

# "what's so bad about hate?" by andrew sullivan essay sample

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## **“ What’s so Bad About Hate?” by Andrew Sullivan Essay Sample**

With so much diversity in the world, there will always be conflicts about beliefs and feelings towards each other. When those who act out on these negative feelings towards minorities, it is called a “ hate crime”. To combat these vicious and horrible offenses, throughout history, presidents and National leaders have declared a symbolic “ war on hate”. From President Clinton calling for a foreign expansion of hate crime laws to President Obama waging an entire war on terrorism. Although we’d like to think the opposite, hate certainly holds a large place in today’s society, in Andrew Sullivan’s “ What’s so Bad About Hate”, he state that we do not exactly know what hate is: “ For all our zeal to attack hate, we still have a remarkably vague idea of what it actually is,” (Sullivan, 182). Is hate however, too big to just ignore? While we all might have something about us for some one to hate, specific groups are mostly targeted and have it much worse.

Sullivan’s essays essentially calls for a movement to get rid of the “ hate crime” and define it as something else. He believes that what we now deem as “ hate crimes” should have the same punishment as any crime: “ And we should of course be vigilant that our most powerful institutions, most notably the government...ensure that the violent expression of hate is curtailed by the same rules that punish all violent expression,” (Sullivan, 191). Essentially he is believes that crimes motivated by hate should be categorized the same as crimes that are not. He also believes that hate cannot be stopped by the government and should be instead simply changing people’s opinions

without using punishment: "...violence can and should be stopped by the government. In a free society, hate can't and shouldn't be," (Sullivan, 191). Instead of the government using punishment to help put an end to hate, he believes that the only way to stop it is " equanimity in the face of justice," (Sullivan, 192). He supports this because he believes that the legal system today has resulted in that everyone except, for example, the straight white male can be the victim of a hate crime. In doing this, it makes these people who cannot be victims viewed as guilty before proven innocent.

Contrary to what Sullivan explains in his essay, I believe that the use of " hate crimes" to distinguish offenses that are acted out of hostility are warranted and that the government should continue punishment to the fullest extent of this law. Although Sullivan explains that the government cannot control the hate people feel and that violence and hatred should be separated, the violence that is caused by hate can — and should be controlled. Although Sullivan does have a point when he says: " The only permanent rebuke to homophobia is not the enforcement of tolerance but gay equanimity in the face of prejudice. The only effective answer to sexism is not a morass of legal proscriptions but the simple fact of female success," (Sullivan, 192) society should not have to simply stand by and be violently discriminated against while they try and change other's opinions of them. The victims of hate should have justice and the court should not get to use the excuse that the victim should be trying to change his or her attacker's overall opinion of them. When it comes down to it, there is no excuse for such cruel intentions and violence.

Counter Argument Position Paper:

" The Long Good-bye: Mother's Day in Federal Prison" by Christina Boufis

The rate of incarcerated criminals has been on the rise so much recently that prisons are becoming over-crowded and inmates' sentences are even shortened because there is simply not enough room for them. With this increasing amount of prisoners, the issue of standards for these prisons and inmates become increasingly important and at question. With the assumption that these inmates have gone through the legal system and have, in fact, been proven guilty, how severe should their environments be? Or how harshly should they be treated while in these prisons? While the issue of prison brutality is still a large issue in today's society, so is the issue of not treating inmates enough like prisoners. Similarly, the issue of sympathy for these inmates is also at hand. How should the public view prisoners and how should they deserve to be treated?

In " The Long Good-Bye", Christina Boufis illustrates her visit to a women's prison on visiting day. She gives a thorough description of the sadness and aching the prisoners felt as they visited with their loved ones, from spouses, boyfriends, and children after having been missing from their lives for so long. While Boufis does not explicitly state her opinion on the environment in this prison, through her descriptions and details she is able to convey her emotions of sympathy and compassion for these women. The small details she includes such as: " The sandwiches are stale, the coffee weak, the candy bars the ones we always pass up at a convenience store," (Boufis, 58). and " They sit proudly before their flower-in-a-Coke-can, amid Hershey bar

wrappers, half-eaten Ding Dongs, and empty paper coffee cups," (Boufis, 57). Both of such quotes display the lifeless atmosphere of the prison. The second specifically shows how the women cling to items that, to a person that is not incarcerated, would not be as valuable. Boufis clearly illustrates her sympathy for these women living in such desolate conditions through these small details of the prisoner's lives. She also includes quotes from an inmates mother describing her view of the prison in which her daughter was sent to serve out her sentence. She explains it in great negative detail: "' Pit of fire,' she said... ' Pit of fire straight from hell. Never seen anything like it.'... Her voice getting louder as and she looks at each of us with pleading eyes. ' My daughter was in that place..." (Boufis, 59). She includes witnesses accounts of these prisons to show how much families are worried about their loved ones in these prisons and how horrible these prisons are viewed.

Although I certainly do believe in prison brutality, I do believe in justice through the legal system, which usually means imprisonment and the loss of luxuries. While it is easy to see how the conditions in these prisons is not pleasurable, they are not meant to be. The women who were proven guilty and sentenced to do time in prison had done wrong and, legally, deserve the time away from normal society. Yes, the conditions are not good in prison, they weren't meant to be. Nobody should enjoy their time in prison, it is a punishment. I do have sympathy for the loved ones of these incarcerated women because they are also being punished by not having their mother or spouse in their lives because of the wrong choices of the woman. However, this is also part of the women's punishment. They must realize that, not only

are they causing themselves pain but they are also causing pain for their loved ones by doing wrong. The tone that Boufis takes in her essay shows the reader that they need to take sympathy on the female inmate however, I do not see the reason for this. Prison is suppose to be an undesirable place that makes inmates not want to repeat their crime and have to return.