Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA:
A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness from 1999 - 2002
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Introduction

The arrest of three men in the July brutal and savage beating death of Gerald King, Jr. forced the concepts of hate and homelessness to the forefront of local minds. Despite the gruesome and seemingly singular nature of his death, King’s death was one of many angry and vicious attacks committed against people experiencing homelessness that occurred during 2002. In August, a bus driver in Los Angeles ran over a homeless man in a battle of “wills,” after refusing to let the homeless man board his bus. In October, an 18-year-old man in San Luis Obispo climbed a fence and jumped from it several times landing on a homeless man’s head. Also in October, three Navy Men pelted several homeless people with paintballs. In Springfield, Ohio, another homeless man was sleeping on a porch during a hot August night when he was set on fire.

Discrimination against people experiencing homelessness has become accepted in today’s society. Michael Savage, the host of the radio talk show Savage Nation, said on April 23, 2002 that, “In a sane society, they [bums] would be beaten up, thrown in a van, and thrown in a work camp.” Statements such as these reinforce negative and violent stereotypes against homeless individuals. The continual size of news reports of hate crimes and violence against people experiencing homelessness has led the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) to publish a four-year study examining hate crimes and violence committed against people experiencing homelessness from 1999 – 2002. The fourth consecutive report, “Hate, Violence, an Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 2002” was also released.

Over the past several years, advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have seen an alarming increase in reports of homeless men, women and even children being killed, beaten, and harassed. In 1999, NCH, along with its Civil Rights Work Group, a nationwide network of civil rights and homeless advocates, responded to this concern and produced the first compilation of its kind, No More Homeless Deaths! Hate Crimes: A Report Documenting Violence Against Men and Women Homeless in the U.S. The following year (2000), NCH published A Report of Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Who Are Homeless in the United States in 2000. In 2001, Hate: A Compilation of Violent Crimes Committed Against Homeless People in the U.S. in 2001 was completed. These reports present the known incidences of hate crimes and violence against the homeless population. These annual reports aim:

1. To compile the incidence of hate crimes and violence against people who are homeless that NCH has received and reviewed in order to document this alarming trend.
2. To make lawmakers and the public aware of this serious issue.
3. To recommend proactive measures to be taken.

The term “hate crime” generally conjures up images of cross burnings and lynchings, swastikas on Jewish synagogues, and horrific murders of gays and lesbians. In 1968, the U.S. Congress defined a hate crime as a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of their race, color or national origin (Title 18 U.S.C Section 245). The
first federal law to combat hate crimes, 18 USC Section 245, passed in 1968. It mandated that the government must prove both that the crime occurred because of a victim’s membership in a designated group and because the victim was engaged in certain specified federally-protected activities -- such as serving on a jury, voting, or attending public school.¹

Hate crimes are commonly called bias-motivated crimes, referring to the prejudice or partiality of the perpetrator against the victim’s real or perceived grouping or circumstance. Most hate crimes are committed not by organized hate groups, but by individual citizens who harbor a strong resentment against a certain group of people. Some are “mission offenders,” who believe they are on a mission “to cleanse the world of a particular evil.” Others are “scapegoat offenders,” who project their resentment toward the growing economic power of a particular racial or ethnic group through violent actions. Still others are “thrill seekers,” those who take advantage of a vulnerable and disadvantaged group in order to satisfy their own pleasures.² Thrill seekers, primarily in their teens, are the most common perpetrators of violence against the homeless population.

For documenting hate crimes and violence NCH relies on news reports and information relayed to us by homeless shelters around the country for the data and documentation that it includes in its reports. Although NCH acts as the nationwide repository of hate crimes/violence against homeless people, there is no systematic method of collecting and documenting such reports. Many of these violent acts go unpublicized and/or unreported, thereby making it difficult to assess the true situation. Often, homeless people do not report crimes committed against them because of mental health issues, substance abuse, fear of retaliation, past incidents, or frustration with police. Some cases this year were also omitted because the victims were found beaten to death, but no suspects could be identified. In addition, the report does not take into account the large number of sexual assaults, especially on homeless women.

Federal bias crime laws enacted subsequently have provided additional coverage. The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 (HCSA) mandates the Justice Department to collect data from law enforcement agencies about “crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based upon race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.”³ The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act, enacted as a section of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, defines a hate crime as “a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.” This measure only applies to, inter alia, attacks and vandalism which occur in national parks and on federal property.⁴

The most recent piece of legislation, Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1343, S. 625), introduced in the 107th Congress, stands to strengthen existing

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² Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, www.ojp.usdoj.gov
³ Source: Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, www.civilrights.org
federal hate crime laws in two ways. First, it would expand the current law to reach all the cases where individuals kill or injure others because of bias against religion, color, national origin or race. Second, it would expand the U.S. Department of Justice’s ability to prosecute individuals who commit violent crimes against individuals because of their gender, disability, or sexual orientation. There is currently no federal criminal prohibition against violent crimes directed at individuals because of their housing status.

H.R. 1343/S. 625 had broad bipartisan support, with 250 co-sponsors in the House and 51 co-sponsors in the Senate. These companion bills are expected to be reintroduced in the current session of the 108th Congress. The National Coalition for the Homeless aims to include housing status in the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act and in future pieces of legislation. By including housing status, hate crimes and violent acts toward people experiencing homelessness will be more appropriately handled and prosecuted. Additionally, if victims know that a system is in place to prosecute such crimes, they are more likely to come forward to report these crimes. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in an extremely vulnerable situation, and it is unacceptable that they are not protected by hate crime prevention laws.

A main objective of this report is to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public about the problem of hate crimes and violence against people who are homeless in order to instigate change and ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. As part of its mission, National Coalition for the Homeless is committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to end homelessness. A major component of these changes must include the societal guarantee of safety and protection and a commitment by lawmakers to combat violent acts and hate crimes against people who experience homelessness.
Four-Year Study

Advocates, homeless shelter workers, and National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) all began to recognize that reports of hate crimes and violent acts against the homeless were increasing with frequency and brutality. As a result, NCH began publishing annual reports documenting hate crimes and violent attacks against people experiencing homelessness in 1999. These annual reports have not only served to document the number of deaths and non-lethal attacks, but have included the individual stories of the victims of these crimes. This four-year study makes evident the great number of crimes as well as the large geographic area in which they occur.

Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness

![Bar chart showing the number of victims over four years (1999-2002).]

- Total number of deaths over 4 years (1999 – 2002): **123**
- Total number of non-lethal attacks over 4 years (1999 – 2002): **89**
- Number of different cities where crimes took place: **98**
- Number of states and Puerto Rico: **34**
NCH developed a point system for cities and states where hate crimes had occurred. A city was awarded two points for each death and one point for each non-lethal act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 20 Most Dangerous Cities for People Experiencing Homelessness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denver, CO 8. Baltimore, MD - Colorado Springs, CO -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Las Vegas, NV 9. Maryland, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, &amp; Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rapid City, SD 10. Anchorage, AK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chicago, IL 7. Kansas City, MO - Portland, OR - Seattle, WA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Top 21 Most Dangerous States for People Experiencing Homelessness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. California 10. Maryand, North Carolina,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colorado 11. Puerto Rico, &amp; Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ohio 13. Missouri &amp; Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nevada 14. Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. South Dakota &amp; Illinois 16. Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Florida 17. Missouri &amp; Oregon</td>
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Numbers indicate victims of hate crimes and violence.

1999 - 2002
Total Number of Deaths and Nonlethal Acts From
### Cities where hate crimes/violence occurred from 1999 – 2002

- **Albany (NY)** — 4 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 3 non-lethal acts.
- **Anchorage (AK)** — 3 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Arlington (VA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Aurora (IL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Austin (TX)** — 2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Baltimore (MD)** — 3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.
- **Bay Point (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Bayamon (Puerto Rico)** — 1 incident resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.
- **Berkeley (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Bloomington (IL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Bremerton (WA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Burton (MI)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Cambridge (MA)** — 2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Champaign (IL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Charlotte Co. (FL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Chicago (IL)** — 5 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Cincinnati (OH)** — 2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
- **Cleveland (OH)** — 1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
- **Colorado Springs (CO)** — 4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.
- **Covington (KY)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Dale City (VA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Dallas (TX)** — 2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.
- **Denver (CO)** — 9 separate incidents resulting in 9 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.
- **Detroit (MI)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
- **El Sobrante (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Elgin (IL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Eureka (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Fayetteville (NC)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Filley (NE)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Fort Lauderdale (FL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Fort Worth (TX)** — 3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.
- **Fredericksburg (VA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Gainesville (FL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Galveston (TX)** — 3 separate incidents resulting in 3 non-lethal acts.
- **Hamilton (OH)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Hartford (CT)** — 2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Hayward (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Hilo (HI)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Hollywood (FL)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Honolulu (HI)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Houston (TX)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Huntington (WV)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
- **Hyattsville (MD)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
- **Inglewood (CA)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
- **Jeffersonville (IN)** — 1 incident resulting in 3 deaths.
- **Kansas City (KS)** — 1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Kansas City (MO)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.
Kent (WA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.
Kissimmee (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Las Vegas (NV)—13 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths and 9 non-lethal acts.
Lawrence (KS)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Livingston (LA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Los Angeles (CA)—3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.
Louisville (KY)—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
Memphis (TN)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Miami (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Milwaukee (WI)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Modesto (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.
Monticello (AR)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
New Britain (CT)—1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
New York City (NY)—8 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.
Norristown (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Omaha (NE)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Passaic (NJ)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Paterson (NJ)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Peoria (IL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Philadelphia (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Pittsburgh (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Portland (ME)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Portland (OR)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.
Raleigh (NC)—4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.
Rapid City (SD)—8 separate incidents resulting in 8 deaths.
Reno (NV)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Richmond (VA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Sacramento (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts.
San Diego (CA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.
San Francisco (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.
San Jose (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
San Juan (Puerto Rico)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
San Luis Obispo (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Santa Ana (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.
Santa Cruz (CA)—6 separate incidents resulting in 6 non-lethal acts.
Santa Fe (NM)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Santurce, (Puerto Rico)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Sarasota (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
Seattle (WA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.
Sioux Falls (SD)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Spokane (WA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Springfield (OH)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Suffolk Co. (NY)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Sun Valley (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Superior (WI)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
Tacoma (WA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.
Tampa (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.
Toledo (OH)—6 separate incidents resulting in 6 deaths.
Tucson (AZ)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Ventura (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
Westminster (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.
States where hate crimes/violence occurred from 1999 – 2002

Alaska—3 separate incidents in 1 city (Anchorage) resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.
Arizona—2 separate incidents in 1 city (Tucson) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Arkansas—1 separate incident in 1 city (Monticello) resulting in 1 death.
California—32 separate incidents in 18 cities: Baypoint (1), Berkeley (1), Eureka (1), El Sobrante (1), Hayward (1), Inglewood (1), Los Angeles (3), Modesto (2), Sacramento (2), San Diego (5), San Francisco (2), San Jose (1), San Luis Obispo (1), Santa Ana (2), Santa Cruz (6), Sun Valley (1), Ventura (1), Westminster (1) resulting in 20 deaths and 15 non-lethal acts.
Colorado—13 separate incidents in 2 cities, Colorado Springs (4), Denver (9) resulting in 11 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.
Connecticut—3 separate incidents in 2 cities: Hartford (2), New Britain (1) resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.
Florida—11 separate incidents in 8 cities: Charlotte Co. (1), Ft. Lauderdale (1), Gainesville (1), Kissimmee (1), Hollywood (1), Miami (2), Sarasota (2), Tampa (2) resulting in 4 deaths and 7 non-lethal acts.
Hawaii—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Honolulu (1), Hilo (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Illinois—11 separate incidents in 6 cities: Aurora (1), Bloomington (1), Champaign (1), Chicago (5), Elgin (1), Peoria (2) resulting in 6 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.
Indiana—1 incident in 1 city (Jeffersonville) resulting in 3 deaths.
Kansas—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Kansas City (1), Lawrence (1) resulting in 2 deaths.
Kentucky—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Covington (1), Louisville (1) resulting in 3 non-lethal acts.
Louisiana—1 separate incident in 1 city (Livingston) resulting in 1 death.
Maine—1 separate incident in 1 city (Portland) resulting in 1 death.
Maryland—4 separate incidents in 2 cities: Baltimore (3), Hyattsville (1) resulting in 3 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.
Massachusetts—2 separate incidents in 1 city (Cambridge) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Michigan—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Burton (1), Detroit (1) resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.
Missouri—4 separate incidents in 1 city (Kansas City) resulting in 4 deaths.
Nebraska—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Filley (1), Omaha (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
Nevada—14 separate incidents in 2 cities: Las Vegas (13), Reno (1) resulting in 5 deaths and 9 non-lethal acts.
New Jersey—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Passaic (1), Paterson (1) resulting in 2 deaths.
New Mexico—1 separate incident in 1 city (Santa Fe) resulting in 1 non-lethal act.
New York—13 separate incidents in 3 cities: Albany (4), New York City (8), Suffolk Co. (1) resulting in 5 deaths and 8 non-lethal acts.
North Carolina—5 separate incidents in 2 cities: Fayetteville (1), Raleigh (4) resulting in 2 deaths and 3 non-lethal acts.
Ohio—11 separate incidents in 5 cities: Cincinnati (2), Cleveland (1), Hamilton (1), Toledo (6), Springfield (1) resulting in 8 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.

Oregon—4 separate incidents in 1 city (Portland) resulting in 4 deaths.

Pennsylvania—3 separate incidents in 3 cities: Norristown (1), Philadelphia (1), Pittsburgh (1) resulting in 3 deaths.

Puerto Rico—4 separate incidents in 3 cities: Bayamon (1), San Juan (2), Santurce (1) resulting in 7 non-lethal acts.

South Dakota—9 separate incidents in 2 cities: Rapid City (8), Sioux Falls (1) resulting in 8 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Tennessee—1 separate incident in 1 city (Memphis) resulting in 1 non-lethal act.

Texas—11 separate incidents in 5 cities: Austin (2), Dallas (2), Fort Worth (3), Galveston (2), Houston (1) resulting in 7 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.

Virginia—4 separate incidents in 4 cities: Arlington (1), Dale City (1), Fredericksburg (1), Richmond (1) resulting in 3 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Washington—13 separate incidents in 5 cities: Bremerton (1), Kent (2), Seattle (4), Spokane (2), Tacoma (4) resulting in 8 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.

West Virginia—1 separate in 1 city (Huntington) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Wisconsin—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Milwaukee (1), Superior (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.
The following accounts are examples of the brutality that people experiencing homelessness have faced. These accounts are taken from NCH’s annual hate crime/violence reports. The individual reports include all of the hate crime/violence accounts and can be found on NCH’s website: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/ under the publications link.

### SEVEN HOMELESS MEN KILLED IN DENVER

Seven homeless men have been found dead in Denver in the trendy Lower Downtown district. Two were beheaded. All of the men were beaten to death, one so savagely that his skull was in pieces. And at least two others were severely beaten.

The most persistent street rumor is that a pack of young men is picking on homeless people for sick thrills. In the only case so far with a witness, someone told the police that several juvenile male suspects were seen beating a homeless man in a downtown alley in early September.

They “may get a sort of high or thrill by beating up people, and homeless are such an easy target,” said Police Lt. Judith Will. “It’s sad and tragic.”

John Parvensky, director of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, said, “It is just as important to find and bring the killers to justice as it is to find the murderer of Jon-Benet Ramsey.”

*Denver Colorado: Fall of 1999*

### HOMELESS MAN KIDNAPPED AND ATTACKED

Two men kidnapped Tommy Council, a homeless man. They tied him up and poured battery acid on his genitals while they threatened to kill him with the drop cord they had tied around his neck. One of the men, Leroy Thaggard, Jr., is in jail with $150,000 bail, but the other is still at large.

*Fayetteville, North Carolina, November 2000*

### HIT-AND-RUN VICTIM LIVED FOR TWO DAYS WHILE TRAPPED IN WINDSHEILD

In early March of 2002, police learned that Gregory Glenn Biggs lived for two or three days after he was hit, lying on a car hood in a southeast Fort Worth garage, his body trapped in the windshield. Despite Biggs’ pleas, police said the driver refused to help and left him to die. Afterward, the body was dumped in the park.

The medical examiner’s office told police that Biggs suffered no internal injuries and apparently died from loss of blood and shock. Records listed Biggs’ address as a homeless shelter.

“I’m going to have to come up with a new word. Indifferent isn’t enough. Cruel isn’t enough to say. Heartless? Inhumane? Maybe we’ve just redefined inhumanity here,” said Richard Alpert, a Tarrant County assistant district attorney.

*Fort Worth Texas, October 2001*

### HOMELESS MAN DIES AFTER HE BEING SET ON FIRE

After eight days of pain, Dennis R. Wade, 47, died due to third-degree burns. Sleeping on the porch of an abandoned house, Wade was set on fire and suffered from burns over 80% of his body. Reportedly, Wade told paramedics at the scene, “I can’t believe they set me on fire.” Despite Wade’s initial stability, his brother reported, “He has no skin. The damage is done. He is not going to make it.”

*Springfield Ohio, August 2002*
Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA:

A Report on Hate Crimes And Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2002
Summary of hate crimes and violence data

Total number of deaths: 16

Total number of victims who suffered from non-lethal violence: 21

Known Ages of Victims and Accused

Known ages of the accused and convicted:
65, 52, 50, 40, 39, 37, 25, 23, 21 (two), 20 (two), 19 (two), 18 (six), 17 (seven), 16 (three), 15 (two), and 14

Known ages of the victims:
70, 67, 64, 58, 56, 55 (four), 54 (two), 52, 49 (two), 47, 46, 45 (two), 44, 43, 40, 39 (three), 35, 28, 22 and 20

Gender of victims:

Male: 34
Female: 2
Cities and States in which hate and violent crimes occurred in 2002

Cities where crimes occurred:

- Albany, New York
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Bloomington, Illinois
- Champaign, Illinois
- Chicago, Illinois
- Detroit, Michigan
- El Sobrante, California
- Elgin, Illinois
- Fort Worth, Texas
- Gainesville, Florida
- Hilo, Hawaii
- Hollywood, Florida
- Huntington, West Virginia
- Hyattsville, Maryland
- Kent, Washington
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Livingston, Louisiana
- Los Angeles, California
- New York, New York
- Peoria, Illinois
- Raleigh, North Carolina
- Reno, Nevada
- Sacramento, California
- San Diego, California
- San Luis Obispo, California
- Seattle, Washington
- Springfield, Ohio
- Tampa, Florida
- Tucson, Arizona
Recommendations For Action

The National Coalition for the Homeless recommends that the following actions be taken:

1. A public statement by the U.S. Department of Justice acknowledging that hate crimes and/or violence against people experiencing homelessness is a serious national trend.

2. A database to be maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice, in cooperation with the National Coalition for the Homeless, to track hate crimes and/or violence against people who become homeless.

3. Inclusion of housing status in the pending federal hate crimes legislation.

4. Sensitivity/Awareness training at police academies and departments nationwide for trainees and police officers on how to deal effectively and humanely with people who become homeless in their communities.

5. A General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of hate crimes and/or violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. This proposed study will address the following: causes of hate crimes/violence; circumstances that contribute to or were responsible for the perpetrators’ behavior, beliefs held by the perpetrators of these crimes and how their beliefs have changed since conviction, thoughts and advice from the perpetrators to others who are considering hate crimes/violence against the homeless population; and community education, prevention and law enforcement strategies.
Case descriptions
By month and city

January

Hyattsville, Maryland
Two Maryland Police Officers Indicted

Two police officers, Cpl. James C. Partenza and Cpl. Mark Elie, were indicted for beating and unleashing a dog on a homeless man. Hector Millan, 28, allegedly broke into a gas station and was consequently arrested; however, a third officer told his supervisors that despite claims that Millan protested and fought against his arrest, brute force was employed by the police officers without justification.

When the police officers found him, Millan raised his arms to surrender, but Partenza struck the homeless man’s head with his baton and Elie unleashed the dog.

Millan said the dog bit his ankle and one arm, and showed a scar on his head that he said was caused by the officer’s baton.

Partenza and Eli are both charged with first-degree and second-degree assault, reckless endangerment and misconduct in the office.

February

Chicago, Illinois
Homeless Man Beaten To Death—Caught On Videotape

Hidden in the shadows, Floyd Mummert, 64, was brutally beaten to death as he lay asleep in a lobby of a building on West Wacker Drive. The morning security guard noticed that Mummert, a regular in the area, did not appear to be moving or breathing. The guard checked Mummert and found his dead body lying in blood. A surveillance video captured the killing on tape, which revealed a man entering the lobby in the very early morning hours of February 10, 2002. On tape, the man is shown looking around the lobby, holding an object in his hand.

Law enforcement officials and Mummert’s family called the killing ruthless. “We’re hoping justice is done...that they find the person who did this,” said his step-mother.
His step-mother described her son as “an avid reader and passionate about baseball, often spent afternoons with his nephews playing ball in his parents’ back yard.” He spent two years in the U.S. Army.

Reno, Nevada

*Man Pleads Guilty In Homeless Beating*

Asleep in an abandoned trailer, Jeffrey Haraohughty, 39, was asleep when Michael Williams, 23, beat the sleeping man to death with a 2-by-4. Haroughty worked at a local restaurant and when he did not come to work for several days, the manager went to the trailer in search of him.

Williams was visiting a friend, Mark Warren, who owned the property where the trailer was parked. “Warren has complained to Williams about ‘these bums’ who were living on his land.” After a night of drinking, Williams just went to Haroughty’s trailer and started “whaling on this guy’s head” with the wooden board. The many blows crushed the victim’s skull.

Williams pleaded guilty to murder. According to his public defender, Erik Nickel, “He’s very remorseful. He knows he got out of hand, and he doesn’t know why. He wanted to take responsibility for it.” As Judge Jerry Polaha noted, “This was human being who was sleeping and you took away his life in a brutal fashion. And that deserves a life term.”

Williams was sentenced to life in prison.

Sacramento, California

*Homeless Man Killed And Another Wounded By A Man In A Trench Coat*

Sleeping, Kenneth Massie, in his 50s, was shot and killed next to his dear friend, Victor Mullin, 54, who was also shot, but survived. The masked gunman, an unknown suspect about 6 feet tall dressed in a dark trench coat or rain jacket, walked past the campsite on a levee and quickly fired several rounds from his pistol.

Supporters and friends described Massie as “a homeless man who defied the stereotype. People were devastated that anyone would hurt him. They all ask: ‘Why Kenneth?’ He would fetch food for newcomers too shy to seek out breakfast.”

Tim Brown, executive director of Loaves and Fishes, said the shooting is a result of a worsening economy and harsh words against homeless people on radio talk shows.
March

El Sobrante, California
Police Hold Son In Slaying Of Homeless Houseguests

Carlos Stewart, 21, the son of an El Sobrante woman who offered Rafael Chavez, 55, shelter, killed him. During the spring months, Chavez painted houses in the area and one day knocked on the door of Stewart’s mother, Sheila Bush. He explained that he was homeless and in turn, Bush offered Chavez a place to stay if he would help with chores and painting.

After living with Bush for two months, Chavez was forced out because Stewart “didn’t want him around.” Chavez was found bludgeoned to death. Despite the son’s denial that he hit or killed the homeless man, Stewart is being held by the police. The police indicated that Stewart did call his brother in an attempt to dispose of the body.

April

Albany, New York
Death Of Homeless Man Ruled A Homicide

Killed by blunt trauma to the head, Christopher Nieckarz, 39, was found on Grand Street. Nieckarz lived on the streets of Albany, but occasionally stayed with friends, at missions or shelters. The night he was attacked, Nieckarz stopped at a friend’s house and explained that he had been “jumped.” His friend provided him shelter for the evening, but in the morning Nieckarz was found unconscious.

David Cright, 19, pleaded guilty for the murder of Nieckarz. Cright told police that he had gotten into a fight with the homeless man, but claims that he only hit the man only once in the head. Cright was consequently sentenced to only six months in jail and five years’ probation despite the Nieckarz family’s request for a harsher sentence.

New York, New York
Youths Set Homeless Man On Fire

A homeless man was treated for burns on his arms and back after he was set on fire by four or five youths in a Bronx apartment building.

Nieckarz’s father said, “[He] was an alcoholic, and, at the time of his death he was a homeless man. But he certainly had a family who loved him and they were always glad to see him.”
Seattle, Washington
Suspects In Beating Death Sought; Man Assaulted After Argument On Bus

Both an advocate and a homeless man, Nicholas Helhowski, 22, died as a result of a brutal beating following a verbal argument on a Metro bus. According to witnesses, following the disagreement, Helhowski and his girlfriend got off the bus and were followed by a group of young men. After yet another argument, Helhowski was repeatedly hit on the head until he fell unconscious to the ground.

As an advocate, Helhowski worked for the organization, Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS), which promotes responsibility and organization among homeless young people.

Duane Fish, spokesperson for the Seattle police, said youths on the streets nicknamed him “Rooster,” probably because of his spiky Mohawk hairdo and because he spoke out and stood up for a lot of them.

June

Hollywood, Florida
Homeless Man Beaten To Death And Consequently Robbed

Frankie Erbe, a homeless man, was attacked in the middle of the afternoon. Erbe, 49, lay motionless and bloodied with his pockets emptied. Working for a local motel owner as a parking-lot attendant, Erbe collected money from the motel’s patrons. When he was attacked, he had several hundred dollars in his pocket—but following the incident, all was stolen and he was dead.

Jerry Sullivan, a friend, said Erbe spoke little of his life, but told Sullivan he had served in the military and had witnessed the death of his wife and children in a car accident.

Raleigh, North Carolina
Durham Man Convicted Of Rape Of Homeless Woman

Mackson Brodie, 50, who has a history of “preying on drug-addicted, homeless women” was found guilty of first-degree kidnapping and first-degree rape in the assault of a 35 year-old woman. Sentenced to at least 32 years in prison, Brodie cannot be released from prison until he is at least 82.
Anchorage, AK
Youth Burn Homeless Man With Sparklers

Over the 4th of July weekend, a group of young men burned a homeless man with sparklers.

Elgin, Illinois
Homeless Man Found Beaten In Park

Responding to a call at 11:30p.m., Elgin police found a homeless man lying on the ground in Festival Park where he had been severely beaten. The man said that he was attacked by four males, but he did not know who they were or why they attacked him. Paramedics were called and they stated that he had a possible broken jaw as a result of the attack, but he refused to be aided.

Fort Worth, Texas
Group Stomps Homeless Man To Death—Onlookers Refuse To Help

A group of men stomped to death Donald Watkins, a 39-year-old homeless man. Watkins was apparently drinking outside of the Ripley Arnold Apartment Complex when he and another man started arguing. As Sgt. David Stamp explained, “Apparently after the initial assault, our victim was knocked to the ground, becoming disabled. For some unknown reason, several of the others standing by joined in the assault. Apparently it was a mob mentality.” As others watched, Watkins head was stomped, kicked and smashed—he was left unconscious and lying in a pool of his own blood until the police arrived.

A week following the attack, Demarcus J. Williams, 18, was arrested as a member of the group that killed Watkins. “He [Williams] was identified as being a primary assailant, and he was seen stomping and kicking the victim in the head.”

Hilo, Hawaii
Puna Man Convicted In Hilo Incident

Steven Willis, age 18, was charged with assault of Daaichi Kamei, a 67-year-old homeless man. Willis approached Kamei and tried to gain his confidence by pointing to a non-existent centipede. Kamei looked in that direction “When he [turned] back, Mr. Willis [was] waiting for him with a punch to the forehead,” said the prosecutor who also described the behavior as “appalling and unacceptable.” The attack was videotaped by one of Willis’ friends. He was sentenced to one year in jail and five years of probation on the condition that he enter a demanding drug treatment program.
Huntington, West Virginia

Gerald King, Jr. Beaten To Death In The Riverbank Camp He Loved As His Home

Gerald King, Jr., 52, was beaten to death with hands, fists, feet, sticks by three young men on the banks of the Ohio River. Jarrett Roscoe Bailey, 19, Michael Day, 17, and a 16 year-old juvenile brutally attacked King. Friends of King sensed trouble the night of his murder, when the three men passed through King’s campsite. A fellow homeless man, Kenny Segrest explained, “The teenagers claimed they were going fishing, but none of them had fishing poles. One of the teenagers threw a beer bottle over the hill, and King told them not to litter because this was his home. They [the teenagers] called him a bum and got up in his face and asked him what he was going to do about it.”

Although the teenagers left the site, they soon returned to attack King and a fellow homeless man, William Porter. A good friend, Jason Scarberry, found King’s body near his home of 20 years surrounded by a “picnic table, a campfire pit, mailbox, makeshift coat rack, crates filled with cooking utensils, and an American flag.” Scarberry said, “Somebody killed him just to be mean.”

The three men were indicted in January 2003 with first-degree murder and malicious wounding. Bailey and Day are both being charged as adults. Day is scheduled to go on trial in April of 2003, and the juvenile is still awaiting news whether he will be transferred to adult status. Cabell County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Brent Walters stated, “Anytime there’s a crime dealing with deadly violence, we’re always going to look at trying juveniles as adults. Especially if they are over the age of 14.”

Born in 1950, King grew up in Huntington and spent much of his life in the area. A husband and a father of two girls, he loved the outdoors from childhood. Darlene Carter, King’s wife and mother of his children said, “Even though he had a roof over his head, he would go to the riverbank and left for weeks at a time. He would catch fish and run back to the house and tell us that he had dinner ready for us. When we would go down there, he would sweep and rake the riverbank until it looked like a beach on the Florida coast.” King entered the Air Force with a desire to continue supporting his family. He received an honorable discharge. However, his wife and daughters left him and he soon turned to alcohol. “His nerves got real bad, so he started drinking. He never put the bottle down after that,” said his wife. In turn, he lived outdoors and chose to be homeless despite pleas from his family and friends.

King’s former wife said, “He [King] was a very intelligent, smart and creative man. He had so much potential.”

As Kim King said, “He was devastated. He just loved his wife and kids so much, that he couldn’t deal with anything else.”
The arrest of the three men was fast and efficient—Police Captain Steven Hall explained, public outrage and information offered coupled with fine detective work lead to the arrests. “We appreciate it, and so do the other people who continue to live on the street despite the danger and difficulty.”

Kent, Washington

*Three Teenagers Charged With Murdering Homeless Woman*

Kelly Rhae Craft, 44, was found dead in a parking lot following a brutal attack by three South King County teenagers. Jesse Morgan, 18, Lamont Caw, 17 and Shaddie Graham, 17, were hanging out nearby when they started to discuss a crack-cocaine deal with the homeless woman. Morgan stated that he had never met the woman and was defensive when she reached for his pocket. In turn, he started to slap and punch her—suddenly all three men were kicking and hitting her.

Witnesses say Morgan persuaded Graham to go with him to the parking lot and they were later “amped up” and “high-fivin” each other boasting about beating someone up.

Craft grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. She had a degree in biology and served in the U.S. Coast Guard. In touch with her nephew and sister, Dennis and Marilyn LaFarlette, she was known to live with friends in the Seattle area. Although unsure of the exact reason for Craft’s homelessness, both said that she became severely depressed after her mother died several years before. LaFarlette said, “It’s inconceivable that anyone could do something like that.”

All three men were charged with second-degree murder; however, Caw pleaded guilty and faces only a year in jail in return for his testimony against Morgan and Graham. Both Morgan and Graham pleaded not guilty and both could face 10-18 years in jail.

Livingston, Louisiana

*Jury Indicts Teen As Adult In Slaying*

A grand jury indicted Wesley Pitre, 16, for the strangulation death of Joseph F. Trahan, 40. Trahan was invited to stay in the home of Pitre’s mother. Pitre admitted to the police that he tied up Trahan, strangled him with the sash of a robe in the early morning hours of July 8. Pitre explained to detectives that he returned to sleep, but awoke at noon and attempted to dismember Trahan’s body with a handsaw “with the plan of hiding the severed pieces in a trash bin.” Instead, Pitre’s mother found the body in her son’s bedroom and then called police. If he is convicted as an adult for second-degree murder, Pitre could face an automatic life sentence without the possibility of parole.
Peoria, Illinois

*Homeless Man Beaten In Early Morning Attack*

A 20-year-old homeless man told police that he was “jumped, beaten and robbed of $1 early Saturday morning.” The incident occurred at 2:35 a.m. and involved several offenders.

Tucson, Arizona

*Paintball Assault*

A 55-year-old homeless man was struck by paintballs as he slept on the street. As a result of the assault, he was treated for several welts on his arms and legs.

August

Champaign, Illinois

*Four Teens Strangle and Beat a Homeless Man to Death*

Robert James Nash, 55, was attacked in a north Champaign park where he was intending to spend the night on or about August 8. A couple found his body the morning of August 8. The doctor who performed the autopsy stated that Nash had been struck on his head and chest about 20 to 25 times. He had also been strangled. Nash had suffered from bleeding and bruising in the brain, six fractured ribs, a broken sternum, and five teeth were knocked out.

The police had no leads on the case until a mysterious letter arrived stating that four teenagers had committed the crime. The letter listed Nathaniel White, 16, Ricky King Jr., 15, Corinthian Howard, 17, and Kortel Burks, 17. White gave a statement that he and the other boys were walking in the park when Mr. Nash approached them mumbling and with his hand in his pocket. White then cursed at him and punched him in the face, knocking him to the ground, he then began kicking him. White said he believed that Mr. Nash had a knife, but he conceded to police that when Nash fell to the ground he could see he didn’t have a knife. The three other boys joined in with kicking and stomping on Mr. Nash. The boys claim to have left Mr. Nash alive. Mr. Nash had a sister and cousin in the area who he occasionally stayed with, they testified at the trials of the boys. David Nash, Mr. Nash’s youngest son, was also present at the trial. Mr. Nash raised his three sons on his own.

White was tried as an adult and convicted of murder on March 13. He is awaiting sentencing, which could be 20 to 60 years. Howard pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and was sentenced to 20 years in prison, prosecutors said he will serve the entire sentence. The other two are awaiting trial.

“When they took him away from me, it seemed they took God from me.” said David Nash at the murder trial of his father.
Las Vegas, Nevada
Retiree Tries To Run Down A Homeless Man For Going To The Bathroom In Public

Al Gallego, 65, was initially charged with felony assault with a deadly weapon after he used his truck to “scare” a homeless man. Attempting vigilante justice, Gallego decided to “teach” the homeless man a lesson about public defecation. “When Gallego turned the corner, he said he saw the man against a wall with his pants down, attempting to defecate. Enraged, he stepped on the gas and drove to within 3 feet of the vagrant, who Gallego said pulled up his pants and tried unsuccessfully to scale the wall behind him.”

With the homeless man pinned against the wall, Gallego called the police and insisted that they hurry, otherwise he was going to “smash the guy up against the wall with his truck.” Police arrived and found the homeless man with only minor bruises on his arms, and immediately arrested Gallego for the assault; however, Gallego, a well-known active citizen, was released from jail soon after. As a result, Gallego was not officially charged and the investigation was dropped.

Los Angeles, California
Bus Driver Accused Of Running Over And Killing A Homeless Man

Cruz Vaca, 39, was arrested for running over a homeless man with his bus. Driving east through the Koreatown district, the homeless man tried to get on the bus, but Vaca refused to allow him to board. “Police said that the homeless man two weeks ago had been kicked off Vaca’s bus, and that he had spit on the driver.”

Determined to board the bus, the homeless man stood next to the bus, and banged against the door. Witnesses stated that Vaca turned and said, through the door of the bus, “You are not going to get on my bus.” Then, the homeless man stood in front of the bus; however, Vaca allegedly claimed not to see the man in front of the bus and ran over him.

“Passengers could hear and feel several thumps as the bus began moving,” a bus passenger said. “After yelling at the driver to stop, passengers ran out to see what happened and found the man lying under the bus near the rear wheels, his pants nearly torn off. The homeless man was unresponsive and appeared to be dead.”

Vaca faces up to six years in state prison if convicted.

Springfield, Ohio
Homeless Man Killed After He Was Set On Fire

After eight days of pain, Dennis R. Wade, 47, died due to third-degree burns. Sleeping on the porch of an abandoned house, Wade was set on fire and suffered from burns over 80% of his body.

Reportedly, Wade told paramedics at the scene, “I can’t believe they set me on fire.”
Springfield Police Chief David Walters stated that he believed Wade was first doused with gasoline or lighter fluid, and then set ablaze. Despite Wade’s initial stability, his brother reported, “He has no skin. The damage is done. He is not going to make it.”

The Springfield police were treating the incident as a homicide.

September

New York City, New York
Man Arrested in Fatal Shooting of a Homeless Man in Queens

Vadim V. Traut, a 52-year-old electrical engineer, walked into a wooded area in Queens frequented by homeless people, pulled a shotgun from his trench coat and shot a man to death.

Police said that Traut entered the wooded area and confronted two men and a woman. An argument broke out, and Traut fired a single round from a shotgun hitting Kevin Monroe, 46. Mr. Monroe, who was homeless, died at the scene, but the woman and the other man escaped. It was unclear if Mr. Monroe was the intended target.

Traut had recently left his job at a meat processing company in Queens, said investigators, who said he had also recently been divorced.

Traut has denied any involvement in the shooting. He faces second-degree murder charges.

Raleigh, North Carolina
Police Report That Stun Gun Was Used In Beating

Five men were sought in association with the beating of a homeless man. Hardy Gilbert, 54, who was brought to a hospital for treatment for his arm (broken in four places) and eye. Four men have been charged with assault with a deadly weapon: Justin Todd Perry, 21, Blake Anders Schlukdler, 20, Skip Ashley Smith, 20, and Mark Canter Brantley, 18. Gilbert was sleeping in the hallway of Smith and Schlukdler’s apartment building when he was brutally beaten. “Gilbert told police some young men at the apartment building ‘just came out and started beating on him,’ according to the Raleigh police captain, D.S. Overman. When police searched the home, they found two pairs of brass knuckles, a collapsible baton and a stun gun.”
October

Gainesville, Florida  
*Homeless Man Robbed And Beaten*

A homeless man was beaten and robbed of his wallet by four men on Banks Street. The men were seen leaving in a brown car.

New York, New York  
*Homeless Man Set On Fire In Hallway*

Police are searching for a Brooklyn teenager, 15, who allegedly set fire to Silvester Williams, a 58-year-old homeless man, as he slept in the hallway of a housing project in East New York City. The man suffered third degree burns on his back and side. Police said that two older teens, who were not with the suspect, may have doused the flames.

San Diego, California  
*Navy Men Pelt Paintballs At Homeless People*

Police arrested three Navy enlisted men in connection with paintballs being pelted at homeless people.

San Luis Obispo, California  
*Assailants Attack, Cut, Kick And Beat A Homeless Man*

On Halloween night, Vance Lybrand, a 49-year-old homeless man, was attacked and severely beaten by three teenagers. Sleeping in a plywood shelter on Archer Street, the three teens, Chanda Miller, 18, her boyfriend, James Gardner, 18 and an unidentified youth savagely kicked and hit him with a “spiked bracelet, metal pipe, a 2-by-4, and a roll of duct tape.” Suffering injuries that included “a severed finger, a broken clavicle, several facial lacerations, broken ribs and a punctured lung,” Lybrand regained consciousness the following morning and walked to a nearby restaurant for help. He was taken immediately to receive medical attention and to speak with police.

After receiving Lybrand’s description, the police looked for Miller because she was known to “be an associate” of Gardner, the man who fit the immediate description. Gardner, soon arrested, told the police that the attack was in self-defense and to “teach Lybrand a lesson.” Previously, Gardner and Miller had harassed and fought with Lybrand. The evening of the assault, Gardner had been drinking a lot and started to smoke marijuana. Lybrand allegedly came after Gardner with a hammer and at that point Gardner “started giving him [Lybrand] a booty party to the head.” Gardner managed to knock Lybrand down and then enlisted the other two in the beating; the unidentified youth attacked using a piece of plywood and Miller hit the victim with her spiked bracelet. In addition, every time Lybrand was completely sprawled across the pavement, Gardner would climb a chain-link fence and jump down on top of Lybrand.
Despite one attempt to bite the leg of Gardner, Lybrand did not attempt to fight back. Finally, the assailants left the scene; however, within hours they came back to see if Lybrand was still alive. Instead of offering help to the injured man, they began beating him again and stealing $50 from Lybrand’s wallet.

**Tampa, Florida**

*Homeless Man Attacked; Suspect In Custody*

An unidentified homeless man was beaten, and then the same man who stole his tattered duffle bag slit his throat. Police have arrested Lafayette Murphy, 37, and have charged him with attempted murder and armed robbery.

The victim remained in guarded condition after surgery.

**Tampa, Florida**

*Officer Shoots Homeless Man Wielding A Putty Knife*

Luis Rafael Objio, a 45 year-old homeless man, was not armed unless a small putty knife is considered a weapon.

Officer Greg Caulley, 40, didn’t know for sure what it was, authorities have said, but it was enough to make Caulley fear for his safety when Objio reared back to hurl it at him.

The officer fired three rounds. One hit Objio’s stomach; another hit his thigh. Objio will recover. At least two witnesses say they pleaded with the officer not to shoot Objio. Both said they were acquaintances of the homeless man—that he was mentally disabled and generally harmless.

Nora Melton, a local grocery store owner who witnessed the incident, said the shooting was an example of excessive police force. “Rafael wouldn’t bother nobody,” she said. “I saw the cop gesturing toward him and aggravating him.”

**November**

**Bloomington, Illinois**

*Brick Beating Yields Prison Time*

On November 9, 2002, Damen Gillespie, 17, and a 14-year-old juvenile, beat and attacked Russell Koonce, 43, until he fell unconscious. Koonce, a homeless man, was invited for a dinner-meal. Laying unconscious on the back porch of Gillespie’s apartment, Koonce was severely assaulted by both men with the legs of a chair and bricks—he was missing a part of his ear and was found bleeding from his many wounds nearly 10 hours following the attack. He testified that he suffered from ensuing dizziness and loss of memory, and in addition, was unable to satisfactorily hear. Following the brutal, mob-like attack, the juvenile poked a stick at Koonce to determine if he was still
alive. “The victim’s presence today is a testament to the miracle of modern medicine,” reported the judge.

Bloomington police detective, Matthew Dick, said the 14-year-old initially denied involvement, but later admitted throwing four or five bricks at Koonce.

Both juveniles were charged. One is currently serving an indefinite term in juvenile prison, and Gillespie, automatically charged as an adult, is awaiting trial.

Detroit, Michigan
Homeless Man Killed, And Another Wounded For Begging

A suburban firefighter and his friend are suspects in the shootings of two homeless men (ages 70 and 45 years of age), who were begging on the street. One died and the other was wounded. Police say the two white men left a bar and apparently began to argue with the two black homeless men. Racial slurs were directed at the two homeless men. One of the white men ended up producing a handgun.

Police say that since racial slurs were allegedly used, the suspects could be charged with more than just murder.

New York, New York
Homeless Man Set On Fire As He Slept On Subway

Two Manhattan men, ages 17 and 25, were arrested for allegedly setting Gerald Omaro, 56, a homeless man, on fire as he slept on the subway. Police say the two men boarded the E train in Queens and set fire to the man’s coat. The fire left burns on the man’s arms.

A McLean County judge stated, “[The crime was] a cold and callous disregard for the sanctity of life. In summary, some crimes demand harsh and serious punishment—this is one of them.”
Please personalize this letter to your U.S. Representative and your two U.S. Senators. If possible we encourage you to handwrite this letter and include any personal stories that are relevant. Please send a copy of any letter and response you receive to Michael Stoops at the National Coalition for the Homeless at mstoops@nationalhomeless.org.

Date

The Honorable [insert full name]  
The Honorable [insert full name]  
United States Senate  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510   
Washington, D.C. 20515  

Dear Senator/Representative [insert name],

I am requesting your assistance in seeking a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of violent acts and hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness. The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is supported in this request by over 400 organizations, including the National League of Cities, National Organization of Women (NOW), and Volunteers of America.

Throughout the nation, people experiencing homelessness, advocates, and service providers report an alarming increase in the number and scope of violent acts against people who lack permanent housing. These accounts include beatings, murders, arson, harassment, and damage of personal property. Homeless men, women, and children around the nation are particularly vulnerable to crimes against them because they represent an easy, visible target and often lack a place to retreat for safety and protection. A GAO investigation would assist Congress and the public in obtaining much-needed information on the extent and scope of violent acts and crimes against people experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, such an investigation would help federal, state, and local officials identify actions that could be taken to prevent and reduce such crimes.

NCH recently released a four-year (1999 – 2002) study that documents hate crimes and violent acts committed against people experiencing homelessness. The full report can be found at [http://www.nationalhomeless.org/](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/). Between 1999 and 2002 there were 123 deaths and 89 non-lethal attacks representing 98 cities and 34 states and Puerto Rico. The youngest victim was four months old, the oldest was seventy-six years old. (insert state information if relevant: Such as the ranking for your state or city) A study by the GAO would aid in protecting one of the most vulnerable populations in our society.

If you would like further information on this critical issue please contact me at:

Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
email  
Phone Number  

Thank you for your time.  
Sincerely,
A Call to Investigate the Violent Acts and Crimes Committed Against People Experiencing Homelessness

Over the past several years advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have received news reports of men, women and even children being harassed, kicked, set on fire, beaten to death, and even decapitated. Over the last four years alone (1999 through 2002) there have been 212 acts of violence, resulting in 123 deaths of people experiencing homelessness, and 89 victims of non-lethal violence. These incidents took place in 98 different cities from 34 states and Puerto Rico. The perpetrators were housed individuals.

NCH calls on Congress for a General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in extremely vulnerable situations. We must ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. Please take a moment to sign on below.

organizational Endorsement Form
(Please Print)

Name of Organization__________________________________________________________
Contact Name_________________________________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip_________________________________________________________________
Phone________________________________________________________________________
Fax___________________________________________________________________________
Email_________________________________________________________________________

Send this form to:
National Coalition for the Homeless
1012 14th St. NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005-3471
Fax: 202.737.6445

Or sign on online at www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes/signon.html
phone: (202) 737-6444 ext. 19  ●  email: mstoops@nationalhomeless.org

Organizational Endorsements for a GAO Investigation Into Hate Crimes/Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness
National Organizations:

Alliance for Children and Families
Americans for Democratic Action
Coalition on Human Needs
Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians Network
Housing Assistance Council
Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, ELCA
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Center for Hate Crime Prevention
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Consumer Advisory Board
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National League of Cities
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Network for Youth
National Organization for Women
National Resource Ctr. on Homelessness & Mental Illness
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office
UCC/Ministries for Criminal Justice & Human Rights
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries
Universal Living Wage Campaign
Volunteers of America
### Local/State Organizations:

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<td>AL</td>
<td>Alabama Council on Human Relations</td>
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<td>Federation of Southern Coops/Land Assistance Fund</td>
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<td>Mobile Fair Housing Center, Inc.</td>
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<td>Montgomery Community Action Committee, Inc.</td>
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<td>The Arkansas Hunger Coalition</td>
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<td>Religious Witness with Homeless People</td>
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<td>Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee</td>
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Sacramento Loaves & Fishes
San Diego Coalition for the Homeless
San Diego Youth and Community Services
San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness
Sonoma County Task Force on the Homeless
SRO Housing Corp.
Union Station Foundation
Windows Support Center

CO
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
COMITIS Crisis Center, Inc.
Denver Voice
Mercy Housing
Rocky Mountain Hebrew Academy
SPIRIT-Human Services, Inc.

CT
AIDS Project New Haven
Columbus House Inc.
Community Renewal Team
CT AIDS Residence Coalition
CT Coalition to End Homelessness

DC
Action for Peace through Prayer & Aid
Change, Inc.
Community Council f/t Homeless/Friendship Place
Dinner Program for Homeless Women
Downtown Cluster of Congregations
House of Imagene Shelters
So Others Might Eat (SOME)
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

FL
Broward Coalition for the Homeless
Catholic Charities
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami Inc
Charlotte County Homeless Coalition
Charlotte County Public Schools/Youth Project
Clara White Mission
Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, Inc.
Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County
Community Coalition on Homelessness
David Lawrence Center
Domestic Abuse Shelter Homes, Inc
Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition/St. John
Family Resources, Inc
Florida Coalition for the Homeless
Florida Impact
HIS Place Ministries
Homeless Voice
Lake Community Action Agency
Lee County Coalition for the Homeless
Miami Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.
Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust
Office of Justice & Peace, Diocese/St. Augustine
Punta Gorda Housing Authority
Recovery House of Central Florida, Inc.
Salvation Army, Sarasota County
Southeastern Network of Youth and Family Services
Stand Up for Kids
SW Florida Coalition for the Homeless
Tallahassee Coalition for the Homeless
The Cooperative Feeding Program
The Salvation Army, Melbourne, FL Corps.
USFF, Inc.
Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless
WIN/Coalition for the Hungry & Homeless of Brevard
GA
Athens Area Homeless Shelter
Georgia Legal Services
Georgia Task Force for the Homeless
Lowndes Associated Ministries to People
Macon Outreach at Mulberry
Mercy Services Corporation
Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless
NAMI South Cobb
Northeast Georgia Homeless Coalition
The Atlanta Union of the Homeless

HI
A.S.I./Ohana Ola O Kahumana
Affordable Housing and Homeless Alliance
Gregory House Programs
Waianae Community Outreach

ID
Terry Reilly Health Services Boise Clinic

IL
Calor/Casa Contreras
Catholic Voices for Economic Justice
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council
Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness
Illinois Hunger Coalition
Interfaith House
Lincoln Park Community Shelter
Rafael Center
Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless
St. Clair Co. Intergovernmental Grants Department
Statewide Housing Action Coalition
Task Force Against Homelessness

IN
Association of College Unions International
Community Action of Northeast Indiana
Haven House Services, Inc.
Heart House
Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues
Michigan City Homeless Shelter
Southern Indiana Housing Initiative
Stepping Stones for Veterans, Inc.
Vincent House, Inc.

KS
Inter-Faith Ministries

KY
Hate Crime Foundation of Louisville
Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
Kentucky Housing Corporation
St. John Center, Inc.
St. Vincent de Paul
The Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.
LA  
Centerpoint  
Providence House  
RHD Voyage House  
Unity for the Homeless Advocacy Committee  

MA  
Arise for Social Justice  
Casa Myrna Vazquez  
Catholic Social Services  
Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands  
Consumer Advisory Bd/Boston Health Care f/t Homelessness  
Holy Cross SCOHAH Program  
New England Network  
Outreach Van Project  
Peace at Home  
Safe Harbor  
Solutions at Work  
Springfield School Volunteers, Inc/Homeless Education Project  
Tripp Consulting  
Union of Minority Neighborhoods  
WWM  

MD  
AIDS Interfaith Residential Services  
Arundel House of Hope  
Frederick Community Action Agency  
Happy Helpers for the Homeless  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.  
Washington County Community Action Council  

ME  
Preble Street Resource Center  

MI  
Altrusa Teen SHARE  
Blue Water Center for Independent Living  
Catholic Family Services  
Coalition on Temporary Shelter (COTS)  
Community Capital Development Corporation  
Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries  
Dochas, Inc  
Homeless Action Network of Detroit
Lenawee Emergency & Affordable Housing Corp.
Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness
NE Michigan Coal. f/t Prevention of Homelessness
Open Door Rescue Mission
Ostego County Housing and Homeless Coalition
Ostego County Housing Committee
Ostego County United Way
Peoples Progressive Network (PPN) of Washtenaw Co.
Safe Horizons
Sequel Mental Health Agency, Inc.
St. Stephen’s Human Services
Waterfalls

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Anoka County Affordable Housing Coalition
Battered Women’s Legal Advocacy Project
CASH
Celestial Synergy, LLC
Central Lutheran Church
Central MN Task Force on Battered Women
Church of St. Stephens
Community Home Partnership
Community Psychologists of Minnesota
Desera Grimley Consulting
Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Elim Transitional Housing
Fair Housing Center of Minnesota
F-M Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, Inc.
Heartland Community Action Agency
Housing Access Center
Housing Coalition of the St. Cloud Area
Houston County Women’s Resources
Integrated Community Solutions
Life House
Mid-Minnesota Women’s Center
Minnesota AIDS Project
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Minnesota Housing Partnership
Minnesota Librarians For Social Responsibility
Minnesota Library Workers for Peace and Justice
Model Cities of St. Paul, Inc.
People Serving People, Inc.
PEPP
Project Foundation
Project Off Streets
Range Transitional Housing
Residents for Affordable Housing
Rise, Inc
ROOF Project
Salvation Army Harbor Light Center
Scott-Carver Housing Coalition
Simpson Housing Services
Tri Valley Opportunity Council Inc
Volunteers of America Cornerstone
Zumbro Valley Mental Health
MO
Missouri Association for Social Welfare
MS
Catholic Charities
Hinds County Human Resource Agency
JHCHC-Ivory Homeless Clinic
Mississippi Children's Home Society
Seashore Mission UMC
NC
AIDS Community Residence Association
Glory to Glory House of Refuge
Greensboro Housing Coalition
Pan Lutheran Ministries of Wake County, Inc.
The Homeless Coalition
ND
Mercer County Women's Action & Resource Center
Minot Area Homeless Coalition
ND Department of Commerce
YWCA of Fargo-Moorhead
NH
Homeless Center for Strafford County
New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness
Under The Bridge

NJ
Apostle House
Fair Housing Council of Northern New Jersey
Garden State Coalition for Youth & Family Concerns
Greater Newark HUD Tenants’ Association
Middle Earth, Inc
Middlesex County CEAS Committee
New Jersey Alliance for the Homeless
Women Rising, Inc.

NM
Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless

NV
Department of Veteran Affairs
NV Health Center
Poverello House
Straight from the Streets

NY
BIG News
Center for Youth
Common Ground Community
Consumer Information & Dispute Resolution
Grand Central Neighborhood Social Services
Homeless in Action
Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless
Nassau-Suffolk Coalition for the Homeless
Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of NYS
Street News
The Partnership for the Homeless
Urban Pathways

OH
CAP Harmony House
Caracole/HMIS
Cleveland Tenants Organization
Columbus Health Department
Columbus Neighborhood Health Center
Cross Creek Community Church/UCC
Faith Mission
Family Services
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless  
Mary Magdalen House  
Maryhaven-Engagement Center  
Miller Community House  
Netcare  
New Housing Opportunities  
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless  
Run for Shelter  
Scioto County Homeless Shelter  
The Salvation Army  
Volunteers of America, Family Services  
Welfare Rights Coalition

OK  
Greater Love Outreach/My Sister’s Keeper

OR  
Community Resources and Vital Services  
First United Methodist Church of Portland  
Oregon Farm Worker Ministry  
Oregon Partnership Alcohol and Drug Helpline  
Outside In  
Recovery Association Project  
South Coast Homeless Council  
Street Roots  
SW Oregon Community Action  
T.H.E. House  
YWCA

PA  
Community Human Services Corporation  
Community of Caring  
Harrisburg Center for Peace & Justice  
Kensington Welfare Rights Union  
Northside Common Ministries  
Operation Safety Net  
Project HOME  
YWCA of Titusville, PA

PR  
Coalicion de Apoyo Continuo a Personas sin Hogar  
Hogar Padre Venaro, Inc.  
Iniciativa Comunitaria de Investigacion, Inc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
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<td>RI</td>
<td>Travelers Aid Society of Rhode Island</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Crisis Ministries</td>
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<td>GAMES Coalition for the Homeless</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>MEG's House</td>
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<td>South Carolina Inst. on Poverty and Deprivation</td>
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<td>Upstate Homeless Coalition of South Carolina</td>
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<td>TN</td>
<td>Amnesty International-Rhodes College Chapter</td>
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<td>Chattanooga Homeless Coalition</td>
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<td>Family Life Center</td>
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<td>Greater Memphis Interagency Council f/t Homeless</td>
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<td>Homeward Bound Knoxville</td>
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<td>Memphis Family Shelter</td>
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<td>Residential Resources</td>
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<td>S.A.C.H./Rhodes College</td>
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<td>Tennessee Network For Community Economic Development</td>
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<td>VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program</td>
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<td>AHP Mutual Housing Association</td>
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<td>House the Homeless, Inc.</td>
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<td>Houston Community Voice Mail</td>
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Houston Compass
Hunger Busters
New Hope Housing, Inc.
Promise House, Inc.
Samaritan Inn
The Arrow Project
The Houston Launch Pad
The Samaritan Inn
Wesley Community Center

UT
Coalition of Religious Communities
Homeless Health Care Program
J.E.D.I. for Women
Utah Issues

VA
Arlington Street People's Assistance Network
Virginia Coalition for the Homeless
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

VT
Paula Natt, Inc
Rural Vermont
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition

WA
African American Community Education Project
Associated Ministries
Friends of Youth
Helping Hand House
NAMI Eastside Housing Committee
Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless
Washington State Coalition for the Homeless

WI
Family Services of Northeast, Wisconsin, Inc.
Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee

WV
Cabell-Huntington Coalition for the Homeless
Huntington West Virginia Housing Authority
Information and Referral Services
Scottie's Place, Inc.

WY
Cheyenne Crossroads Clinic
### Foreign Organizations:

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>L’Itineraire</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>World Home</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>International Tenants Union</td>
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