



**College of Professional Studies
Department of Behavioral Sciences and Human Services**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0606/HB0917
2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law**

To: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Matasha L. Harris, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Date: February 11, 2020

My name is Dr. Matasha Harris and I am an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Bowie State University. I would like to thank each of you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 0606/ HB0917. As a member of the Bowie State University's family and as a criminologist, I strongly support SB 0606/HB0917, 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law.

There are several reasons why I strongly support, 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law. As a criminologist, I understand the nuances and complexities associated with hate crimes. I understand the fear that direct and indirect victims face as a result of such vicious acts of violence. The most recent data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program pertaining to hate crimes reveal that hate crimes are an issue in our country and within Maryland. In 2018, 7,120 hate crime incidents were reported in the United States. In Maryland, hate crime incidents increased from a low of 16 reported incidents in 2014 to 49 reported incidents in 2018. This is why we are here today. We are here to address this pervasive culture of hate within our society that promotes violence against targeted individuals and others like them. The time has come for our leaders to pass legislation that will deter the rising number of hate crimes in Maryland.

As a member of the Bowie State University's family, I share the pain associated with the senseless murder of 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III. I stand in solidarity with the Collins' family and my students. As we continue to process the tremendous loss of an exemplary human being, we are adamant that his life shall not be in vain. 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's legacy of service and leadership will continue to live through me. I am a champion for social justice and I am determined to help eradicate this pervasive culture of hate.

Therefore, I believe it is absolutely necessary for each of you to support 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law. I respectfully urge a favorable report.