

STENY H. HOYER
MAJORITY LEADER
5TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6502

February 11, 2020

The Honorable William Smith Jr.

Chairman

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Maryland State Senate

Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing

11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Luke Clippinger

Chairman

Judiciary Committee

Maryland House of Delegates

House Office Building, Room 101

6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairmen Smith and Clippinger:

My constituent, Second Lieutenant Richard Collins III, was murdered at the University of Maryland in the early morning hours of May 20, 2017. Second Lieutenant Collins had just been commissioned into the U.S. Army and was to graduate from Bowie State University. At a time that should have a been full of celebration for the Collins family, they had to face the unthinkable. Having learned much about Second Lieutenant Collins through his mother and father, I came to know how special he was and how painful it has been for his family and community.

During the trial of the man convicted of Second Lieutenant Collins's murder, we learned that the man possessed photos and memes depicting racist, white-supremacist propaganda that included encouraging violence against African Americans and other minority groups. We also learned that the defendant participated in a Facebook group called "the Alt Reich: Nation." This group included propaganda encouraging violence against people of color and non-whites. This kind of hate has no place in our community or our country.

I have been proud that, throughout my career in public service, I have advocated for policies like fair housing, civil rights, and expanding federal hate-crimes legislation. Hate crimes motivated by race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and identity or disability not only injure individual victims but also terrorize entire segments of our population and tear at our nation's social fabric. I commend your committees for considering legislation that would work to combat hate crimes.

I look forward to working with you and other members of the Maryland General Assembly on this important issue. With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



STENY H. HOYER

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**House Judiciary Committee
February 11, 2020
House Bill 917 – Criminal Law-Hate Crimes – Basis
(2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III’s Law)**

Support

The University of Maryland writes to express its support for *HB917 – Criminal Law-Hate Crimes – Basis (2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III’s Law)*. Campuses across the country are experiencing record numbers of hate incidents targeted at members of our communities. By allowing prosecutors to pursue charges when a crime is motivated in part based on another person’s race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability or national origin, SB 606 would give them a much-needed tool to more effectively combat these incidents.

The University of Maryland is one of the nation’s most diverse flagship campuses. We deeply value our diversity, and we recognize the importance both educationally and culturally of a diverse student body. Please help us make all members of our campus community feel safe and supported by enacting HB 917. We owe our students nothing less. We urge your favorable report.