



**Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee
February 24, 2021**

HB 452 – Hate Crimes – Civil Remedy

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 452, which ensures a civil right of action for certain hate crimes, and authorizes the court to impose injunctions and award certain damages. This bill provides the missing legal mechanism so that victims of bias-based intimidation and violence can initiate a civil action against the offender.

In Maryland, we regard our diversity as one of our greatest strengths. These acts are motivated by hatred and prejudice, and impact the fundamental rights of the individual as well as the group of which the individual is a member. They provoke fear among members of similarly situated groups, and therefore represent a unique danger to community. They undermine the very fabric of our society, and can never be condoned or ignored.

HB 452 further protects the right of individuals to be free from violence against themselves and their property. It discourages people from acting on their biases, and punishes violent behavior. And it issues a powerful message that Maryland stands against violence motivated by prejudice.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 452.