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Support for HB 917: Criminal Law – Hate Crimes – Basis

The Maryland Legislative Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus strongly urges your support for the above titled legislation.

At a time when hate crimes are the number one priority of the FBI, and at a time when Maryland's reported hate crimes has increased, as the number of hate crimes nationwide have decreased, we believe that Maryland's hate crime law must be strengthened.

A shocking example of the flaws in the Maryland statute is the case involving 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III who was fatally stabbed at a bus stop on the University of Maryland, College Park. Although his assailant was charged with first degree murder, and with a hate crime under Section 10-304 of the Criminal Law Article, the hate crime charge was dropped because the prosecution could not prove that race was the "actual motive" for the stabbing.

We believe this "actual motive" standard is an impossibly difficult threshold. This legislation would remedy this problem and allow other victims protection against these heinous acts.

We ask for a favorable report.