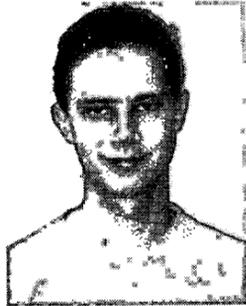


## Hate crime legislation undermines our freedom

Much debate has occurred over recent years both in Congress and among the general public about legislation that would give harsher punishment to criminals convicted of



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crimes that were committed because of prejudice or hatred of a particular group. So-called "hate crime" legislation calls for more severe punishment for criminals accused of committing crimes that were directed at a specific race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation or handicap. Essentially, a person accused of a crime that was motivated by a hatred of one of these groups would be given a longer sentence than a person who had no bias against their attacker. The theory behind this legislation is that individuals or groups who take violent action against an individual based on prejudice are not just terrorizing the victim, but also the entire group to which that person belongs.

It is obvious why hate crime legislation is so popular in Congress: It gives politicians a way to show that they care about these specific interest groups and are willing to offer them extra protection. The problem is that hate crime legislation, as it is currently worded, comes dangerously close to violating the principles of free speech and ideas on which this country is based.

While there is no question that it is wrong to attack someone based on prejudice, is it right to punish someone more severely sim-

ply because they hold certain beliefs? Hate crime legislation seems to be an attempt at thought control. We are not just punishing action, but also beliefs. While individuals should be punished for expressing their beliefs violently, it should be only the expression of those ideas, not the ideas themselves that get punished.

The free expression of ideas is one way we are able to expand the rights of underrepresented groups. By regulating ideas we are potentially making it more difficult for the groups these laws seek to protect to gain true equality. For this reason, the ACLU opposes current hate crime legislation, saying, "It is our belief that vigilant protection of free speech rights has historically opened the doors to effective advocacy for expanded civil rights protections."

Furthermore, establishing laws to protect certain groups more than the community as a whole could have a potentially isolating effect. If we are going to categorize people into groups so that they may be protected from hate crimes, we can't stop at just five or six. What about those who commit crimes against abortionists, or the homeless? Naming only some of these groups isolates others, while also separating the groups that are singled out from the rest of society.

We don't need more laws that seek to divide us even further into defined constituencies. We are all human beings and an attack on another human being, whatever the motivation, is an attack on us all. While hate crimes should certainly be punished just as any other crime, instituting further punishment based on ideas and beliefs undermines the very notion of freedom that we have fought so hard to protect.

## In the spirit of Homer, Michaelangelo, Jefferson....

Did you know that the original blueprints for Davidson College were based on those of the N.C. Lunatic Asylum, a home for the insane in the early 1800s? After the Civil War was fought, those original plans were



Cannon Hodge '04

abandoned and replaced by a classical design. The influence of classical architecture in America dates to our Revolutionary War. Not only was the Constitution based on the ideals of the ancient Greeks and Romans, but our architecture was as well. Thomas Jefferson's architectural prophet was Palladio, the genius of the Renaissance. Jefferson strived to achieve a neoclassic look in his Monticello home and his state buildings - including the University of Virginia. Classic art and architecture is regarded as the highest style of architecture for civilized man.

That's why it is so appropriate for Davidson, the school of brooding geniuses. How uncanny would it be if we had the Chambers Building in its antebellum style and all of our dorms designed by Frank Lloyd Wright?

Have you ever walked past Chambers on a cold night? The air is so clear that the edifice seems to be a dream, a place where only geniuses like Plato, Einstein and Voltaire would learn and teach. I always expect to see

Michelangelo standing on metal scaffolding chipping away at the stone, carving another masterpiece. Davidson's architecture is inspiring.

I believe that if our campus became an architectural smorgasbord, it would only demonstrate our disinterest and debasing of the Classics. Our liberal arts education is founded on the theories dating to the Greeks and Romans, and our architecture coincides with those same originators. It is succinct, timeless and perfect.

Duke University's West Campus is famous for its Gothic architecture. The school hired men to mold the steps so that it looked as if people had been trotting on them for eternity. But what about the other parts of its campus? It looks like a flowerbed of Holiday Inns. Only a portion of Duke's architecture is famous.

Even though our school may give the impression of being unimaginative and being a mere reproduction of the popular antebellum architecture, these buildings represent a history. They tell a story of Palladio, Homer, and Jefferson, and follow the spirit of the aqueducts in France and Michelangelo's St. Peter's Cathedral. Our campus is a representation of the liberal arts mission, and it inspires us to think beyond our normal parameters.

To those who believe our campus needs a diverse range of facades, I challenge you to walk from the old Union to the new one at night. If you do not feel inspired in the least bit, then maybe I am wrong. But I can assure you that the simple tranquility of that building is more breathtaking than any made of stone.

## Think deeper before reacting

It's easy to say that the media likes to overhype any story it can get its hands on, whether it is about a cat getting stuck in a tree or a politician having a piece of broccoli stuck in his teeth. You hear people say that news-casts only show footage with helicopter chases or bloody riots and that papers print pictures



Tim Cook '04

of victim's families after a traumatic event. Well, you'd be right. It is often the journalistic way to seek out the most controversial material and expose it in the eye of the public no matter how upsetting or depressing.

We had such a case in the last week here at school that many felt crossed the line between good and bad reporting, embellishment and poor sources. It was an interesting case about a fraternity, a claim of utmost seriousness and the cause and effects of what would happen if the guilty party was found. To get to the bottom of the case, we had to do a little thinking and cast out immediate thoughts of rage and disgust so that our minds are clear and free to discern the facts from the fiction.

You as the reader have the right to think freely about the subject and ask around for yourself after the article has been published. The newspaper is not always the final word.

My point in is not to defend my paper, but merely to remind us all that everyone is

human and because of that the truth often does not emerge as quickly as we'd like.

The article last week on SAE's attempt to find the alleged culprits was meant to be just that. There were allegations on the Court directed at the brothers of the house and we felt compelled to report a story that had all those who knew the situation in an uproar. Someone at Davidson had accused someone else of a hate crime. Because the night was chaotic and dark and loud, there were no witnesses who had come forward to testify before last week. Our best source then was Patterson Court Council President Matt Arbuckle, who was glad to tell us all he knew. Unfortunately, by the time the paper had been distributed, the article on the front page was out-of-date because of the letter to Skylar Hoffman and several witnesses who had since come forward. Those are the perils of a weekly paper.

But nevertheless, I stand by the story and editorials that we ran. They got people talking about hate crimes and the nature of the Court, in particular its openness. It also reminded people that it is tough to be a homosexual at a small school like ours.

And that is a big problem with how we look at this situation and other situations in life. It's like we have to be mad at someone at all times. I felt this way when I heard about the initial reports of the vicious inhuman acts of hate on a friend of mine. Others felt it when the terrorist attacks shook up our blanketed society. And though the terrorist acts were caught on camera, many things are not.

Before we start attacking each other and flinging ourselves blindly into battle, let's take a step back and consider everything.

## End terror with military force

War and death are a part of the world, always have and always will be. Some will rise to power and cause destruction out of self-interest or fanaticism (such as Hitler and Mao). Other times war is the result of competition for resources or ideological differences between two groups.



Mike Galdo '04

Whatever the cause, history has shown that the group not willing to fight when challenged will suffer. I believe that most people agree with that on some basic level. The question then becomes, is the current situation in Afghanistan one of those times when fighting is the best solution. Josh Craft, in his article entitled "Ideas, not bombs should be top priority in Afghanistan" (which appeared in the October 24, 2001 edition of the Davidsonian), argues that the U.S. response to terrorism should be limited to increasing U.S. aid to foreign nations, the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and the criticizing of Israel's actions in Palestine.

Craft obviously does not believe that bombing Afghanistan provides any solution to our current problem. I too see the negative side-effects of the military action. After all, some of the millions of mislead Arab citizens (which, by the way, all live under some form of dictatorship) will surely interpret our actions as an attack on Islam itself. This will inevitably lead to more terrorist actions in the future. However, such side-effects are minute when compared to the problems associated with Craft's suggestions.

As a response to being attacked the U.S. sends more money to struggling nations? By

examining how U.N. dollars have been used in the past one can see the results of such a "solution." Afghanistan built a soccer stadium with U.N. funds that they now use for public executions and money sent to African nations to build roads has been pocketed by corrupt officials. Direct action by non-profit organizations has produced many positive results, and private corporations, as well as the U.N., should continue to support them. However, such policies would hardly solve the current crisis.

Craft's suggestion of criticizing Israel could produce many more negative results than the Arab and U.N. support for U.S. policy it would garner. Although Israel does use U.S. money to fight against their Arab enemies, they also use it to provide us with needed intelligence information. Not to mention the fact that Israel is the only strong democratic society in the middle-east, and a nation we hold dear as an ally. True, Israel has acted in a manner that some view as extreme. But as long as the Palestinian nation is being controlled by terrorist organizations, its official Web site includes multimedia slideshows showing Sharon (Israel's leader) morphing into Hitler and its official television station runs a Disney-like program that features eight to 10 year old children singing the glories of killing Israelis, Jihad, and suicide as the path to heaven, I personally find it difficult to criticize Israeli actions.

Increasing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan does need to take place for many moral, as well as political, reasons. However, our continued military incursions to root out terror from festering in the fertile soil of Islamic Radicalism must occur. The U.S. government has a responsibility to its own citizens, as well as those that inhabit democratic societies throughout the globe combine its political and economic efforts to end terrorism with strong, precise military action.