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Ways and Means Committee

Chair, Revenues Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SPONSOR Testimony on House Bill 741

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

As a result of the proliferation of hate crimes and white supremacist activities in Maryland and across the country, I have become increasingly focused on finding effective ways to ensure that all of Maryland's communities are safe. For this reason, I drafted House Bill 741, which originally set out to create the Empowering Communities to Counter Racially Motivated Violent Extremism grant program. After meeting with a variety of stakeholders who expressed their concerns about the language of the original bill, I have drafted a major amendment which will repurpose the bill to instead authorize a hate crime grant program for local law enforcement agencies, departments of health, civil rights commissions, and nonprofits.

This amendment would authorize a grant program, administered by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS), to be awarded to nonprofits, civil rights commissions, and health departments to conduct forums and programs related to hate crime prevention, education, and victim services. These funds may also be awarded to local law enforcement agencies to assist in conducting law enforcement activities or crime reduction programs to prevent, address, or otherwise respond to incidents of hate crimes, particularly as those programs relate to reporting hate crimes.

This new language facilitates the expansion of hate crime investigation, reporting, and training in Maryland and brings more attention to this issue within communities. With the rapid expansion of incidents of hate crimes, this grant program provides necessary investments for public safety. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 741 as amended.

Thank you,

Delegate Eric Luedtke

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Luedtke", written in a cursive style.