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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 24, 2021

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 452

HATE CRIMES-CIVIL REMEDY

House Bill 452 will enable victims of Maryland’s hate crimes law with the means to pursue civil remedies such as injunctions and damages (equal to up to three times the amount of actual damages) against those who commit hate crimes.

Hate or bias-motivated crimes are crimes committed because the victim is (or is thought to be) a member of a certain group, such as a racial or religious minority. According to the “State of Maryland 2019 Hate Bias Report”, published by the Maryland Department of State Police, Maryland experienced an average of 386 hate bias incidents from 2017 – 2019. There were 10 more incidents reported in 2019 as compared to 2018.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws against hate crimes. In addition to state laws, several federal laws prohibit hate or bias crimes, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, which offers greater protection to victims than some state laws.

Additionally in 31 states and the District of Columbia, people who commit violence, intimidation, or vandalism against others on account of the person’s race, religion, ethnicity, or membership in a protected group can be sued in civil court and ordered to pay damages to the victim.

With this legislation, Maryland will join the other 31 states and the District of Columbia, in providing victims of hate crimes with the ability to pursue civil remedies against those who commit hate crimes.

I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 452.

Sincerely,

Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield