



# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

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## **House Bill 14 – County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements** **Position: Support**

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

House Bill 14 requires every local school board to post annually on a prominent location on their websites information about the number of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation reported to the State Board of Education. Under current law, the school boards are already required to report this information to the State Board when it is determined that the incident is motivated by the actual or perceived personal characteristic of an individual or group – such as an individual’s or group’s **race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability**<sup>1</sup>. The posted data must be disaggregated by the motivating personal characteristic.

Since calendar year 2022, the Maryland State Police (“MSP”) reports that hate bias incidents in Maryland schools have increased at extraordinary rates – from 90 reports in 2022 to 326 reports in both 2023 and 2024<sup>2</sup>. These official reports mirror allegations of discrimination, hate, and bias occurring in Maryland’s schools that can be found across social media and in the news. Within the school setting, these hate bias incidents oftentimes manifest as bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents within the school community.

<sup>1</sup> **Bolded attributes** identify overlap with the protected classes within the laws MCCR enforces.

<sup>2</sup> Of these submitted reports, verified reports totaled 10 in 2022, 24 in 2023, and 39 in 2024. Additionally, all of this data can be found in both MSP’s annual Hate Bias Report and MCCR’s Annual Report.

***“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”***

MCCR supports HB14 because the reporting of accurate and complete data by Maryland schools will enable education and policy leaders to formulate sound public policy – based on facts – that will directly address the underlying reasons behind the increase in reports to law enforcement. Additionally, Marylanders deserve to have a complete picture of what is happening in their local schools so that they can work with educational leaders and policymakers to enact meaningful change that protects our students while fostering access to opportunity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB14. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.