

IN SUPPORT OF HB-917/SB-606

To: Judiciary Committee (House) and Judicial Proceedings Committee (Senate)

From: Krystal Oriadha, The LGBTQ Dignity Project

Date: February 11, 2020

Re: Written Testimony in support of House Bill 917 and Senate Bill 606- 2nd Lt. Richard Collins, III Law

I am submitting this written testimony to offer my unequivocal support for HB917/SB606. My name is Krystal Oriadha and I work with the Co-Founder of The LRBTQ Dignity Project. Our Organization works to combat discrimination, advocate to create a more just and fair society for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The FBI reports that nearly 1 in 5 hate crimes motivated by anti-LGBTQ bias. Of the almost 8,000 hate crime incidents reported in 2018, more than 1,300 — or nearly 19 percent — stemmed from anti-LGBTQIA+ bias, according to the FBI's latest Hate Crime Statistics report. When compared to 2017, the number of reported incidents targeting the LGBTQ community increased to 1,347, jumping to 19 percent of each year's total number of reported hate crime incidents. In particular, reports of anti-trans violence is growing: Between 2017 and 2018, the number of these reported incidents increased 34 percent. LGBTQIA+ community is estimated by Gallup to comprise 4.5 percent of the U.S. population, yet according to the FBI's newly released report, they comprise 18.5 percent of hate crime victims.

From these statistics, it is abundantly clear that we are living in more hateful times. We must arm our prosecutors and law enforcement officers with the tools to protect and seek justice victims of hate crimes. While statistical reports are important and informative, we must take the next step. We must strengthen our hate crime statute. We must equip our prosecutors with the tools to fight for

those that have been victimized. We must arm the courts with laws with no loopholes, where Defendants like Urbanski cannot slip through. It does not make Maryland safer to simply to have reports, we must have the tools to fight hate. I urge this committee to strengthen the hate crimes law. I respectfully ask for this committee's favorable report on HB917/SB606- 2nd Lt. Richard Collins, III Law.

Krystal Oriadha

Krystal Oriadha,
Organization Name