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DEBORAH J. GLICK
Assemblymember 66TH District
New York County

July 2, 2009

Hon. Richard A. Brown
Queens Country District Attorney
125-01 Queens Boulevard
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Dear District Attorney Brown:

As the New York State Assembly's openly lesbian, gay and bisexual members, we were very concerned and saddened to hear about the hate-driven beating of Leslie Mora on June 19th. Ms. Mora, a transgender woman, was beaten about her face, head and body with a belt while repeatedly being called "faggot" in Spanish. The attack, which left her with bruises throughout her body and required several stitches, stopped only when a passer-by threatened to call the police.

We now hear that that the New York Police Department has failed to classify Ms. Mora's attack as a hate crime and that the Queens Country District Attorney's office subsequently expressed reluctance to viewing this as a hate-motivated crime. We urge you to reconsider your position.

Regardless of how Ms. Mora identifies her sexual orientation or gender identity, the fact that her assailants repeatedly called her "faggot" during the attack makes clear that they believed she was gay and attacked her on that basis. Consequently, we feel strongly that the facts of this case support, and even command, that hate crime charges be brought pursuant to New York's Hate Crimes Act of 2000, which classifies as a hate crime ones which are motivated "in whole or in substantial part because of a belief or perception regarding the . . . sexual orientation of a person, regardless of whether the belief or perception is correct."

Hate crimes hurt people who, as members of disadvantaged groups, most need our protection. We believe that it is vital to send a message that crimes of bigotry will not be tolerated, by ensuring that the perpetrators of these brutal crimes are properly penalized.

We urge you to review your office's position in this case and ensure that Leslie Mora's attackers are brought to justice. We look forward to hearing that you will do so. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Glick

Daniel O'Donnell

Micah Kellner

Matthew J. Titone