

MICHELE BACHMANN
6TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

COMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL SERVICES

HOUSE REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2306

107 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2331

6043 HUDSON ROAD, SUITE 330
WOODBURY, MN 55125
(651) 731-5400

110 2ND STREET S, SUITE 232
WAITE PARK, MN 56387
(320) 253-5931

www.bachmann.house.gov

October 13th, 2009

I've only been in Congress for a few years, but it is no surprise to me that a Gallup poll on October 6 found that Congress has an approval rating of 21%. I can't imagine Congress earned any respect from the people last week given the shenanigans the majority pulled on an important troop-funding measure.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is supposed to authorize programs to provide for national defense, providing for the resources, tools and training our troops currently engaged overseas need. Funding for American men and women in uniform – particularly as they are in harm's way – has pretty much universal support. And that is what makes it so dastardly that Congressional Democrats held troop funding hostage to an agenda that their base voters support, but mainstream America has rejected.

Hate crimes legislation has been around since 1997, but it has failed to muster enough support for passage into law on its own merits in all that time. Essentially, what "hate crimes legislation" does is criminalize thought. It says that a crime committed because of a motivation based on a certain category of prejudice is more heinous than one committed for any other reason. You and I know that a crime is a crime is a crime, regardless of a "perceived" social circumstance. Really, is it more heinous if someone kills because of prejudice than for some twisted joy they get from killing?

According to FBI statistics, the incidence of hate crimes has actually declined over the last ten years and only 0.05 percent of homicides in the nation involved so-called hate crimes. But, regardless of whether you think that hate crimes legislation is necessary, is good policy, or should become law, we can all agree that it has nothing to do with supporting our troops and has no place in the NDAA.

In this case, supporters didn't want to pass hate crimes legislation as a "standalone bill" because it "would be vulnerable to dangerous amendments," according to The Washington Blade, a D.C. paper. They knew that they couldn't get what they wanted without the cover of the men and women who put their lives on the line for our freedoms.

Our soldiers are brave heroes, not some political tool to be used to advance an agenda, particularly not an agenda that cannot pass on its own. Not only are these actions a disgrace to the procedures our founding fathers put in place to promote serious and thoughtful legislation, but even more so a disgrace to the men and women who serve in uniform. They deserve better than to be treated like pack mules carrying a "must-pass" policy of the fringe left.

I won't be surprised when the next Gallup poll shows that no one is happy with the way Congress does its job.

Michele Bachmann



Member, United States Congress