



4FRONT

STUDENTS TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 633

Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission – Training Requirements – Hate Crimes

Judicial Proceedings Committee - February 11, 2020

### SUPPORT

Our names are Liam Asher, Jacob Benesch, Braden Deems, and Charlie Treger. We are with a program called Students Taking Action for Change, also known as STAC. STAC is a group of Jewish high school students from across the Baltimore area that learn and discuss politics, advocacy, and how they all relate to being Jewish.

**We are writing to express our support for Senate Bill 633 – Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission- Training Requirements – Hate Crimes.**

In the United States, there is currently a major problem regarding hate crimes. In just four years, from 2014 to 2018, hate crimes across the country have doubled. Research shows that 60% of these hate crimes were motivated because of someone's race or ethnicity. Another 18% of these hate crimes were motivated by someone's religion, and 17% of these hate crimes were motivated by someone's sexual orientation. The bill that would help solve this problem would be House Bill 541. You, as a lawmaker should care about this bill because it will help police be able to properly file a report of hate crimes and assist the victims of these targeted attacks. House Bill 541 will also inform officers of the proper channels for providing support to victims.

As Jewish teens, we are taught the value of B'tzelem Elohim. It teaches us that everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity. Enforcing police officers to be trained in proper responses to hate crimes ensures every Marylander receives equal treatment if their way of life is ever attacked. This added training procedure is a win for both law enforcement and the general public since more trust will be built between the two.

Personally, we have a connection to this bill because we are Jewish and have witnessed attacks on the Jewish Community in recent years. We've witnessed a synagogue in Pittsburgh, no different than ours, become a violent crime scene as a result of Anti-Semitism. Proper responses to these attacks based on race, religion, and sexual orientation is essential to our society's improvement. We support HB 541 because young people, like ourselves, want to make sure that police are properly trained on hate crime response and reporting.

In summary, we are asking you to support **SB633** because it will decrease hate crimes in the state of Maryland, and it will make sure police officers are properly educated on these important issues. If this bill is passed, it will improve the safety for all residents in the State of Maryland.