



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Support

HB485 - Criminal Law/Hate Crimes

House Judiciary Committee

2/11/2020

Testimony presented by Rev. Kathy Shahinian

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland supports HB 485 – Criminal Law/Hate Crimes. The intent of the legislation is to requiring the court to impose, on a person convicted of a hate crime, at least 8 hours of educational instruction relating to the group or community against whom the person convicted has committed a prohibited act.

This is a bill that makes sense and there are national practices for the implementation:

- Maryland state courts reported 50 violations filed for hate crimes in 2019. (Six individuals were sentenced in 2019).
- A National Crime Prevention Council strategy utilized by the Anti-Defamation League encourages counseling programs. Programs are used to educate members of hate groups and juvenile offenders to change their biases on certain cultures, religions, races, etc. that are frequently the target of young offenders.

As Nelson Mandela has written and President Barack Obama has quoted: “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

”Our national church passed the following resolution in response to hate:

*Resolved*, That the 75th General Convention urge the provinces, dioceses, congregations, and institutions of The Episcopal Church to adopt and support for the next triennium nonviolence training for personal and social change, to advance the mission priorities of Congregational Transformation and Justice and Peace; and be it further

*Resolved*, That each Episcopal diocese be encouraged to make available active nonviolence training to congregations and institutions, to assist them in addressing conflicts, controversies, and divisions; to respond to violence, oppression, and injustice at all levels, including issues of racism, social and economic injustice, crime, and domestic violence; and where possible to create trainings that represent a diversity of perspectives within communities, including intergenerational trainings for youth/young adults with adults; and be it further

*Resolved*, That each diocese be invited to identify candidates to attend training to become training facilitators in the diocese. <sup>1</sup>

We have work to do teaching love: from the expensive homes in the State of MD to the houses of the poorest among us. It is not going to be easy, and it is work that must be done for the cause of justice and because it is the work of the Jesus Movement. The Episcopal Church is committed to eradicating hate in this country and HB 485 is a good beginning. We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), p. 691.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE

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