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Reducing Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes and Improving Services to Survivors

Over the course of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual individual’s lifetime there is a 20% risk of experiencing hate violence, while a transgender individual’s risk of violence is 27%.^{1,2}

Recommendations

Recent research points to three key recommendations for reducing the victimization of LGBT people by hate crimes:

- Shifts in state public policies that affirm LGBT persons as equal citizens under the law reduce the rates of hate crime victimization in a state.
- Training for police and medical personnel in recognizing hate-crime victimization and cultural competency related to LGBT communities is needed to make reporting of hate crimes safer for victims.
- Anti-bullying and educational programs for youth and young adults, who are most likely to commit anti-LGBT hate crimes, could improve the social climate for LGBT people and reduce anti-LGBT hate crimes.



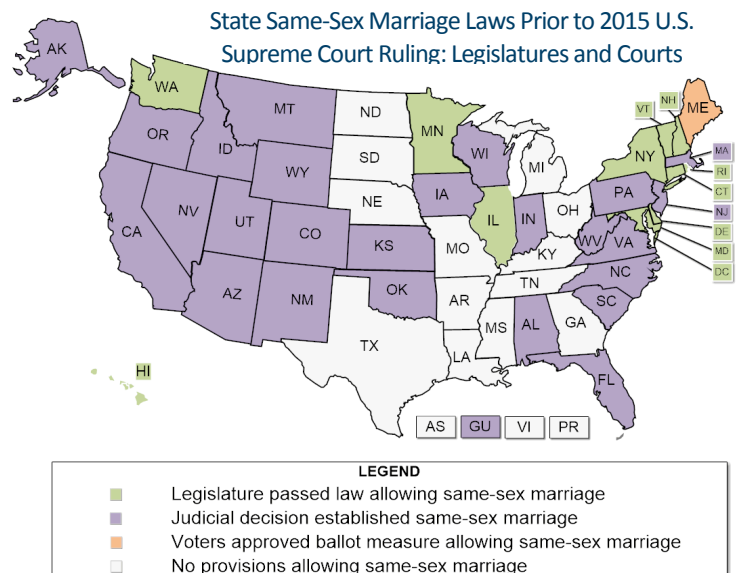
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Research interests:
Criminology, Gender and Sexuality, Race and Ethnicity

Findings – Impact of State Policies:

- Public policy decisions impact rates of hate crimes victimization. The enactment of same-sex marriage bans are associated with higher rates of anti-LGB hate crimes while passage of same-sex marriage legislation is associated with reduced rates of anti-LGB hate crimes.³
- Without action, state-level rates of anti-LGBT hate crime victimization are largely predicted by the rate of such hate crimes in the previous year.⁴



(Views are those of individual faculty member and not lobbying positions of VCU as a public university.)

- Though invalidated in practice by a Supreme Court ruling, Virginia still has laws and a constitutional amendment that bans same-sex marriage. Based on this research, removing such “dead-letter” laws is likely to reduce rates of victimization.

Findings – Barriers to victims seeking help:

- LGBT people are at similar risk of victimization regardless of race, class, or gender⁴
- Only 44% of victims seek help from the police, and only 14% seek medical care, despite the fact that hate crimes more often result in injury to victims than non-bias crimes.⁴
- In 23% of hate crimes reported to community organizations, LGBT victims say that officers refused to file a report, and 27% experienced hostility from officers⁵; improved training would minimize negative post-victimization interactions with police and increase hate crime reporting.
- Training on differences within the LGBT community, would result in improved classification and understanding of hate crimes. Use of the category “anti-LGBT” is more common than appropriately recognizing and classifying hate crimes specifically as “anti-lesbian”, “anti-gay”, “anti-bisexual” or “anti-transgender”.³
- Improved police and medical personnel training to recognize victims of anti-LGBT hate crimes and to accurately classify such crimes can improve the services received by victims and improve the quality of data reported that show the scope of the problem.
- Fostering collaborations among police, health care providers, and community organizations to improve service provision to victims of LGBT hate crimes would also improve services to victims.

Findings – Educating potential offenders:

- Non-White offenders are reported to the police 3.5 more often, though White offenders commit anti-LGBT hate crimes at similar rates.⁶
- Young adults most frequently commit anti-LGBT hate crimes.⁶
- Anti-bullying and educational programs would be beneficial for improving the social climate for LGBT people and reducing anti-LGBT hate crimes.

¹ Herek, Gregory M. 2009. "Hate Crimes and Stigma-Related Experiences among Sexual Minority Adults in the United States Prevalence Estimates from a National Probability Sample." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 24(1):54-74.

² Lombardi, Emilia L, Riki Anne Wilchins, Dana Priesing and Diana Malouf. 2002. "Gender Violence: Transgender Experiences with Violence and Discrimination." *Journal of Homosexuality* 42(1):89-101.

³ Coston, Liz G. 2017. "Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes in the US." PhD, Sociology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY.

⁴ Coston, Liz G. 2019. "Understanding Characteristics of Victims and Perpetrators of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes in the Us." *Violence and Victims* 33(3).

⁵ Chestnut, S, E Dixon and C Jindasurat. 2013. "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Hiv-Affected Hate Violence in 2012." New York: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.

⁶ Sandholtz, Nathan, Lynn Langton and Michael Planty. 2013. "Hate Crime Victimization, 2003-2011." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.