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**LETTER OF SUPPORT  
HOUSE BILL 0513**

February 24, 2026

Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are writing to express our support of **HB0513: Hate Crimes and Hate Bias – Definitions of Sexual Orientation and Hate Bias Incident**. As advocates for the LGBTQ+ community in the General Assembly, we believe this bill will strengthen and secure protections for all LGBTQ+ residents and will ultimately create a positive and long-lasting change for all of Maryland.

HB0513 would update the definition of “sexual orientation” under certain hate crime statutes and establish a definition of “hate bias incident.”

The bill requires State Police to collect, analyze, and report data on hate crimes and hate bias incidents statewide. Nationally, FBI data indicates that approximately one-fifth of reported hate crimes are motivated by sexual oriented or gender identity bias. Although overall violent crime has declined in recent reporting periods, hate crimes remain at historically elevated levels.

These changes are offered by the State Hate Crimes Commission to help policymakers better understand and law enforcement respond more effectively to bias-motivated incidents for the LGBTQ+ community and beyond.

Thank you for considering the bill's positive effects on the LGBTQ+ community. Please reach out to us regarding any additional questions or concerns on the bill.

Respectfully,

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Delegate Kris Fair  
Chair