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**VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY PEOPLE  
IN PHILADELPHIA AND  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA:**

**A STUDY BY THE PHILADELPHIA LESBIAN AND GAY TASK FORCE**

June, 1988

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**ACQUISITIONS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This study represents the second systematic examination of violence and discrimination against lesbian women and gay men in Philadelphia, and the first study of violence and discrimination against lesbian and gay citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia. The study updates and extends the first study of anti-lesbian/gay violence and discrimination conducted by the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force in 1984. As the present study shows, anti-lesbian/gay violence and discrimination continue to be major problems in Philadelphia and throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, just as they are elsewhere in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Lesbian women and gay men in Pennsylvania have no civil rights protections at the federal or state levels. At the local level, Philadelphia and Harrisburg in 1982 and 1983, respectively, enacted legislation to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation. In January 1988, Governor Robert Casey issued Executive Order 1988-1, which states, "no agency under the jurisdiction of the Governor shall discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, union membership, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or non-job-related handicap or disability" (emphasis added). The Executive Order provides no monitoring or enforcement mechanism to assure compliance with its non-discrimination provision in state employment and state contracts.

The absence of civil rights protection at the state and federal level exacerbates the growing problem of anti-gay and anti-lesbian violence. The fear of revictimization by authorities and the implicit threat of public disclosure discourage gay and lesbian people from reporting incidents of violent victimization.

In 1987, the National Institute of Justice of the U.S. Department of Justice commissioned a study by Abt Associates, Inc., of Cambridge, Mass., on the topic of the response of the criminal justice system to bias crime. The authors of the report, Peter Finn and Taylor McNeil, defined bias crimes, or hate violence, as "words or actions designed to intimidate an individual because of his or her race, religion, national origin, or sexual preference." They went on to say that, "these types of offenses are far more serious than comparable crimes that do not involve prejudice because they are intended to intimidate an entire group. The fear they generate can therefore victimize a whole class of people...(B)ias crime tears at the whole fabric of our society." In their summary, Finn and McNeil state that, "The most frequent victims of hate violence today are blacks, Hispanics, Southeast Asians, Jews, and gays and lesbians. Homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims. Verbal intimidation, assault, and vandalism are the

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<sup>1</sup> National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization: A Study of Violence and Discrimination in Eight Major Metropolitan Cities in the United States. June, 1984.

most commonly reported forms of hate violence.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, the current AIDS crisis has only exacerbated anti-gay bias and probably serves to trigger anti-gay attacks by those already imbued with the homophobia so prevalent in our society.

Our study only confirms and extends the conclusions reached by the Abt Associates researchers. Anti-lesbian/gay violence and discrimination is a serious problem confronting millions of American citizens, many thousands of Pennsylvanians among them, and the public agencies and officials who are charged with protecting citizens have been largely unresponsive and insensitive to the dimensions of the problem. As Finn and McNeil conclude on the basis of their nationwide study, "for the most part, the criminal justice system -- like the rest of society -- has not recognized the seriousness of the hate violence problem. Police officers, prosecutors, and judges tend to regard most incidents as juvenile pranks, harmless vandalism, private matters between the involved parties, or acceptable behavior against disliked groups." We can only concur in this assessment, and we would add to their list, most city, state and federal elected officials, as well as the city and state public school hierarchies and officials.

## RESULTS

Between June, 1987 and January, 1988, the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force (PLGTF) distributed approximately 3300 six-page questionnaires, 1700 in Philadelphia and 1600 in other counties around the Commonwealth. Twelve hundred of these were sent to Task Force members (mostly in Philadelphia). Surveys were returned by 806 individuals, an overall return rate of 24%.

Since the focus of our survey is on discrimination and violence related to sexual orientation, the sample was restricted to those who reported that they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This criterion eliminated 18 of the respondents. We further eliminated those respondents who do not live in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, thus removing an additional 67 respondents, with a resulting total of 721 individuals in our sample.

We have organized and analyzed the survey in terms of two primary sample characteristics: gender and location of residence. The sample thus divided includes 437 Philadelphians (291 men and 146 women) and 284 residents of the Commonwealth outside of Philadelphia (170 men and 114 women).<sup>3</sup>

As we turn to the data on anti-lesbian/gay discrimination and violence, one very important point should be kept in mind concerning the nature of our sample. This is a predominantly white, highly educated group of individuals with a mean age of 35. Federal statistics indicate that such individuals are among those in society least likely to be

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<sup>2</sup> "The Response of the Criminal Justice System to Bias Crime," Peter Finn and Taylor McNeil. Cambridge: Abt Associates, Inc., October 7, 1987 (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> The Commonwealth sample is drawn from 28 counties, as follows: Allegheny (22), Bedford (1), Berks (7), Blair (1), Bucks (25), Cameron (1), Carbon (3), Centre (11), Chester (14), Crawford (1), Cumberland (5), Dauphin (10), Delaware (32), Erie (5), Lackawanna (2), Lancaster (14), Lebanon (1), Lehigh (45), Luzerne (2), Lycoming (1), Mifflin (2), Monroe (7), Montgomery (49), Northampton (16), Schuylkill (1), Somerset (1), Westmoreland (1), York (4).

victimized.<sup>4</sup> The poor, the less educated, the young (ages 12 to 24), and members of racial minority groups have the highest rates of victimization. On the other hand, this is a sample with high percentages of respondents who are "out" to significant others. Such individuals may be at greater risk of anti-gay and anti-lesbian violence and discrimination than people who are "closeted."<sup>5</sup> However, among people who tend to be "out," our sample is one with a lower likelihood of victimization for the reasons noted above. The actual rates of victimization for the general lesbian and gay population of such individuals in Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are probably even higher than our survey results indicate. This conclusion is particularly worrisome given the alarmingly high rates of violence and discrimination reported by our sample:

**Annual Discrimination Rates.** (See Figure 1, page 13.) Nearly a fifth of the Philadelphia sample (18% of the men; 19% of the women) and nearly a quarter of the Commonwealth sample (22% of the men; 24% of the women) reported experiencing employment, housing or public accommodations discrimination in the 12 months preceding June 1987. Philadelphia lesbian and gay people are protected by the Fair Practices Act from such discrimination, while other Pennsylvanians (aside from residents of Harrisburg) have no civil rights protections. The slightly lower annual discrimination rates in the Philadelphia sample may in fact indicate that the Fair Practices Act amendment has had some impact in reducing discrimination. However, it is clear that the Fair Practices Act, as it is currently enforced and administered, is not totally effective, because nearly one fifth of the people in the Philadelphia sample continue to experience employment, housing or public accommodations discrimination on an annual basis.

**Lifetime Discrimination Rates.** (See Figure 2, page 13.) Nearly 40% of the respondents experienced at least one type of discrimination at least once in their lives (39% of Philadelphia men; 37% of Philadelphia women; 37% of Commonwealth men; 43% of Commonwealth women).

In contrast to our earlier study, there were no consistent or significant findings of higher rates of discrimination experienced by women. Unfortunately, for the most part the equivalence between rates of discrimination for men and women in the present study, in contrast with the 1984 study, seems to be due to higher levels of discrimination encountered by the men rather than lower rates encountered by the women in the study.

**Fear of Employment Discrimination.** (See Figure 3, page 13.) In addition to the direct forms of discrimination lesbian women and gay men experience, many are also victimized by fear of discrimination. For each category of discrimination, the majority of respondents report that they fear they could experience discrimination. In terms of employment discrimination, nearly seven out of ten gay men and more than eight out of ten lesbian women report fear of discrimination (66% of Philadelphia men; 83% of Philadelphia women; 71% of Commonwealth men; 78% of Commonwealth women).

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1985. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Since "closeted" individuals are generally inaccessible to survey research, we are unable to assess their victimization rates.

In general, female respondents report greater levels of fear than male respondents. There are no statistically significant differences between the Philadelphia and Commonwealth samples in terms of fear of discrimination. This latter finding again suggests that the Philadelphia Fair Practices Act, as it is currently enforced and administered, is not a totally effective vehicle for civil rights protection, because it has not decreased the fear of discrimination among Philadelphia lesbian and gay people.

**Concealment of Sexual Orientation.** Individuals who fear discrimination in employment, housing or public accommodations are overwhelmingly likely to conceal their sexual orientation some or all of the time to avoid discrimination. Among those who fear employment discrimination, more than 85% conceal their sexual orientation on the job at least some of the time (81% of Philadelphia men; 90% of Philadelphia women; 87% of Commonwealth men; 87% of Commonwealth women). In general, females who fear discrimination are somewhat more likely than males to conceal their sexual orientation, and members of the Commonwealth sample are somewhat more likely than the Philadelphians to do so.

The federal government does not compile statistics on discrimination. We are therefore unable to make comparisons of lesbian and gay people to members of other minority groups or to the general population in terms of levels of discrimination. However, we are able to make such comparisons in terms of violent victimization. The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice compiles violent victimization rates each year as part of its National Crime Survey. When we compare these statistics for the U.S. adult population with the annual criminal violence percentages for our sample, we find some astonishing differences:

**Annual Criminal Violence Rates.** (See Figure 4, page 14.) In the 1986-87 period surveyed, 46% of the Philadelphia men and 20% of the Philadelphia women were victims of criminal violence on the basis of their sexual orientation. In comparison, only 3.9% of U.S. adult males and 2.2% of U.S. adult females on an annual basis experienced some form of criminal violence. Thus, the annual criminal violence victimization rates are twelve times higher for Philadelphia men and nine times higher for Philadelphia women than the respective rates for men and women in the U.S. adult population. In the Commonwealth sample, 31% of the gay men and 15% of the lesbian women reported that they experienced criminal violence in the preceding year. These annual criminal violence victimization rates are eight times higher for Commonwealth men and seven times higher for Commonwealth women than the respective rates for men and women in the U.S. adult population.

In general, the study indicates that gay men are more likely than lesbian women to experience violent victimization. This parallels the situation in the general population, where most violent crime involves males both as perpetrators and as victims. The study also indicates that members of the Philadelphia sample are somewhat more likely than members of the Commonwealth sample to experience criminal violence. This reflects the situation in the general population, where violent crime rates tend to be higher in urban centers than in rural or suburban areas.

**Annual Criminal Violence Rates – 1984 Survey vs. 1987 Survey.** (See Figure 5, page 14.) The annual criminal violence rates for the 1987 Philadelphia sample are twice as high as the rates of violent victimization found in our 1984 survey. We believe two factors are at work to explain this dramatic increase in violent victimization rates. First, the present sample, because of its greater size and representativeness, probably



provides more accurate violence estimates than the earlier study did. The earlier study probably underestimated the seriousness of the problem at that time. However, we believe there has also been an actual increase in violence in the three years between the two studies. One reason for this increase is greater public awareness of AIDS and misplacement of blame onto the gay and lesbian community for this disease. In the current study, participants were asked whether they had experienced violent victimization that was specifically AIDS-related. Overall, 1% of the lesbian women and 13% of the gay men reported that they had in fact experienced AIDS-related victimization. These percentages are probably underestimates, because it is likely that in some incidents motivated by AIDS hysteria the perpetrator(s) did not mention AIDS in the course of the crime, so the victim(s) did not realize that AIDS was a motivating factor.

**Lifetime Criminal Violence Rates.** (See Figure 6, page 14.) More than two thirds of the gay men and well over one third of the lesbian women reported that they experienced criminal violence at least once in their lives on the basis of their sexual orientation (73% of Philadelphia men; 42% of Philadelphia women; 61% of Commonwealth men; 39% of Commonwealth women).

**Annual Verbal Abuse Rates.** Nearly seven out of ten gay men and more than five out of ten lesbian women reported that they experienced verbal abuse in the 12 months preceding June 1987 on the basis of their sexual orientation (75% of Philadelphia men; 57% of Philadelphia women; 64% of Commonwealth men; 47% of Commonwealth women).

**Lifetime Verbal Abuse Rates.** (See Figure 6, page 14.) Survey participants were overwhelmingly likely to have experienced verbal abuse. More than nine out of ten gay men and nearly eight out of ten lesbian women in the sample experienced verbal abuse at some point in their lives on the basis of their sexual orientation (92% of Philadelphia men; 81% of Philadelphia women; 90% of Commonwealth men; 77% of Commonwealth women).

**Reporting Violence and Harassment to the Police.** According to the 1985 National Crime Survey, annual rates of reporting violent crimes to the police are 42% for men and 57% for women in the U.S. adult population. In the current study, the findings for the Philadelphia sample are encouraging, because rates of reporting to the police are slightly above the national average for gay men (44%) and only somewhat below the national average for lesbian women (48%). In our previous study three years ago, reporting rates were much lower. At that time, only 39% of the gay men and 9% of the lesbian women who experienced violent crimes reported them to the police. The increased rates between the two studies may be partly due to the existence of the Task Force's Violence and Discrimination Hotline, which encourages people who have been victimized to report the incidents to the authorities. The increase may also be due to improvements in Philadelphia Police Department policies and performance under Commissioner Kevin Tucker.

In contrast, both the men and the women in the Commonwealth sample are far less likely to report incidents to the police (29% for Commonwealth men; 29% for Commonwealth women). This finding underscores the importance of improving police training and procedures across the Commonwealth to increase police responsiveness to lesbian and gay citizens.

**Police Victimization Rates.** (See Figure 7, page 15.) More than 10% of the gay men and nearly 5% of the lesbian women in the study reported that they experienced some form of police abuse just in the preceding year (14% of Philadelphia men; 5% of Philadelphia women; 12% of Commonwealth men; 1% of Commonwealth women). More than one quarter of the men and more than one tenth of the women experienced police violence or harassment at least once in their lives on the basis of their sexual orientation (26% of Philadelphia men; 15% of Philadelphia women; 31% of Commonwealth men; 8% of Commonwealth women).

**Lifetime School Victimization Rates.** (See Figure 8, page 15.) More than two thirds of the gay men and more than one third of the lesbian women at some point in their schooling experienced harassment or violence by classmates or teachers (67% of Philadelphia men; 33% of Philadelphia women; 72% of Commonwealth men; 40% of Commonwealth women). The highest levels of abuse were suffered in high school, where more than half of the gay men and one fifth of the lesbian women reported that they experienced anti-lesbian/gay harassment or violence. One fourth of the men in the study, both in the Philadelphia and the Commonwealth samples, reported that they were physically assaulted in school on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Gay men were much more likely than lesbian women to experience violence or harassment during junior and senior high school. Victimization rates for males and females are more comparable in college. This pattern of gender differences is probably related to the fact that males in the sample on average reported that they first recognized their sexual orientation at age 15.4, compared to an average age of 20.6 for females in the sample. Thus, a greater percentage of males acknowledged their sexual orientation while they were in high school, and therefore a greater percentage of males were at risk of victimization at that time.

**Lifetime Family Victimization Rates.** (See Figure 9, page 15.) More than one fifth of the men and more than one quarter of the women in the study reported experiencing harassment and/or physical violence from family members on the basis of their sexual orientation (19% of Philadelphia men; 25% of Philadelphia women; 22% of Commonwealth men; 29% of Commonwealth women).

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study extends the grim findings of the 1984 PLGTF report. Lesbian and gay people continue to experience widespread discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations, despite the existence of legal safeguards in some cities. Fear of discrimination and consequent concealment of sexual orientation are pervasive throughout the gay community. Lesbian and gay people continue to be singled out for violent victimization at rates far beyond those experienced by the general U.S. adult population. Anti-gay and anti-lesbian violence and harassment by police officers, teachers, classmates and family members continue to occur at alarmingly high rates.

In fact, the situation for lesbian and gay people today appears even worse than it did at the time of the 1984 PLGTF report. The higher rates of victimization found in the current study are probably due to a combination of [1] an increase in anti-lesbian/gay victimization due to AIDS-hysteria, and [2] a more accurate estimate of anti-lesbian and anti-gay victimization rates because of the greater size and representativeness of the current sample. However, even the present sample continues to be somewhat unrepresentative in a way that would tend to underestimate the actual levels of victimization

experienced by the general population of individuals who are relatively "out." The true levels of violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian and gay people in Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are probably even greater than the shockingly high rates found in the current study.

Many factors contribute to the great risk of violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian and gay people:

**Absence of Civil Rights Legislation.** Lesbian and Gay Pennsylvanians have no civil rights protections at the federal or state level. Philadelphia and Harrisburg residents are protected at the local level against discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. However, our survey indicates that discrimination persists in these cities despite the existence of civil rights legislation. Yet, very few suits alleging anti-lesbian or anti-gay discrimination have been filed with the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR), the agency charged with enforcing the Philadelphia Fair Practices Act. One possible reason for this is that the existing legislation provides only certain safeguards against discrimination. Lesbian and gay people are still at risk of discrimination in areas such as child custody decisions and child visitation and adoption rights. By filing charges of discrimination and publicly identifying their sexual orientation, lesbian and gay people could put themselves at risk of further discrimination in areas where they are unprotected by existing legislation. Also, in the few cases where people have filed charges of anti-gay or anti-lesbian discrimination, the cases have been mired in administrative process, and very few cases have resulted in resolutions that are satisfactory to the lesbian or gay litigants. In sum, most lesbian and gay Pennsylvanians have no civil rights protections, and in the few cities where there are local protections, they are largely ineffective because they are not comprehensive and because the process for resolving complaints is bogged down in red tape and bureaucracy.

**AIDS-Related Victimization.** AIDS has had a tremendous impact on the lesbian and gay community. Many lives have been lost to this disease and many more people will die. However, the negative impact of AIDS has been exacerbated by the actions of a hysterical, ill-informed public. People with AIDS, people with ARC (AIDS-Related Conditions) and people with a positive HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) status have been treated as pariahs, despite the relative incommunicability of AIDS. Many have experienced discrimination in employment, housing, insurance coverage, parental rights, and access to social and medical services. Furthermore, because of the misplacement of blame onto the gay community for the disease AIDS, there has been an increase in anti-gay and anti-lesbian violence. In our study, 1% of the women and 13% of the men reported that they experienced violence that was specifically AIDS-related.

**Inadequate Law Enforcement.** The justice system should give the same priority to anti-lesbian and anti-gay victimization that it accords other cases of violence and discrimination. Unfortunately, our survey and other studies found many cases where law enforcement officers were unsympathetic to lesbian and gay victims and where judges gave less severe punishment to perpetrators of anti-gay and anti-lesbian crimes. By not treating anti-lesbian/gay victimization as seriously as other crimes, the justice system gives tacit approval to the perpetrators of this victimization, and fails in its mission of deterring crimes against members of society. Our study also found many instances where the police themselves were the perpetrators of anti-lesbian/gay violence and harassment. Clearly, police in the Commonwealth are not being adequately informed

about the inappropriateness of anti-gay and anti-lesbian behavior, and they are not being adequately trained about the specific needs of lesbian and gay crime victims.

**Failure to Include Sexual Orientation as a Protected Category in Bias Crime Legislation.** Twenty-nine (29) states, including Pennsylvania, have enacted legislation which increases penalties for certain offenses motivated by racial or religious bigotry and/or enables victims of such crimes to initiate civil actions against perpetrators. The vast majority of these states, including Pennsylvania, have failed to include sexual orientation as a protected category in bias crime legislation, despite evidence that homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims of bias crimes.<sup>6</sup> Anti-gay and anti-lesbian crimes are as deplorable and as devastating as other forms of bigotry. All hate-motivated crimes should be of grave concern to democratic governments, because such crimes deny constitutionally guaranteed rights of privacy and freedom of association and expression.

**Inadequate Bias Crime Statistics.** The U.S. Justice Department collects extensive police and survey statistics on crime. However, it collects no data on the nature or incidence of bias crimes. In the absence of such data, state and local governments, which rely on the federal government for statistical information, will have a difficult time effectively allocating resources to combat bias crimes.

**Inadequacies in the Education System.** Statistics in the present study indicate that large numbers of lesbian and gay respondents experienced violence and harassment by classmates and teachers in junior and senior high school. Furthermore, findings indicate that school victimization rates are negatively correlated with age of respondent, indicating that the situation in our schools is getting worse today. Documentation from the PLGTF Violence and Discrimination Hotline Project and results from other studies indicate that the principal perpetrators of anti-lesbian and anti-gay violence are teenage and young adult males, the recent products of our schools. Clearly, our school system is failing to inform these youths that violence and harassment of gay and lesbian people is repugnant and immoral. Also, our schools are failing to provide a safe and supportive environment for lesbian and gay youths. Accurate information about lesbian and gay people is not provided in the general curriculum, and lesbian and gay youths are rarely able to find positive role models within the education system. Some religious institutions and members of the media also contribute to the problem by failing to provide accurate information about homosexuality and by failing to condemn anti-gay and anti-lesbian victimization.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems cited above contribute to the significant levels of violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian and gay people. PLGTF proposes a number of policy recommendations to address these problems:

**Enactment of Civil Rights Legislation.** In order to provide full and equal protection to gay and lesbian people, PLGTF recommends that:

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<sup>6</sup> "The Response of the Criminal Justice System to Bias Crime," Peter Finn and Taylor McNeil. Cambridge: Abt Associates Inc., October 7, 1987.

- the U.S. Congress amend Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include the category "sexual orientation;"
- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania propose and the state legislature enact an amendment to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (1955, PL 744, as amended) which incorporates "sexual orientation" as a protected category and which provides criminal penalties for civil rights infringements;
- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania propose and the state legislature enact legislation to prohibit the use of sexual orientation, per se, as a primary factor in awarding child custody, visitation and adoption rights;
- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania propose and the state legislature enact legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all educational programs and instructional materials at the elementary and secondary school level.

**AIDS-Related Legislation and Training.** In order to alleviate the great, negative impact that AIDS has had on society, PLGTF recommends that:

- the U.S. Congress enact legislation which prohibits discrimination on the basis of AIDS, ARC and HIV status;
- the federal government appropriate adequate funding for comprehensive research and explicit educational programs to halt the spread of AIDS and dispel public misconceptions about this disease;
- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania propose and the state legislature enact legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of AIDS, ARC and HIV status;
- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania propose and the state legislature enact legislation to assure that the HIV antibody test is not coercively administered and that its results are protected against unauthorized disclosure;
- the state government substantially increase appropriations for community-based education and public health programs in regard to AIDS.

**Comprehensive Legislation to Combat Bias Crimes.** In order to provide the victims of anti-lesbian/gay violence the same protections accorded victims of racial or religious bigotry, PLGTF recommends that:

- the Pennsylvania legislature amend existing bias crime legislation to include "sexual orientation" as a protected category and to make provision for civil cause of action against perpetrators.

**Collection of Bias Crime Statistics.** In order to develop a statistical data base to facilitate the combatting of bias crimes, PLGTF recommends that:

- the federal government enact legislation requiring the U.S. Justice Department to collect and publish police and victim survey data on the nature and incidence of all bias crimes, including those on the basis of sexual orientation;
- state and local human relations offices cooperate with law enforcement agencies in gathering and disseminating information about hate-motivated crimes;
- law enforcement agencies and human relations offices cooperate with organizations in the private sector that deal with bias crime issues;
- the state government enact legislation which mandates the reporting of bias-motivated violence and harassment in the schools, and that requires that such data be distributed to local school boards and the media.

**Curriculum Revision and Training Programs in the Education System.** In order to combat anti-lesbian/gay violence in our schools, to provide a safe and supportive environment for gay and lesbian students, and to dispel misconceptions about homosexuality that can lead to anti-lesbian/gay victimization, PLGTF recommends that:

- public and private schools establish clear policies which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, staff development programs, curriculum, instructional materials, testing instruments and library acquisitions;
- public and private schools develop comprehensive training programs, with periodic review and evaluation, for all teachers and professional support staff, specifically on the matters of sexual orientation, race, gender, age, disability, religion and ethnicity;
- public and private schools, in consultation with trained curriculum specialists, undertake revision of history, social studies, literature and health curricula, guided by clearly defined institutional policies that require sensitivity to and inclusion of educational materials on minority issues, including sexual orientation and women's studies;
- library acquisitions be guided by a highly publicized institutional mandate to reflect human diversity and respect for difference;
- religious institutions and the media, as vehicles for public information and education, play an active role in condemning anti-lesbian/gay victimization and in providing accurate information about homosexuality to dispel public misconceptions about gay and lesbian people that can lead to bias crimes.

**Training Programs in Law Enforcement.** In order to improve the police response to anti-lesbian/gay violence and combat police violence and harassment of gay and lesbian people, PLGTF recommends that:

- law enforcement agencies establish comprehensive in-service and academy training programs, subject to periodic review, testing and evaluation, on minority issues, including sexual orientation;

- law enforcement agencies adopt the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives' (NOBLE) "Model Law Enforcement Response," as amended,<sup>7</sup> in order to assure a precise delineation of roles, responsibilities and procedures in effectively investigating, reporting and analyzing hate-motivated crimes.

**Training Programs in State Government.** In order to assure non-discrimination in state employment and in the provision of state services and benefits, PLGTF recommends that:

- the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania institute a comprehensive training program, subject to periodic review and evaluation, on minority issues, including sexual orientation, for all state agency and state contractor personnel.

**Training Programs in Social Service Agencies.** In order to insure a satisfactory response to the needs of lesbian and gay victims of violence and discrimination, PLGTF recommends that:

- victim service agencies institute comprehensive staff training programs about minority issues, including sexual orientation;
- victim service agencies advertise the availability of their programs to the lesbian and gay community and develop a working relationship with gay and lesbian community organizations.

Our study has demonstrated that anti-gay and anti-lesbian violence and discrimination are pervasive problems throughout Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A timely, multifaceted response by people in government, law enforcement, education, social service agencies, religious institutions and the media is essential in order to combat this senseless victimization.

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<sup>7</sup> The NOBLE protocols focus on racial and religious bias crimes. We recommend that the following categories be included: age, ethnicity, gender, handicap, and sexual orientation.

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