



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 0541- Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Training Requirements-
Hate Crimes**

Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterberry and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

It is time we face the fact that Hate Crimes occur more often than we want to believe. Given today's racially charged political climate, it's not hard to believe that hate/bias based crimes and offenses are on the rise. We need law enforcement to have the proper training to address this new reality. The Issue goes further than the hate crimes themselves but, in the fact, these crimes are not being properly reported by our law enforcement agencies. If a crime is hate or bias motivated, it carries a tougher punishment upon conviction.

HB 541 requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to require, for entrance-level police training and at least every three years for in-service level police training conducted by the State and each county and municipal police training school, that the curriculum and minimum courses of study include special training, attention to, and study of the application and enforcement of the criminal laws concerning hate crimes and the appropriate treatment of victims of hate crimes, as specified.

We are asking for a State-wide standardized training specific to handling hate crimes. In the 24-page list of learning objectives that make up the training standards, there is no specialized training for hate crimes. The request for special training is not unusual. We already require police to be properly trained to respond to domestic violence, sexual abuse and human trafficking. There are currently 15 states that have hate crime training and reporting provisions codified.

A patchwork of standards for policing and reporting simply does not serve Maryland's diverse communities. Areas with stricter reporting standards such as Montgomery and Howard Counties, appear to have high frequency of hate crimes, and those with no standards have none to report. Because of this inconsistency, those impacted are less likely to come forward. In a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 52 percent of respondents who had experienced a hate crime did not report it as a hate crime because they did not believe the police would do anything about it. With this bill, every resident in every zip code will be protected by state, county and municipal police subject to the same standards.

I would urge the Judiciary Committee to vote favorably on this bill.