



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

SB 161 – Hate Crimes – Use of an Item or Symbol to Threaten or Intimidate
1/12/2020
Support

Good afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. My name is Al Collins, and I serve as a member of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland's Legislative Committee as well as Legislative Director for the Maryland Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians. Today we asking you to support SB 161 – Hate Crimes – Use of an Item or Symbol to Threaten or Intimidate.

Hate is neither a religious nor American value. The sacred scriptures of many different faith traditions speak with unity on the subject of hate. Crimes motivated by hatred or bigotry are an assault not only upon individual victims' freedoms, but also upon a belief that lies at the core of our diverse faith traditions, i.e., that every human being is created in the image of God. While we recognize that legislation alone cannot remove hatred from the hearts and minds of individuals, this proposed legislation will serve as a crucial step in building a society where hate-motivated crimes are deemed intolerable.

In 2018, the FBI documented 7,120 hate crimes directed against institutions and individuals because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. But these troubling statistics go well beyond the victim because behind each and every one of these incidents are individuals, families, and communities deeply impacted by these crimes.

Now is the time for this committee to publicly reaffirm its commitment to protect all Americans from such flagrant bias-motivated violence. The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland as well as the Maryland Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians are committed to eradicating the blatant hatred and violence which divides our society. SB 161 is vital to this struggle, and we ask you to support its passage.