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February 11, 2020

Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
101 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

On behalf of the Office of the Attorney General, I urge the Judiciary Committee to vote favorably on House Bill 541 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Training Requirements – Hate Crimes.

Last year, I had the privilege of representing Maryland along with my colleague, Zenita Hurley, Chief Counsel for Civil Rights, at the National Association of Attorneys General's Symposium on Raising Awareness and Effective Collaborative Approaches to Address Hate Crimes in Los Angeles, California. Maryland was recognized throughout the event as a leader in addressing hate crimes and hate bias within our communities based in large part on the reporting requirements set forth at Md. Code, § 2-307(b) of the Public Safety Article.

Data analysis to inform public policy and better understand what resources are needed to reduce incidents of hate crimes and hate bias in Maryland is only as good as the data received. The annual Hate Bias Reports issued by the Maryland Department of State Police in conjunction with the Maryland Coordination & Analysis Center for the period of 2013-2018 shows that two counties in Maryland did not report any hate bias or hate crimes incidents, and an additional seven counties reported no more than one incident per year. During that same time period, the total number of hate bias and hate crimes incidents reported across the State increased by 49%.

The training required by House Bill 541 will increase law enforcement knowledge of the differences between hate crimes and hate bias incidents, why Maryland collects data on both, and how that information may be used to help local jurisdictions solve community problems before they become criminal issues. Enhanced training on hate bias and hate crimes for law enforcement will assist law enforcement with better community engagement, enhanced

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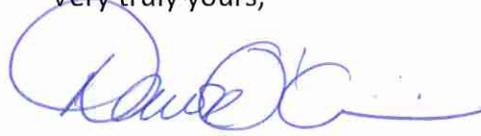
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understanding of the biases confronting the populations they serve, and increased and more accurate reporting of hate bias and hate crimes incidents statewide.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dawn P. O'Croinin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "O".

Dawn P. O'Croinin
Assistant Attorney General