

**From:** [Isabelle Boutin](#)  
**To:** [House Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** HB 198 - Monday 2nd March Session  
**Date:** Friday, February 28, 2020 6:59:47 AM

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On December 09th, in the early morning hours in Sterling, my wife Tammie Willis was assaulted, slashed, stabbed and beaten up by a person with a knife. Since then, fear has become part of our daily lives. No one should have to live in fear like this simply for being who they are, simply for living with the person they love more than anything.

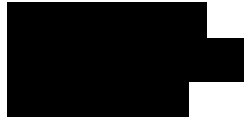
Prior to the assault, Tammie had received a hate letter asking her to go away or she would get hurt, then her truck was vandalized. Why? because someone out there that doesn't know her at all decided she should pay for being who she is. After the letter and truck events, my fear and anxiety were high and I was trying to have her to not stay at our Sterling home alone(I work in Anchorage). But why should someone have to leave their own home? Staying home ended up having her assaulted, and this is so wrong.

Hate is a constant threat to LGBT people , many are living in hiding and fear, those who are not, like kids in school are often harassed and bullied. The LGBT people are a minority group targeted by hate, and this is why HB 198 is so important to us. It is time for Alaska to fix the law to include this group.

I am a very private person and rarely speak up, but I really hope that you consider approving HB 198 on Monday 2nd March and allow it to move to the next phase. It is very important not just to Tammie and I but to the whole LGBT community and the State of Alaska. It is time to say this is NOT OK, we will not accept this anymore and do something about it. HB 198 is a good first step, and a very important one.

The cities of Anchorage, Kenai, Soldotna and the Kenai Peninsula Borough are now all officially supporting this bill. They recognize how important it is to the Alaskan LGBT community. I really hope you do same.

Thank you very much,  
Isabelle Boutin



**From:** [Susan Smalley](#)  
**To:** [House Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** HB198  
**Date:** Monday, March 02, 2020 6:02:40 AM

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I'm a woman of faith, old, straight, married more than half a century, and a 50 year Alaska resident. I'm writing this as an ally of, and an advocate for the LGBTQ community and a supporter of HB198. I am proud that both Soldotna and Kenai, as well as the Kenai Peninsula Borough have passed resolutions in support of this bill.

I'm also proud of the action of our brave territorial legislature who passed the Anti-discrimination Act of 1945. As you are aware, it was the first civil rights legislation in the 48 United States and its territories.

There was pushback then also. The sentiments about how ineffective passing a law would be resulted in the following comment from Elizabeth Peratrovich. "Have you eliminated larceny or murder by passing a law against it? No law will eliminate crimes but, at least you as legislators, can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of a present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination."

Move along 75 years. "I didn't know" was not an uncommon comment at the subsequent meetings after the rock, broken windshield, vicious knife attack against one of our borough residents. We could even imagine this as an isolated incident. The reality is that when these kinds of crimes are reported, then the trolling and the attacks on victims are often worse than the initial incident.

So now we do know! We cannot deny that there are people in our community who have decided that hate crimes are acceptable. Children, at our standing room only safety townhall testified about having to be constantly hyper-vigilant walking to and from school or going out in the community because they have been targeted. Parents are terrified for their children's safety.

A young man, braver than I for sure, read the Facebook posts that were sent to him encouraging him to die, talking about how worthless he was, filled with profanities.

Hate crimes are not just harassment, but they are a federal crime. Supporting this resolution will send a message that hate crimes will not be tolerated in our state.

Hate crimes are not just personal problems but they are systemic ones, community problems, state and national problems. As a state we need to say a resounding "NO." We are better than this and we don't want our citizens to be fearful. My faith includes a serious, "love your neighbor" clause. In my opinion that love includes a safety component. My faith is also hopeful. I am confident that because we know better we will do better. Our opportunity is at hand.

I don't know if you ever wondered, as I have, what you'd have done during slavery, during the Holocaust as Jews, Gypsies, the handicapped, and gays went off to the ovens, when your neighbors of Japanese ancestry were being interned, when our Alaskan indigenous people were denied basic rights, or during the lynchings and Civil Rights movement.

I've heard people say "I wasn't there. I didn't do that."

The good news is we are here now and we can make a difference.

Message crimes which target one person with the intention of intimidating a group are not new. What can be new in our state is that we can give a message response that is strong and reinforces what Alaskans can and should be! We cannot allow people to become comfortable in their hate. We can help create a climate change.

You may hear more from us allies and advocates than from the LGBTQ community. That's because I risk nothing by testifying. I am a woman of privilege. I didn't ask for privilege but I've got it and I know how to use it!

Thank you for considering my testimony.

A. Susan Smalley

**From:** [Michele Vasquez](#)  
**To:** [House Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** re: I support HB 198  
**Date:** Monday, March 02, 2020 11:06:11 AM

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Dear Chair Claman and Members of the Committee:

My friend Tammie Willis was the victim of a hate crime in my community. I feel that the state of Alaska must do all that it can to protect our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. I write to you in full support of HB 198, which will add sentencing aggravators for defendants found guilty of a crime that was motivated by hatred or animus towards a person based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

This is not about giving special protections or extra rights to a group of people, but rather providing more equity in the criminal justice system to those who are the victims of crimes simply because they are lesbian, gay, transgender or bi-sexual. Over the decades, we have added sentencing aggravators for race, creed and national origin, to name a few, so now is the time to provide the same to the LGBTQ community.

On the national level, crimes against LGBTQ people are on the rise. Of course, the statistics only include known crimes because many will simply not report it out of fear. At our LGBTQ Safety Townhall in January, I was made aware of other people who are living in fear, being harassed/bullied because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Many of them are teenagers. Members of the LGBTQ community don't feel safe, are constantly looking over their shoulders and being fearful of leaving their homes. That is no way to live.

I want to be clear. I believe Tammie was targeted for one reason only; she is gay. The note left on her truck was laced with homophobic language and threats of harm. The large rock thrown at her truck that damaged her windshield had the word "dyke" written on it, which is the same word used in the letter. Lastly, she was viscusly assaulted in her own home by a man with a knife, and he would have killed her had the power not gone out in her neighborhood. This all happened over a very brief time period. She has moved out of her home and is currently residing at the KPC Residence Hall where she works. Tammie does not feel safe and I don't blame her.

We cannot stop violence in this country or state, but we can certainly try to deter it. One way we can do that is by adding language to increase sentencing for those who wish to commit violence against people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. I welcome the day when we no longer have to pass laws that protect certain groups of people. It is my fervent hope that the day will come when every human being is valued, accepted and treated the same and these laws are not necessary. Until that day comes, we must do what we can to protect people who are vulnerable. I ask you to support and vote for HB 198 and move it to the next committee.

Respectfully,

Michele Vasquez  
Soldotna, AK

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