



February 11, 2020

House Bill 541

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

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 541 - Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission - Training Requirements - Hate Crimes.

Unfortunately, we have seen a rise in the number of hate bias incidents in Anne Arundel County and elsewhere. According to Maryland State Police statistics, hate crime incidents rose by 116 percent between 2015 and 2016. The most recent Hate Bias Report from the Maryland State Police shows that reported incidents increased from 203 in 2015 to close to 400 in 2018. We must make clear to all Marylanders that incidents of hate will not be tolerated. In order to do that, Maryland law must give law enforcement the training and tools to respond to and prosecute offensive behavior.

House Bill 541 would require that entry-level and in-service police training include instruction on criminal laws concerning hate crimes, including the recognition of, response to, and reporting of incidents of hate crimes. In Anne Arundel County, we train our officers in the Academy that even if there is no crime, a report and investigation is mandated. This is reinforced by annual in service training, which includes cultural competence training. These annual trainings have included serving and understanding the LGBTQ community, issues between police and the African American community such as historical enforcement of unjust laws to suppress civil rights in much of the country, issues affecting the Muslim community, interacting with youth of all cultures in our schools, and reinforcing the need for alternative measures other than arrest.

In Anne Arundel County, EVERY hate/bias incident requires the response of a police lieutenant, which puts the priority on a hate/bias call as high as a shooting, suspicious death or armed robbery. In addition, every hate bias incident is reviewed all the way up the chain of command to the Chief of Police on a daily basis with an eye towards making sure we do charge criminally whenever we can.

However it is critical that in order to confront hate crimes and incidents of hate bias head-on, all Maryland law enforcement officers have the training to recognize, respond to, and report these terrible incidents. We support this legislation because we must use every tool to combat bigotry, racism, and antisemitism in Anne Arundel County and across the state. Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 541.