



HB-13

WILLIE FLOWERS; PRESIDENT

1/19/2023

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE - IT IS WITH HUMAN COMPASSION AND CONCERN THAT I TESTIFY IN FAVOR OF HOUSE BILL 13.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BILL FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND. WE ARE A STATE OF MANY DIVERSE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS. WHILE WE EXPECT THE GOOD AND BEST OF PEOPLE SOMETIMES IT IS NOT SO.

IN 2017, A YOUNG STUDENT FROM BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY WAS CELEBRATING HIS UPCOMING GRADUATION. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN COMMISSIONED AS A 2ND LT. IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY. HIS NAME IS LT. RICHARD COLLINS, III. HE WOULD NOT LIVE TO SEE HIS GRADUATION BECAUSE HE WAS KILLED BY A RACIST WHITE SUPREMACIST ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK. I HAVE DEDICATED MY LIFE TO MAKE SURE THAT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN.

I USE THIS STORY TO REMIND EVERYONE HERE THAT WHILE WE ALL PURSUE PEACE IN LOVE IN OUR LIVES IN THE WORK WE DO SOME PEOPLE DO THE OPPOSITE. THAT IS WHAT HATEFUL PEOPLE DO.

THIS BILL HELPS TO BRINGS THE APPROPRIATE ATTENTION TO HATE ACTS AND GIVES VICTIMS THE POWER TO RESPOND WITH CIVIL ACTION. THIS INCLUDES NON-ECONOMIC DAMAGES, EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, MENTAL ANGUISH, LOSS OF JOY AND LOSS OF COMPANIONSHIP. I URGE THAT HB-13 BECOMES LAW FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

I HAVE DEDICATED MY LIFE TO ALTER THE RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT USING PEACE AND LOVE AS AN ORGANIZING TOOL IN OUR SOCIETY. WHILE THIS BILL USES THE WORD HATE IN THE TITLE AND IS MEANT TO REMEDY WHAT WE SEE AS HATE IN OUR COMMUNITY THE ALTERNATE MOVE FOR REAL COMMUNITY GROWTH SHOULD BE A STEPS TOWARD LOVE.

IN CONCLUSION, ONE AMENDMENT I WOULD ADD WOULD INCLUDE ADDING LANGUAGE THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE GROWING POWER OF HATE ACTIONS, CRIMES AND INSULTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEDIA. CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS, MYSELF INCLUDED, ARE CONSTANTLY THE TARGET OF HATE TALK IN SOCIAL MEDIA. IT IS HARD OUR US WHILE WE DO OUR WORK AND CHALLENGING FOR OUR FAMILIES. ANY LEGAL SUPPORT TO CURB IT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

THE MEMORY OF LT. RICHARD COLLINS, III WILL BE A REMINDER OF THE FACT THAT WE SHOULD ALL DO MORE TO MAKE SURE THAT HATE DOESN'T WIN AND LOVE PREVAILS. HB-13 IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.