

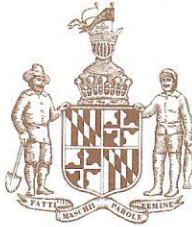
DANIEL L. COX
Legislative District 4
Frederick and Carroll Counties

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Family Law

Public Safety



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21, 2020

HB 1243 Criminal Law –Hate Crimes (John Weed Dignity Act)

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary and members of the committee:

Thank you for considering the John Weed Dignity Act, an act which if passed would strengthen our hate crime bill. All across Maryland, incidents of spitting and throwing liquids or other matter onto people out of hate is on the rise. Allegedly two teens in Frederick asked for a dollar from a middle aged man during fair week at the Great Frederick Fair in downtown Frederick, Maryland last September 2019. When he refused to give the dollar the teens allegedly beat and kicked him and when he fell to the ground, unconscious, they were seen in video spitting on him while he appeared to be dying. The constituent was John Weed who died of the wounds he received that day.

I know that no one defends the actions of this tragic incident. The intent of this bill is to strengthen the law and communicate to all our citizens that hate has no place in Maryland.

This bill will expand the prohibitions under § 10-304 of the Criminal Law Article (hate crimes – harassment or destruction of property) to prohibit specified acts committed against a person or group because of the person's or group's age, speech, or refusal to donate money or a thing of value on demand. As well as expand the list of prohibited acts under § 10-304 to include intentionally or attempting to throw, spit, place, smear, or eject bodily fluids or excrement on a person or group.

Thank you for your consideration and I would appreciate a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D Cox".

Dan Cox