless Stabbing*

**August 26:** Homeless citizens Dewy Belles, 44, and Natalie Melando, 52, were attacked by Joseph C. Saunders, 23, of 812 Capouse Ave in Scranton, Penn. The victims claimed that Saunders had a welding knife as he approached them in front of United Neighborhood Centers’ Progressive Center. For some time police and court officials were unable to find Belles and Melando to testify against Saunders in preliminary hearings, but finally in January 2009 the two victims were found in the

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Scranton area. On February 3, jurors, “found Mr. Saunders guilty of aggravated assault, two counts of simple assault and other related charges.” Saunders remains in Lackawanna County Prison, waiting for his sentence.

## **East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania**

### *Gangs Attack Homeless Man*

**August 27:** Sometime on Wednesday evening, a 23 year-old homeless man was attacked by at least one, possibly two gangs. The gangs believed to be involved in the attack are the Bloods and the Juggalos. The assailants are also believed to be teenagers. The attackers stole his CD player and knife then proceeded to beat him unconscious. The victim was taken to the local hospital, but had no severe injuries. The attack was witnessed by two people, who recall seeing a blue car quickly drive away from the crime scene.

## **Indianapolis, Indiana**

### *Homeless Man Experiences Severe Brain Damage Caused by an Attack*

**August 30:** Derek Rowlette was attacked by a group of at least 10 teenagers in a bus stop around 5:30 p.m. They stole his bike and then continued to attack him. He remains in critical condition and has “severe brain trauma”. Police are still looking for the attackers and family members of the victim.

## **Rockford, Illinois**

### *Teens Terrorize Homeless*

**August 30:** Within the past month, there have been multiple attacks against the homeless in Rockford, Illinois. The perpetrators have been described as a group of 4-6 teenagers who wait and prey on the homeless in their most vulnerable drunken and sedated states. David Medland, 34, of Rockford noted, “Within the last month, I’ve seen about 20 people battered to a pulp.” One of these homeless victims was Robert L. Brown, who was attacked in his sleep with blows to his temple. His homeless companion Larry Crocker, 41, “sat in his wheelchair Monday evening outside the American Red Cross homeless shelter when he was attacked”. Deputy Chief of Police, Michael Booker, said the homeless should walk in pairs and should report crimes when they occur.

## **SEPTEMBER**

## **Annapolis, Maryland**

### *6<sup>th</sup> Teen is Arrested in Attack on Homeless Man*

**September 5:** Peter Gopshes, 34, a homeless man, was brutally attacked by a group of teenagers at about 1:15 a.m. The teens assaulted him by throwing rocks at him and punching him in the face. Gopshes lost consciousness and was robbed by his teen assailants. He also suffered multiple skull fractures and remains in critical condition.

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16 year-old suspect Charles Richard Mason turned himself in to authorities. He was charged with assault, robbery and other related offenses. Police have also charged Sheldon Wells, 18, of assault and robbery. Four other boys from Annapolis, ages 12, 13, 13, and 14, and a 14 year-old boy from Baltimore have been charged for the crime.

## **Key West, Florida**

*Homeless man stabbed by two men*

**September 28:** A homeless man was stabbed while riding his bicycle in what may have been an attempted robbery. After the attackers knocked down the victim, the victim struck back and hit one of his assailants in the face. At this point, one of the assailants pulled out a knife and stabbed the victim in the stomach. The victim was able to ride his bike to the hospital and recovered from surgery successfully. His attackers are still at large.

## **OCTOBER**

### **Washington, District of Columbia**

*Homeless Men Beaten While Sleeping*

**October-November:** Two separate homeless men were beaten on two separate occasions while sleeping some time during the months of October and November. One man was hit repeatedly over the head in a park and the other was accosted on a street downtown.

### **Pompano Beach, Florida**

*Homeless Veteran Robbed and Beaten*

**October 2:** Richard Denise, 64, paraplegic was found pleading for help after receiving a beating with a board and having \$94 and his wheelchair stolen from him. His attacker, a man known to the area, 35, has yet to be captured by the police. Denise received a free motorized wheelchair to replace his old one from the owner of a local medical supplies company.

### **Pompano Beach, Florida**

*Homeless Man Harassed by Teens*

**Oct/Nov:** Timothy Creswell, 46, was awakened one night by 3 teenagers kicking him. He attempted to flag down a passing BSO deputy, but was unable to gain the deputy's attention. He was picked up by an ambulance and transported to a hospital where he was treated for a broken leg. BSO was contacted and they did a NWR (No Written Report).

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Portland, Oregon**

## *Twin Brothers Terrorize Homeless Community*

**November 16:** On November 16th, twin brothers James and Michael Johnson were arrested and charged for 5 instances of assault against the homeless community. Officials have recorded these instances as “five unprovoked assaults”. The Johnson twins were accused of “pounding a man with a bicycle while he was sleeping on a park bench, and stabbing another man in the leg because he yelled at the twins to stop the beating”. Included in the case were records of the twins, “pushing a homeless woman down a steep staircase in a city park,” and assaulting another homeless individual who tried to intervene. The two brothers have been indicted with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree manslaughter charges and await trial.

## **Colorado Springs, Colorado**

### *Attack Leaves Homeless Man in Hospital for Over a Month*

**November 18:** Four suspects are wanted for an attack on a homeless man who was stabbed several times in the torso, chest and head.

. Unnamed, the homeless individual was left with cuts on his wrist that deepened through his tendon. In effort to recover from these horrific brutalities, the man was in the hospital for over a month.

## **DECEMBER**

## **St. Petersburg, Florida**

### *Homeless Vietnam Veteran is Brutally Attacked*

**December 21:** A disabled homeless Vietnam Veteran was beaten alongside his homeless son after attending the second annual Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day vigil. William Shumate, a mentor to his homeless peers in St. Petersburg, was sleeping at city hall after the night’s memorial. An estimated nine teenagers demanded that Shumate turn over his son’s bike as well as his own. Shumate refused. Subsequently the teenage group started beating him on the spot. Shumate was struck in the face and was unable to recover. Homeless Peoples Network reported, “By the end of the encounter, in which the teens called the two men (Shumate and his son) ‘homeless scum,’ Shumate had suffered a minor concussion, broken nose, black eye, damaged ear drum and numerous scratches and bruises”. Reflecting on the devastating events the homeless veteran had said, “I constantly look over my back now, when I got back from Vietnam, I never thought I’d have to look behind my back again.”

## CASE DESCRIPTION OF NON-LETHAL SHOOTINGS BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:

### TOTAL ATTACKS: 8

### JUNE:

#### **Miami, Florida**

##### *Two Homeless Men Shot with a BB Gun*

**June 11:** John Rains, 51, and Willie Thomas, 48, two homeless men living in Miami, Florida, were shot early on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Thomas was sleeping underneath Interstate 95 when he was shot with a BB gun, and Rains was riding by on his bike when he felt the shot and he saw a silver pickup truck drive by. Thomas and Rains were taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital and were released.

#### **South Bend, Indiana**

##### *Homeless Man Shot by Teens in South Bend*

**June 18:** A homeless man in South Bend was shot in the arm on June 18<sup>th</sup> after refusing to give up his bike. Two teenagers were said to have driven up to the man that afternoon. They then proceeded to demand the homeless man's property, and when he refused, "the man was shot in the wrist." Captain Phil Trent of the South Bend Police Department commented about the incident saying, "(it) was a crime of opportunity".

#### **Columbus, Ohio**

##### *Homeless Man Defends Campsite and Gets Attacked*

**June 29:** Robert Clipner, 47, was shot by two adolescent men near his campsite in Columbus, Ohio. The residents of the campsite have been harassed before by people in the area, and Clipner chose to take a stand against the two men who were throwing rocks down at the campsite. The two men shot at him after Clipner told them to "move on their way," said Brian J. Beavers, who is a detective with the police assault squad. Beavers said that they hadn't arrested anyone yet but that Clipner was taken to the hospital and survived the attack, with the bullet still remaining in his chest. Clipner says that this was his first experience with "outside people, if that's what you want to call them." Clipner and his girlfriend were planning to move to another campsite even before the attack, and other residents of the campsite are beginning to get worried. Ken Andrews, an outreach coordinator at the Open Shelter, says that many of these incidences go unreported because the homeless tend to be independent and try to keep to themselves.

### AUGUST:

#### **Cleveland, Ohio**

## *Homeless Man Shot at with Paintball Gun*

**August 7:** A homeless male was crossing the street at North and Saint Clair when a gold Ford Contra drove up next to him. Inside the car there were four to five men. As they approached the victim, they pulled out a paintball gun and shot him 10 times. Once the attackers hit their target, they quickly drove away. Luckily, the victim experienced no injuries. There are no known suspects at the time, and the victim did not wish to press any charges.

## **DECEMBER:**

### **Costa Mesa, California**

#### *Innocent Homeless Man is Attacked with Paintballs While Sleeping*

**December 26:** The increasingly violent attacks against homeless people in Costa Mesa California went too far on December 26th when a group of suspected teenagers shot and nearly blinded homeless man Gregory Dahlgren with paintball guns. Dahlgren had been sleeping in an alley behind B.K. Burgers when around 9 p.m. about 5 to 6 teenagers opened fire. Completely vulnerable, Dahlgren was pelted on his hands, feet, face and upper torso. “They blinded me,” Dahlgren had reported while showing “many purple welts on his hands”. Barely escaping, the victim ran to a nearby liquor store where he found his two friends Jose Zamora and Scott Solverson. Solverson noted, “He was bleeding real bad – all over his body... he had blood all over his face”. Zamora noted, “I can’t imagine he (Dahlgren) would hurt anyone, why would anybody do this to him?” There was no apparent motive for the crime. Rushed to the local Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, Dahlgren was told by doctors that he may lose sight in one eye. Other such homeless attacks have been on the rise in the Costa Mesa area; however the majority of these attacks go unreported. There have been no arrests so far; however officials are investigating internet sources for further leads and information.

### **Riverside, California**

#### *Drive-by-shooting Aims at Homeless Man*

**December 30:** On December 30 two unnamed 16 year-old youths were arrested in Riverside after drive-by-shooting a homeless man on the side of the road. The driver, a resident of Hesperia was “arrested on suspicion of reckless driving and being an unlicensed driver.” The shooter in the passenger seat was also arrested on suspicion of assault. There was no motive to shoot the innocent homeless individual, suggesting the action was influenced by discrimination against homeless people as a group.

## CASE DESCRIPTION OF NON-LETHAL POLICE HARASSMENT/BRUTALITY BY MONTH, DATE, AND CITY IN 2008:

### TOTAL ATTACKS: 5

#### JANUARY:

##### **Lakewood, Colorado**

###### *Police Dog Let Loose on Homeless Man*

**January 24:** The Lakewood Police Department in Lakewood, Colorado was looking for a suspect in January when they let their search dog loose in the alleyway to try and locate their target. At the same time, Edward Trujillo, a homeless man, was in the alley and was attacked by the dog. Trujillo is suing the police department for damages, and his lawyer said that even if the attack was a mistake, that the police should still be held responsible.

“His face was ripped apart,” said David Lane, Trujillo’s lawyer. “He had dozens and dozens of stitches, his leg was ripped apart. All because he was homeless scrounging for food in an alleyway and the police officers couldn’t be bothered to check to see if it was safe to unleash a police dog.” Police were unable to comment on any possible lawsuit.

#### FEBRUARY:

##### **Ft. Lauderdale, Florida**

###### *Police use Taser on Mentally Ill Homeless Man*

**February 13:** Broward Public Defender Howard Finkelstein is raising questions in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida regarding a police officer’s use of a taser on a man who appeared to be mentally ill and was in handcuffs and leg restraints. Although police say that the action was justified, Finkelstein believes the legitimacy of this claim is questionable. Police showed up outside the Cooperative Feeding Program, a soup kitchen in Florida, on Wednesday after getting a call about a man lying outside drinking from a puddle on the ground. When the police arrived at the scene, the man ran into the building, and the police determined that the man who said his name was Steve Fernandez, needed psychiatric treatment. Officers had to restrain the man eventually, and they put him in handcuffs and leg restraints. He continued to struggle and the officer used his taser. Marti Forman, the CEO of the Cooperative Feeding program recalls being surprised when she saw the officer use the device, and said she heard Fernandez howl in pain. Fernandez was taken to Florida Medical Center for a psychiatric evaluation.

#### JULY:

##### **Los Angeles, California**

## *LAPD Caught on Tape Beating a Homeless Individual*

**July 24:** An unnamed homeless man sat peacefully eating sunflower seeds on Skid Row when police approached and unwarrantedly assaulted him. The LAPD officer squad proceeded to “knee the man in the mid section and strike him forcefully in the head with clenched fists”. It was reported that people watching the incident immediately cried for the police to stop. Such events were later confirmed by a video tape that was rolling the entire time. After police backup had come, the medical staff took the homeless man immediately to the hospital

## **AUGUST:**

### **Panama City, Florida**

#### *Homeless Man Arrested and Beaten by Police Officers for Simply ‘Looking Homeless’*

**August 3:** A homeless man, John Paul Kimbro, 37, was falsely arrested by Panama City Beach Police officers on the night of August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The officers approached Kimbro because he looked like ‘a transient’ and then asked him to show his ID. Kimbro was within his legal rights when he refused to do so, yet the officers arrested him and took him back to their headquarters. Video surveillance tapes show that the officers placed Kimbro into a headlock, slammed him into a wall and punched him violently. When Kimbro was taken to the county jail, he was pepper-sprayed for refusing to cooperate again. Sgt. Jimmy Warr was suspended for 5 days and then resigned for his involvement in the incident. Two other officers are currently under investigation.

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# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

## APPENDIX B:



**I can't imagine how to stop hate crimes against America's homeless.**

**I can't imagine how to stop hate crimes against America.**

**I can't imagine how to stop hate crimes.**

**I can't imagine how to stop hate.**

**I can't imagine.**

**I can't.**

**I can.**

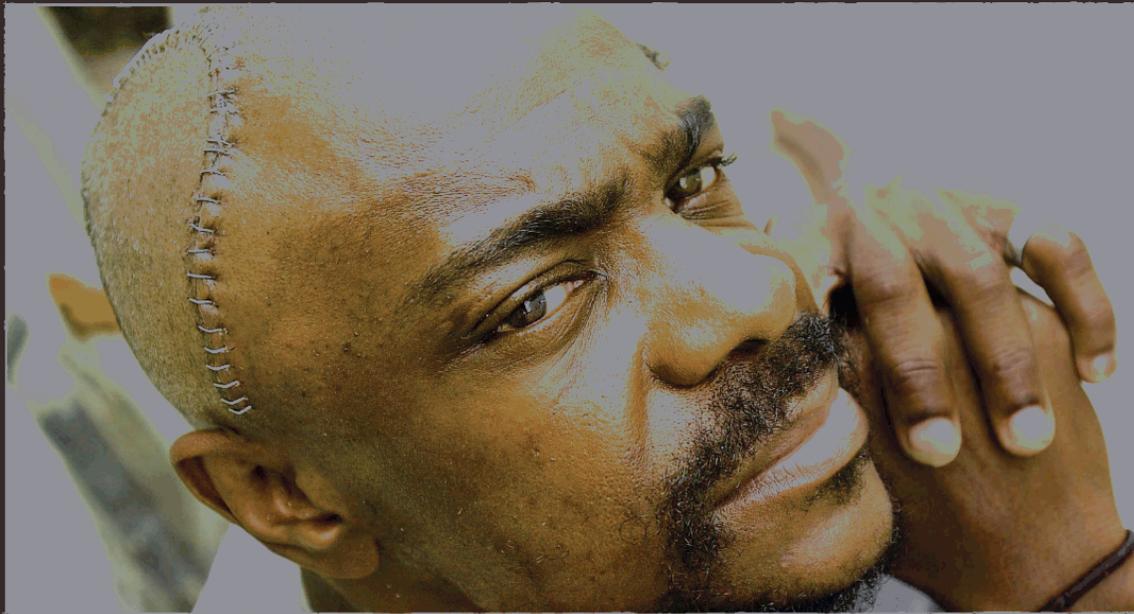
Violent, often fatal attacks on homeless Americans now exceed those of all other categorized hate crimes combined. Join the fight against homelessness. Join the National Coalition for the Homeless. Download or order our latest report on "Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA" at [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org). It serves as the voice for people who lost their lives, those who managed to survive, and the countless other victims and casualties that go unreported every year.

 NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS We depend on the kindness of strangers. [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org) [info@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:info@nationalhomeless.org) 202-462-4822

# HATE, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH ON MAIN STREET USA

2008

IN THE LAST DECADE, 880 HOMELESS MEN, WOMEN  
AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ATTACKED. 244 DIED.



Ricky White, 45, Galveston, TX

Photo courtesy of The Galveston County Daily News

Victims ranged from 4 months to 74 years old.  
78% of the perpetrators were under 25 years old.

**WHAT CAN WE DO?** We need to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public on the problem of violence against homeless persons. Your support will help the National Coalition for the Homeless take a stand against violence!



Please become a member of NCH by sending in your tax-deductible contribution today!

National Coalition for the Homeless  
2201 P Street, NW | Washington, DC 20037-1033 | Ph: 202.462.4822  
Email: [info@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:info@nationalhomeless.org) | [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)