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The 1999 Facts on Crimes and “Hate Crimes”

“Hate Crimes” in Context

If history is any guide, sometime during this Congress the Senate will vote on a “hate-crimes” amendment. If this amendment looks anything like the Kennedy amendments of prior Congresses (and it probably will), then the Senate can expect an amendment to expand the definition of “hate crimes,” enlarge the number of groups covered by the statute, and, perhaps ironically, reduce the penalties for “hate-crimes” murders. (The Kennedy amendment does not permit the death penalty for even the most heinous “hate-crimes” murders). If a “hate-crimes” amendment is coming down the pike, it would be well to understand some of the facts about “hate crimes” within the context of all crimes. Here is some of what we know:

- ✓ In 1999, there were 9,301 “hate crimes” reported to police. However, 7,800 of those crimes (84 percent) are of such relatively minor consequence that *they are not even counted* in the Uniform Crime Reports. The “hate crimes” numbers are inflated by including minor crimes such as simple assaults, intimidations, and vandalism.
- ✓ There were 1,430,693 violent crimes reported in the United States in 1999 (murders, rapes, aggravated assaults, robberies); 1,272 of these were “hate crimes” (0.09 percent). In short, 1123 violent crimes were motivated by all other causes for every one that was motivated by officially designated “hate.”
- ✓ There were 10,204,456 property crimes reported in the United States in 1999 (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft); 229 of these were “hate crimes” (0.002 percent). In short, 44,559 property crimes were motivated by all other causes for every one that was motivated by officially designated “hate.”
- ✓ There were 15,533 murders in 1999. Seventeen of these were reported to have been motivated by “hate” (but as we shall show in another paper, many of those 17 were not “hate-crimes” murders at all – and some were not even murders!). To understand the evil in context, remember that 445 children were murdered by a parent, 32 children were murdered by a babysitter, and 580 children under the age of nine were murdered. Fire was the cause of death in 125 murders, and 26 persons were murdered by drowning.

✓ There were 89,107 rapes reported in the United States in 1999. Six of those were reported to have been motivated by officially designated “hate.” Amherst, Massachusetts (population 35,413) also reported six rapes. The District of Columbia reported 248 rapes.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation of the U.S. Department of Justice publishes two essential books of crime statistics, CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES, 1999 (often called the “Uniform Crime Reports”), an annual compilation of crimes reported to the police, and HATE CRIME STATISTICS, 1999, an annual report on crimes motivated by bias because of a person’s race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. The 1999 books are the latest available, and the crime numbers shown in the table below are from those two sources (the calculations in columns 3 and 4 were made by RPC, however).

Crime Reported in the United States, 1999

	<u>All Crimes</u>	<u>Hate Crimes</u>	<u>Hate Crimes As a % of All Crimes</u>	<u>Ratio of All Other Motivations To “Hate” Motivation</u>
Violent Crime				
Murder	15,533	17	0.109%	913:1
Rape	89,107	6	0.007%	14,850:1
Robbery*	409,670	129	0.031%	3,175:1
Aggravated Assault	916,383	1,120	0.122%	817:1
Simple Assault	not counted	1,766	---	---
Intimidation	not counted	3,268	---	---
Other	not counted	12	---	---
 Total Violent Crime	 1,430,693			
Property Crime				
Burglary	2,099,739	112	0.005%	18,747:1
Larceny-Theft	6,957,412	103	0.001%	67,547:1
Motor Vehicle Theft	1,147,305	14	0.001%	81,949:1
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism	not counted	2,654	---	---
Other	not counted	22	---	---
 Total Property Crime	 10,204,456			
 Arson**	 76,045	48	0.063	1,583:1
Crimes Against Society	not counted	30		
		9,301		

Notes: *HATE CRIME STATISTICS inexplicably counts “robbery” as a property crime; we have counted it as a crime of violence as is done in CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES. **Arson is a property crime, but arson numbers are highly unreliable and are not counted in the total of property crimes in CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES. Accordingly, we too have shown arson but not counted it in the total for all crimes.