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## **Senator Tina Polsky and Representative Emily Slosberg File Bill Expanding Protections Against Hate Crimes**

**Tallahassee, FL – Senator Tina Polsky (D-Boca Raton) and Representative Emily Slosberg (D-Boca Raton)** filed [SB 1208](#)/[HB 883](#) to update Florida statutes addressing hate crimes by allowing government, public and private organizations to be classified as victims of misdeeds motivated by race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability. The bill was drafted following the vandalism of a Delray Beach intersection decorated to honor those murdered at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, an attack on the LGBTQ and Latin American communities as well as the second-deadliest mass shooting in American history. Under current law, the Palm Beach County State Attorney is unable to pursue hate crime charges against the suspect because cities have no standing as victims of hate crimes from a statutory perspective.

Announcing the bill, **Senator Polsky** said, "When acts of hate are perpetrated against individuals, we pursue and reprimand those responsible in order to serve justice and reaffirm the human dignity of the victims. When acts of hate are perpetrated against public property or government entities, we must do the same. This legislation allows law enforcement officials to seek full and appropriate redress for expressions of hate which have no place in Florida."

"To further unity and acceptance in the community, we need to deter crimes, particularly those that show bias," **Representative Slosberg** said. "This legislation goes a long way towards that end."

According to **Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg**, "This important bill will close a glaring loophole in state law that allows defendants to avoid hate crime charges even though their actions were motivated by prejudice. This bill gives prosecutors the tools needed to hold fully accountable those who harm our community with hateful conduct."

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