



**Jewish Community
Relations Council**

MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS POSITION ON HATE CRIMES

The Jewish community supports strong hate crime legislation.

Hate crimes are not only crimes against individuals, but also are crimes against our pluralistic society. Such crimes have a ripple effect, intimidating victims, their families and entire communities, leaving them feeling terrorized, isolated, vulnerable and unprotected. Enforcement of hate crimes laws can have a deterrent impact and limit the potential for further hate crime incidents, violence and widespread community disturbances.

The Jewish community has historically been targeted by hate crimes and has trusted the legal system to impose and ensure justice. We embrace strong laws to deter and appropriately punish criminal conduct that targets people based upon their race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, disability or gender identity. When persons are targeted by crime merely because of their core identities, those crimes rightfully carry greater penalties, for such criminal conduct is designed to attack an entire community.

Hate crimes laws should be recognized as an important protection and deterrent for the sake of the most vulnerable, who are targeted due to their race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, disability or gender identity. They are not intended and should not be used to protect people based upon their occupation or similar activity, many of which are already protected by additional heightened penalties. Such penalties for crimes against, for example, law enforcement, firefighters, social workers, and teachers, already exist in our law and should be invoked when appropriate. Therefore, adding occupations to hate crimes laws diminishes the protections afforded vulnerable groups by such laws.