WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence released the following statement condemning the hate crimes amendment that passed the U.S. Senate yesterday as part of the Defense Department authorization bill. Pence, as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, fought a hate crimes measure that passed the committee and the U.S. House earlier this year.

"By adding protections for homosexual behavior to the defense authorization bill, the Senate has done a disservice to our Armed Forces and the freedoms they fight to protect. Hate crimes legislation that includes sexual preference endangers the freedom of religion in this country.

“If this bill becomes law, any religious leader who teaches a traditional view of sexual orientation could face criminal charges for aiding, abetting or inducing a hate crime. For the sake of our soldiers and freedoms they fight to protect, House and Senate conferees should remove this provision and, if not, the President should veto this bill.”