



OFFICERS

Date February 11, 2020

Robert E. Ross  
President

IN SUPPORT OF HB-917/SB-606

Jody Wildy,  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**To: Judiciary Committee (House) and Judicial Proceedings Committee (Senate)**  
**From: Prince George's County NAACP**  
**Date: February 11, 2020**  
**Re: Written Testimony in support of House Bill 917 and Senate Bill 606**

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Jerome Jones,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Rhonda Thomas  
Secretary

April Martin  
Assistant Secretary

John Simms  
Treasurer

I am submitting this written testimony to offer my unqualified support for HB917/SB606. The NAACP works to ensure that we live in a society where all people have equal rights without discrimination. This legislation is important and necessary. The [FBI's 2018 report](#) documented an **increase in hate crimes against African Americans, members of the LGBTQ community, Native Americans, Jews, and Muslims**. Law enforcement agencies submitted incident reports involving 5,850 criminal incidents and 6,885 related offenses motivated by bias toward race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, and gender identity. 7,173 reported hate crimes were committed against individuals, and another 2,338 were committed against property. Several states do not have comprehensive laws to cover hate crimes and Maryland must act now. Hate crimes are the highest it has been in two decades. Maryland must ensure that when crimes are committed because of hatred or amicus for one's race, gender, religion, or sexuality- justice must be served – they must be protected. However, this cannot happen if the loophole in the current hate crimes statute remains.

In 2017 Urbanski committed premeditated murder of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard Collins, III. Based upon the evidence shown in court, Urbanski has racist pictures of African Americans, those of the Jewish faith and members of the LGBTQ community. It was clear that he held hatred in his heart for persons of color. However, the court held the statute as drafted was insufficient to convict Urbanski of the hate crime. We all know it was motivated by hate. I am asking that you fix the loophole and ensure no one has to experience this type of judicial travesty again. I respectfully ask for this committee's favorable report on HB917/SB606- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard Collins, III Law.

Sincerely,

Robert Ross, President,  
Prince George's County NAACP