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January 29, 2026

**TO:** The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

**FROM:** Jennifer Frederick, Assistant Attorney General  
Counsel, Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention  
Executive Division, Maryland Office of the Attorney General

**RE:** House Bill 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or  
Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements -  
Favorable

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The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports House Bill 14, County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements, sponsored by Delegate Foley. HB14 proposes to adjust the reporting process of bullying in schools to recognize when an incident is motivated by hate and ensure that data about those incidents is easily accessible online.

As Maryland's elected Chief Legal Officer, the Attorney General supervises and directs the legal business of the State. The OAG advises and represents State institutions, agencies, boards, commissions, and officials, while representing Maryland's interests in state and federal litigation. The OAG uses its authority to enforce the rule of law, protect Marylanders, and promote the public good.

This legislation directly supports our efforts to improve reporting of any act of hate, especially non-criminal hate, also known as hate bias incidents. With clearer data on acts of hate, all of Maryland will have a better understanding of what an act of hate looks like in our schools. Additionally, the OAG and the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention will be able to assess better mechanisms to address and prevent hate in schools. By working to address hate in childhood before it reaches a criminal level, Maryland will be able to create

better policies and practices for a better tomorrow. This data is necessary to make informed decisions towards that goal.

Additionally, HB 14 will create a way to share how prevalent hate bias incidents are in schools without involving law enforcement. Currently, the only official mechanism for monitoring hate across the state is to report it to law enforcement. By creating a pathway for schools to share data on hate bias incidents, education professionals will be able to use mechanisms already available to them without creating an additional requirement to report all hate bias incidents. Instead, this builds on the existing bullying report the Maryland Department of Education releases every year and does not create an additional burden on teachers while also providing local communities and the whole state a better understanding of what our students are experiencing within the classroom.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important policy and welcome the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give House Bill 14 a favorable report.