



Issue: Hate Crimes

Bill: Not released yet

Sponsor: TBD

What it does:

Utah's current state code regarding hate crimes (76-3-203.3) does not allow a case to be tried as a hate crime if the infraction is greater than a misdemeanor. The law also makes no mention of hatred, bias or prejudice based on specific characteristics, such as the victim's race.

Why it matters:

In the past 20 years, Utah law enforcement agencies reported a total of 1,279 hate crimes. 48% because of race, 20% because of religion, 17% because of ethnicity, and 15% because of sexual orientation. Hate crimes are different than other crimes because they not only terrorize the victim, but the community that the victim represents. While the crimes themselves can be prosecuted, our laws currently provide no justice for the community that has been attacked.

Key Question:

Should we strengthen our current legislation to allow crimes greater than a misdemeanor to be prosecuted as a hate crime?

Instructions: As a group, spend the next five minutes crafting a pitch to lobby your expert to pass legislation allowing greater prosecution of hate crimes.