

just news

Intimidation bill signed into law

On August 4, Gov. Neil Goldschmidt signed into law two bills designed to improve reporting of malicious harassment crimes and to ban intimidation based on sexual orientation. The governor also signed a bill extending the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to schools statewide.

Senate Bill 606, the Bias Crimes Bill, requires law enforcement agencies to report to the state Executive Department statistics concerning crimes motivated by prejudice based on perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability. The new law will help law enforcement agencies determine the magnitude and geographic location of these "hate crimes."

The Executive Department will provide an annual report of hate crimes, and police officers will be trained to investigate, identify and report these crimes. Seven states currently require data collection regarding bias crimes, including Maryland, Virginia, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Minnesota, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

House Bill 2784 adds sexual orientation to categories protected by Oregon's intimidation law. It creates both a misdemeanor and a felony for acts of intimidation based on bias against sexual orientation. Tampering with property or subjecting another person to offensive physical conduct is a Class A misdemeanor. Causing physical injury or placing a person in fear of imminent serious physical injury is a Class C felony.



PHOTO BY JAY BROWN

The bill was originally requested by Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk. Near death, the bill was resuscitated late in the session by Representative Judy Bauman, D-Portland, and passed by a bare majority in both houses. (See Just Out, July 1989)

The governor also signed into law House Bill 2705, which designates Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, the third Monday in January, a legal school holiday statewide. ▼

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