



MEMBER OF CONGRESS

BARBARA LEE  
NINTH DISTRICT  
CALIFORNIA

*Greetings from Congresswoman Barbara Lee*

November 16, 2008

Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I welcome you to the 2008 Transgender Day of Remembrance, an event that brings critical attention to the violence confronted by our transgender community. Today we honor the memory of our transgender and gender-variant community members tragically lost to violence.

As we offer support and condolences to the families and friends who have lost loved ones, we remember their lives and further commit ourselves to creating a safer, healthier and more equal community.

I would like to commend the Tri-City Health Center for its dedication and commitment to protecting the rights of all of the individuals of our community, and the MAC AIDS Foundation for its tremendous support of this event. It is because of your diligent work in the important areas of human rights advocacy and community empowerment that the Bay Area continues to lead the state and nation in providing opportunities for transgender individuals. I am proud of our national reputation on this issue, and I remain dedicated to working collaboratively to ensure the human rights of transgender people to live healthy lives free of violence.

California law considers all crimes based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender hate crimes. However, 38 states still lack these basic protections. That is why I co-sponsored the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, H.R. 1592, to amend the federal law to criminalize offenses based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and extend federal resources to local authorities prosecuting hate crimes.

I firmly believe in the need to guarantee and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals. Yet, despite some of the progress we have made towards this goal, the discrimination that leads to these atrocious crimes still exists. As founding Vice-Chair of the Bi-Partisan Congressional Caucus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality, I will work to ensure the guarantees and opportunities that people deserve regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

All hate crimes, whether perpetrated on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, deserve to be prosecuted.

My thoughts and prayers are with those who mourn these heartbreaking losses. It is my hope that the spirits of those we remember today have found peace. Together, we can pursue protection and justice for every individual. Thank you again for being here and for your continued commitment to creating a safe and healthy community for all.

Sincerely Yours,

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress