



SB161 CRIMES - HATE CRIMES - USE OF AN ITEM OR A SYMBOL TO THREATEN OR INTIMIDATE

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JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **SB161 Crimes - Hate Crimes - Use of an Item or a Symbol to Threaten or Intimidate**. This bill prohibits a person from placing or inscribing an item or symbol, including an actual or depicted noose or swastika, whether temporary or permanent, on any real or personal property of another without authorization, with the intent to threaten or intimidate any person or group of persons.

Racist behavior and actions are not tolerated in AACPS. As such, we continue to work with our staff, families, students, and the community at large to be part of the solution to acts of hate in the county and in our schools.

In an effort to continue the dialogue and work toward creating climates free of hate and bigotry, AACPS has conducted community meetings to discuss our efforts, allow student and community feedback, and break into small groups to discuss the issues with racism. AACPS staff updates the Board of Education monthly on bias incidents in our school system. In addition, the school system's Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement has been extremely busy meeting with community stakeholders and providing professional development to AACPS staff.

AACPS' Global Community Citizenship class, which helps students explore the values and diversity of our local, national, and global communities, is a graduation requirement beginning with ninth-graders in the 2019-2020 school year. Changes in our middle school advisory lessons and the implementation of Second Step, which focuses on social/emotional coping skills at the elementary level, are among the other actions that we are taking help our students in the 19 percent of each week we have them in our care.

There is a lot of work, however, for everyone to do when it comes to eradicating bigotry and hate. We all have roles to play, and just as is the case when it comes to the education of our children, in this effort all must mean all. As such, we believe that HB5 is an important step in the right direction to help strengthen Maryland's hate crimes law.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB161.