



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 03/03/2024
RE: HB699- Criminal Law- Hate Crimes- Notice and Removal of
Item or Symbol (Hate Crimes Graffiti Removal Act)

The MLLC supports HB699- Criminal Law- Hate Crimes- Notice and Removal of Item or Symbol (Hate Crimes Graffiti Removal Act)

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB699.

Data shows that hate crimes against Latino and other minority communities are on the rise. Graffiti attacking our community is seen throughout the state and is negatively impacting our family, friends, and colleagues. According to the US Department of Justice data on the State of Maryland, hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/ancestry have exponentially increased since 2022, Hate crimes against property happening 44.2% of the time.¹ This category also makes up 60% of bias motivation for single-bias hate crimes.²

This bill would facilitate rapid response to and removal of hate crime items/symbols through cooperation between law enforcement, property owners, and imposing civil penalties on non-compliant commercial owners. The bill would require law enforcement agencies to promptly notify property owners if an alleged hate crime involving placing an item or symbol (like a noose or swastika) on their property is reported. Property owners would be required to remove any such items/symbols constituting an alleged hate crime from their property within 24 hours of being notified, except if law enforcement says it cannot be removed yet due to an ongoing investigation.

Penalties for not removing hate crime items/symbols would apply to commercial, real and personal property owners - they would get a warning for a first violation and a civil fine up to \$1,000 for second/subsequent violations.

Property owners would not face penalties if the owner was the intended target of an alleged violation

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB699.