



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

RE: HB917 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes - Basis (2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law)

The MLLC supports HB917 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes - Basis (2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law)

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation which improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a voice in the development of public policy affecting the Latino community and the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB917.

In a state that is considered “progressive,” hate crimes continue to plague its communities. Maryland has experienced a minor decrease in the number of hate crimes and hate biased incidents reported to local authorities in recent years. However, it is well known how often these types of incidents go unreported. Victims of hate crimes retreat from the idea of speaking up because they assume nothing will be accomplished from going to law enforcement. Moreover, the decision to drop the hate crime count against 2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III’s killer due to language technicalities in the law, further supports victims’ notions that they will not see results nor justice.

HB917 provides additional provisions for protected classes. A person may not commit a crime against another person or group motivated either in whole or in part by their race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, national origin, or whether they are experiencing homelessness. Those who are criminally responsible for acting on their hate, must be held accountable. No one should have to go through these types of crimes and it’s disheartening that someone’s life had to be taken for our state to take action. The legislature has the opportunity to protect Marylanders from this hate that has no place in our state and communities.

The MLLC supports this bill and seeks your favorable report on HB917.