"'Code of the (American) Penetrator':
U.S. Evangelicals and Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill"
Darren Arquero, University of California, Berkeley

Results from the 2012 Election Day marked a historic moment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and
transgender (LGBT) individuals in the United States: outcomes from this election cycle saw, for
the first time, the passage of same-sex marriage in three states by popular vote. At the same time
mainstream U.S. media inundated the American public with celebratory stories and images of
LGBT Americans, however, November 6 marked a different occasion for gay rights advocates in
Uganda. According to a Ugandan-based newspaper, Member of Parliament (MP) David Bahati
advised parents in the capital city to watch their children, "warn[ing] that close to 40 companies
were recruiting minors in the gay business."1 Ironically, Bahati's remarks were soon followed by a
November 12 statement that announced the re-tabling of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, notoriously
known as the "Kill the Gays" Bill, which Bahati himself first introduced in 2009.2 As stated by a
small minority of gay rights activists in the East African country, "A vitriolic homophobia is rising
in Ugandan society, pointing to the meteoric rise of the U.S. evangelical church as a driving
force."3

This paper will explore Uganda's religious climate surrounding the current Anti-Homosexuality
Bill. My goal is to illuminate how citizenship in Uganda "is premised in heterosexual terms and
how lesbian and gay bodies are made to bear the brunt of the charge of undermining national
sovereignty,"4 influenced by the workings of U.S. evangeliicals.

1 John Tugume, "MP Bahati Advises Parents on Holidays," The Daily Monitor, last modified November 6, 2012,
http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/MP+Bahati+advises+parents+on+holidays/-688334/1612548/-13yd5wjz/-index.html.
2 Rodney Muhumuza, "Official: Uganda to Pass Anti-Gay Legislation This Year," The Associated Press, last
3 Jocelyn Edwards, "Uganda Anti-Gay Bill Draws Church, Donor Battle Lines," Thomson Reuters, last modified
4 M. Jacqui Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred