

STENY H. HOYER
MAJORITY LEADER
5TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6502
February 11, 2020

SB 606

The Honorable William Smith Jr.
Chairman
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland State Senate
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairmen Smith and Clippinger:

My constituent, Second Lieutenant Richard Collins III, was murdered at the University of Maryland in the early morning hours of May 20, 2017. Second Lieutenant Collins had just been commissioned into the U.S. Army and was to graduate from Bowie State University. At a time that should have been full of celebration for the Collins family, they had to face the unthinkable. Having learned much about Second Lieutenant Collins through his mother and father, I came to know how special he was and how painful it has been for his family and community.

During the trial of the man convicted of Second Lieutenant Collins's murder, we learned that the man possessed photos and memes depicting racist, white-supremacist propaganda that included encouraging violence against African Americans and other minority groups. We also learned that the defendant participated in a Facebook group called "the Alt Reich: Nation." This group included propaganda encouraging violence against people of color and non-whites. This kind of hate has no place in our community or our country.

I have been proud that, throughout my career in public service, I have advocated for policies like fair housing, civil rights, and expanding federal hate-crimes legislation. Hate crimes motivated by race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and identity or disability not only injure individual victims but also terrorize entire segments of our population and tear at our nation's social fabric. I commend your committees for considering legislation that would work to combat hate crimes.

I look forward to working with you and other members of the Maryland General Assembly on this important issue. With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



STENY H. HOYER

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