



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 541

DATE: February 11, 2020

SPONSOR: Delegate Lopez, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (sara.morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Department of Police)

Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Training Requirements – Hate Crimes

House Bill 541 establishes that the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission require hate crimes training for entrance-level police officers, and the same training every three years for in-service police officers, to address incidents of crime apparently directed against an individual or group because of race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

At the end of last year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued its 2018 Hate Crimes Statistics which showed a slight decline in overall hate crimes, but an increase in interpersonal violence against victims from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Because many victims of hate crimes can feel marginalized or intimidated, the majority of the crimes against them were not reported to law enforcement, according to the FBI's findings.

House Bill 541 proposes to change that outcome by requiring that hate crimes, including the recognition of, response to, and reporting of incidents become a required component of police training in Maryland. As residents witness an increase in the number of police officers responding skillfully to incidents of bias-motivated hate crimes, more of these crimes will be reported as a stronger bond and greater sense of trust will develop between residents and local law enforcement.

The Montgomery County Department of Police supports HB 541 and would urge that the Committee adopt a favorable report.