



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB1452 Hate Crimes and Hate Bias - Definitions of Sexual Orientation and Hate Bias Incident**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, Board Member

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of **HB1452** on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

The FBI hate crime report released in 2024 and based on 2023 data found that the hate crime data relating to incidents targeting members of the LGBTQ+ community once again show disturbing, record-breaking numbers. Even as violence in the nation overall is continuing to drop, reports of hate crime incidents targeting people for their sexual orientation or gender identity are rising with no sign of abating.

Frighteningly, more than 1 in 5 hate crimes are motivated by anti-LGBTQ+ bias

Bottom line, hate crimes are very real for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Research shows that one out of five lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or pansexual individuals living in the United States will experience a hate crime in their lifetime. The rate is even higher for transgender individuals where one in four will be a victim of hate.

Further, members of the LGBTQ+ community routinely exhibit a lower likelihood of reporting victimization due to a lack of trust in and alleged harassment by law enforcement according to a recent national survey in the U.S. conducted by the ACLU.

According to Kelley Robinson, Human Rights Campaign President "LGBTQ+ people need full non-discrimination protections in law, nationwide. All law enforcement agencies must commit to fully reporting data on hate crimes in their communities. And politicians and community leaders across the country need to stop lying about our community and inciting hatred against us. It's time we build an America where LGBTQ+ folks don't just survive, they thrive - in every town, every state, every corner of this nation. That's not just a dream, it's our fundamental right as Americans."

PFLAG Salisbury supports alterations to our hate crime statute to better encompass sexual and gender minorities. Further, we support the Department of State Police collecting, analyzing, and reporting information provided by law enforcement agencies relating to hate crimes and hate bias incidents. Accordingly, PFLAG Salisbury recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.

References

ACLU. (2024). Policing Progress: Findings from a National Survey of LGBTQ+ People's Experiences with Law Enforcement. <https://www.aclu.org/publications/policing-progress-findings-from-a-national-survey-of-lgbtq-peoples-experiences-with-law-enforcement>

FBI (2024). FBI Releases Hate Crime Report. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-releases-2023-crime-in-the-nation-statistics>

Flores AR, Stotzer RL, Meyer IH, Langton LL (2022) Hate crimes against LGBT people: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017-2019. PLoS ONE 17(12): e0279363. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0279363>