



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgia General Assembly Approves Hate Crimes Law

Atlanta, GA (June 24, 2020) - [The Georgia Coalition for Safe Communities \(GCSC\)](#) applauds state legislators for approving HB 426, a bipartisan hate crimes law that holds individuals and groups accountable for crimes motivated by bigotry and hatred.

“Laws deter violence and with the passage of HB 426 people now will know that their hate crimes will not be tolerated in Georgia,” said GCSC Co-Founder Dorothy Leone-Glasser, executive director of ARxC, a non-profit patient advocacy coalition. “We urge Gov. Brian Kemp to sign this critically important legislation into law without delay.”

GCSC, founded by ARxC, Compassionate Atlanta and Faith in Public Life GA-OUTCRY, fought for passage of HB 426 earlier this year before the 2020 General Assembly session was suspended in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill passed the House in 2019 and stalled in the Senate. Georgia was one of four states without a hate crimes law.

Following the May 7 arrests of two white men in the shotgun death of Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old African American, in Brunswick, GA, GCSC joined the chorus of community and business leaders calling on the Senate to approve the House bill when the session resumed June 15. To underscore the urgency, hundreds of people of all faiths across Georgia signed a [Faith in Public Life petition](#) urging adoption of HB 426.

“GCSC congratulates Republicans and Democrats for recognizing the significance of this legislation for all Georgians,” Leone-Glasser said. “Our communities will never be safe if people fear they can be targeted because of who they are and what they stand for. We particularly want to commend the bill’s sponsors Reps. Chuck Efstrotation and Calvin Smyre as well as House Speaker David Ralston, Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, and Senators Elena Parent, Harold V. Jones II, Jesse Stone and Bill Cowsert. We also acknowledge the untiring efforts of the Georgia Democratic Leadership and Caucus, along with the NAACP GA.”

Leone-Glasser also observed, “The adoption of HB426 was supported by all the citizen advocates who called, emailed and posted on social media the need to pass this historic legislation. Your voices were heard!”

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