



oklahomans for equality

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OkEq Denounces Anti-Gay Violence

Tulsa, Okla - December 5, 2007 — Oklahomans for Equality expresses its outrage at the recent murder of [Steven Domer](#). We extend condolences to his family and friends. This senseless tragedy highlights the urgent need for federal and state hate crimes legislation protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

On October 26th, Steven Domer, a 62-year-old gay man, was abducted from NW 39th Street near Pennsylvania Avenue in Oklahoma City. On November 4th, his body was found in rural McClain County. His hands were tied with duct tape and a wire hanger was wrapped around his neck. The Oklahoma State Medical Examiner concluded that Domer died of asphyxiation and ruled his death a homicide. On November 28, [Darrell Madden](#), a self-proclaimed white supremacist, was charged with first-degree murder and kidnapping in relation to Domer's death.

Prosecutors believe that Madden targeted Domer as part of an initiation rite of the Aryan Brotherhood. In order to secure a "patch," the white supremacist group demands that its members commit an act of violence against an African American, Jew, homosexual, or any other person declared "an enemy."

Although Oklahoma County District Attorney [David Prater](#) and other law enforcement officials believe that anti-gay bias was a motivating factor in Domer's murder, they cannot prosecute Madden under Oklahoma's hate crimes law because the statute does not cover sexual orientation. Oklahoma is one of only 17 states whose hate crimes laws do not protect LGBT citizens. Most state hate crime laws enhance the penalties for bias-motivated crimes.

On December 4, Representative [Al McAffrey](#) (D-Oklahoma City) announced his intention to introduce a bill expanding the state's hate crime law to include sexual orientation and gender.

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act / Matthew Shepard Act](#) giving the Justice Department the power to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violence by providing the department with jurisdiction over crimes of violence where the perpetrator has selected the victim because of the person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. This bill will soon be voted upon in the U.S. Senate.

As legislators consider passage of these historic state and national laws, Oklahomans for Equality will be working with its allies in the LGBT and allied community in educational and advocacy efforts.

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Our mission - Oklahomans for Equality (OkEq) seeks equal rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals and families through advocacy, education, programs, alliances, and the operation of the Dennis R. Neill Equality Center.