



April 16, 2007

Jackie Matheny
Warren County Sheriffs Department
108 Security Circle
McMinnville, Tennessee 37110

Dear Sheriff Matheny:

We were contacted by Neal Anthony, a resident of McMinnville who is the victim of a series of recent, disturbing hate crimes. As you know, Mr. Anthony's McMinnville home was covered in graffiti clearly evidencing anti-gay bias. The graffiti included the anti-gay slurs, "Fags deserve 2 die," "All gays go to hell," and "Queer son of bitch." Mr. Anthony's home was also vandalized by rocks and paintballs, and previously, his gay pride flag was torn in half.

Tennessee state law expressly provides for enhanced penalties for crimes against a person or property that are motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's belief or perception regarding the race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or gender of the victim. TN STAT. § 40-35-114. Hate crimes on the basis of sexual orientation should also be reported to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Based on the anti-gay nature of the slurs spray-painted on his home, it is plainly apparent that the crimes against Mr. Anthony and his property were motivated in whole or in part because of his actual or perceived sexual orientation. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance to you in reporting the crimes against Mr. Anthony as hate crimes. In the event that the Sheriffs Department does not intend to investigate the acts as hate crimes, we would appreciate an explanation of your reasons for not doing so.

We would greatly appreciate a response to this letter by Friday, April 27, 2007. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at 615.329.9934 if you have any questions or concerns.

Very Truly Yours,

Christine P. Sun
LGBT Staff Attorney*

Cc: Honorable Lisa Zavogiannis (P.O. Box 510, 455 N. Chancery Street, McMinnville, TN 37110. Phone: (931) 473-9572. Fax: (931) 473-7410)

*Admitted in New York and California. Not admitted in Tennessee.

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