

**Bill Number: HB 645**  
**Maryland States Attorneys Association**  
**Support**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE MARYLAND STATES ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION,**  
**IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 645**  
**HATE CRIMES - FALSE STATEMENT TO A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

The Maryland States Attorneys Association writes to offer their support for House Bill 645, Hate Crimes - False Statement to a Law Enforcement Officer. This bill would make it a hate crime to make a false statement to a law enforcement officer when the false statement is motivated as a result of the race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability or national origin of another person.

This bill would address an issue, which has been brought to the public's attention recently as a result of significantly publicized outrageous acts by individuals directed at others because of their race. In May 2020, an African American man was accused of threatening the life of a woman in Central Park in New York City when all he wanted to do was bird watch. Just after Christmas of 2020, a 14 year old young black man was accused of stealing the iPhone of a woman in a New York City hotel. It is readily apparent that these accusations occurred because of the race of the victims of the false reports. It is a tragic reality that incidents like this occur more often than we would like to think. With the proliferation of cellphones and the ease of recording events, they are being brought more to the public attention. Actions like this should be called exactly what they are- hate crimes. They should also be dealt with more harshly than a false report which is not motivated by hatred or prejudice against a particular class of human beings because of their race, sexual orientation, gender or national origin.

The Maryland States Attorneys Association asks for a favorable report to give the public and States Attorney's Offices around the State the ability to address such offensive acts by certain people in our communities.