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Bringing you **IMPORTANT** news from our nation's capitol

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A *For Faith & Family* Ministry Partner

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The most egregious of the hate crime laws are all attempts to silence those who would speak what the Bible has to say about homosexuality. The intent of most of these laws is that, if it makes a homosexual uncomfortable or makes them feel like they are not accepted, then you are guilty of a hate crime. Their feeling about what you say is determinative about what the law does about what you have said.

Dr. Richard Land
President, SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

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[Judiciary panel sends Roberts' nomination to Senate floor](#) Three Democrats joined the 10 Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee to approve the nomination of John Roberts as chief justice of the United States in a 13-5 vote Sept. 22.
[Land, Dobson, others urge Frist to stop hate crimes bill](#) ERLC President Richard Land and other pro-family leaders have called on Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist to block passage of legislation that would expand rights for homosexuals.
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population control program.

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Judiciary panel sends Roberts' nomination to Senate floor

Three Democrats joined the 10 Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee to approve the nomination of John Roberts as chief justice of the United States in a 13-5 vote Sept. 22. The panel's action sends Roberts' nomination to the Senate floor, where he is expected to receive at least 60 votes during the week of Sept. 26-30.

If confirmed, Roberts will become the 17th chief justice, succeeding William Rehnquist, who died Sept. 3 after a lengthy battle with thyroid cancer. Unless Senate action is delayed, Roberts will be confirmed in time to sit on the Supreme Court when it begins oral arguments in the new term Oct. 3.

While the Senate nears confirmation of Roberts, it awaits the next high court nominee from President Bush. Retiring Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has agreed to remain on the bench while another nominee goes through the confirmation process. Bush reportedly will announce his selection soon. His announcement is likely to set off an even more contentious debate over a replacement for O'Connor, who, unlike Rehnquist, is not considered a conservative.

Democratic Sens. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Russ Feingold and Herbert Kohl, both of Wisconsin, joined the Judiciary Committee's Republicans in voting for Roberts. Voting against the nominee were Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, Joseph Biden of Delaware, Dianne Feinstein of California, Charles Schumer of New York and Richard Durbin of Illinois.

Social conservatives applauded the committee's vote and continued to provide widespread support to Roberts, though the former aide in the Reagan and first Bush administrations has not committed himself on the *Roe v. Wade* opinion legalizing abortion. Pro-life and pro-family advocates, including Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission President Richard Land, mostly have affirmed Roberts because of the judicial philosophy he has expressed. During the committee's hearings, Roberts said judges should have a "limited" role and endorsed "judicial restraint."

Jan LaRue, Concerned Women for America's chief counsel, said Roberts' confirmation vote should be "overwhelming."

"Only those willing to jump off a political cliff by joining hands with the die-hard abortion, gay rights and environmental groups can be expected to oppose this supremely qualified nominee," LaRue said.

Roberts, 50, has served on the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals since 2003 and at onetime was a clerk for Rehnquist.

You may contact your senators about the confirmation vote by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or by emailing them through the ERLC's website, www.faihandfamily.com.

[Back to Top](#)

Land, Dobson, others urge Frist to stop hate crimes bill

ERLC President Richard Land and other pro-family leaders have called on Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist to block passage of legislation that would expand rights for homosexuals.

Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson and American Family Association founder Donald Wildmon joined Land and 43 national and state leaders in a Sept. 20 letter telling Frist they "are looking to [him] to assure" a measure expanding hate crimes prevention to cover homosexuals and transgendered individuals fails to become law.

The House of Representatives passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, H.R. 2662, in a somewhat surprising 223-199 vote Sept. 14. The House approved the hate crimes legislation as an amendment to the Children's Safety Act, H.R. 3132, which would stiffen penalties for and supervision of sex offenders. Passage of the sex offender bill came in a 371-52 vote, even though it included the hate crimes measure.

While Land and his fellow signers said they strongly support the Children's Safety Act, they "will adamantly oppose" the inclusion of the hate crimes language. That measure "was created as, and continues to be, an attempt by some to advance the cause of homosexuality."

The hate crimes language would extend protection to include "gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability." The hate crimes law currently covers the classifications of race, color, religion and national origin.

"Sexual orientation" includes homosexuality. "Gender identity" may be different than a person's sex and provides coverage for a category labeled transgender, an umbrella term that includes transsexuals and cross-dressers.

So far, the government has granted civil rights protections "based on certain immutable characteristics shared by humanity generally," Land and the others said in the letter from the ERLC.

They warned the bill also could silence churches.

When the government establishes "more and more special rights," it places limitations not only "upon actions, but speech and thought as well," the pro-family leaders told Frist. "This trend will prepare the way for the outright ban of criticism of a lifestyle believed by millions of people of religious conviction to be contrary to the laws of God and nature. Thus, granting special rights and protections to homosexuals is inevitably a step toward removing rights from those who oppose homosexuality."

There appears to be a majority in the Senate prepared to pass an expansion of the hate crimes law to include "sexual orientation." The Senate version has 44 cosponsors. Last year, the Senate approved a similar expansion of hate crimes legislation as an amendment to a bill, but House leaders blocked final passage.

You may contact Frist's office by calling (202) 224-3344 or by e-mailing through his website, <http://frist.senate.gov>.

[Back to Top](#)

White House blocks funds linked to China's coercive abortions

The Bush administration has refused for the fourth consecutive year to provide money to a controversial United Nations family planning fund linked to China's coercive population control program.

The State Department announced it would withhold this year \$34 million designated by Congress for the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA). As it has each year since 2002, the department determined contributions to the organization would violate the 1985 Kemp-Kasten amendment, which prohibits family planning money from going to any entity that, as determined by the President, "supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization."

Officials in many parts of China have practiced a forced population control program for about 25 years in an attempt to curb the birth rate in the world's most populous country. A law codifying the policy throughout China went into effect in 2002.

The policy limits couples in urban areas to one child and those in rural areas to two, if the first is a girl. Other exceptions have been made in some provinces, and the enforcement of the policy has varied among provinces. The program has been marked by coercive sterilization and abortion, but infanticide, especially of females, also has been reported.

The UNFPA has denied charges it supports coercive programs, but a State Department investigative team in 2002 reported the UNFPA provided computers and vehicles to Chinese population-control offices, a State Department spokesman said at the time. That team did not recommend withholding the funds, however.

Since 2002, "we have continuously called on China to end its program of coercive abortion," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in a written statement Sept. 17. "We have also repeatedly urged China and the U.N. Population Fund to restructure the organization's programs in a way that would allow the United States to provide funding. . . . since no key changes have taken place, these restrictions are being applied again."

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[Back to Top](#)

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"Our president and our country are standing with the oppressed by refusing to cooperate with their oppressor," said Rep. Chris Smith, R.-N.J., in a written statement. "The international community should be appalled that UNFPA spends more time and energy demonizing the U.S. for providing funding to other organizations than it does in criticizing the murderous Chinese population control program."

[Back to Top](#)

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