

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

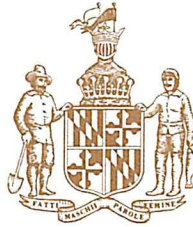
Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 29, 2020

Testimony in Favor of SB0161
Crimes - Hate Crimes - Use of a Symbol or Item to Threaten or Intimidate

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 161. This bill would prohibit an individual from placing or inscribing an item or symbol with the intent to threaten or intimidate any person or group of persons on property without the express permission of the owner.

The Maryland State Police 2018 Hate Bias Report indicated that there were 375 reported hate crime incidents statewide - with the most, 75, being in Anne Arundel County. Whether it be the noose that was found in Chesapeake Middle School in 2018, the swastika found at South River High School in 2019, or the swastika that was carved into the car of an Annapolitan just 3 weeks ago - we must do more to protect our communities and discourage these incidents of hate.

We can't legislate hate out of people's hearts - but we can and we must loudly disavow those who seek to divide us and strike fear in our communities. Senate Bill 161 sends a clear message that hanging a noose on or carving a swastika into someone's property is simply not acceptable in our society. It ensures prosecutors have the tools necessary to hold accountable those who seek to do harm.

The crossfiled bill passed the House Judiciary Committee unanimously last week and passed the House of Delegates in 2018 and 2019. The time for the Senate and Maryland to act is now. I once again request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sarah Elfreth'.

Sarah Elfreth