

CHICAGO, IL – Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (LLEHCPA). This was the first bill Quigley co-sponsored bill in Congress.

“In 2008, there were 72 reported hate crimes in the City of Chicago alone. When one of our neighbors is attacked, our entire community feels the pain,” said Quigley. “Every American, regardless of who his parents are, where she worships or who he chooses to love, deserves to live free of the fear of harm. This bill will go a long way towards ensuring all of our citizens have equal access to protection under the law.”

The LLEHCPA will authorize the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute certain bias-motivated crimes based on the victim’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. In 2007, the FBI reported over 7,600 hate crime incidences, including almost 1,500 targeted against the LGBT community. Currently, the federal government can only investigate hate crimes motivated by the victim’s race, color, religion, and national origin. In addition to authorizing the DOJ to investigate and prosecute crimes based sexual orientation, the bill will also provide local authorities with more resources to combat hate crimes and give the federal government jurisdiction over prosecuting hate crimes in states where the current law is inadequate.

Throughout his career, Quigley has championed issues particularly important to the LGBT community. As Cook County Commissioner, Quigley worked tirelessly, in conjunction with a coalition of LGBT advocates, to ensure that Cook County does not do business with groups that discriminate based on sexual orientation. Additionally, Quigley passed a groundbreaking ordinance that created the Cook Country Domestic Partnership Registry, which allows domestic partners to more easily secure benefits for one another.