

Hate Symbols Testimony

I've attended Hereford high school for four years and am currently a senior. In the past four years I have seen plenty of racism and hateful behavior, hate symbols included. Last year the boy's bathroom had to be shut down because there were swastikas and other hateful words being drawn/written on the stall walls and doors. I remember seeing people laugh about it in classrooms and in the hallway, not even considering how unsafe this made students or teachers feel. This has been going on for years and many students think it's funny, and last I had heard the drawings and symbols hadn't stopped. Another example of a hate symbol at my school is the confederate flag. Students would drive around the parking lot with the confederate flag flying off the back of their cars. It made me incredibly uncomfortable, they were parading around holding a flag that represented a group that supported slavery.

I know other students were made uncomfortable by these symbols and many others as well. It creates a toxic school environment and a level of fear, stress, or uncomfortableness that we shouldn't have to feel when trying to learn. The students I saw driving around with the confederate flag as well as the students who laughed at the hate symbols in the bathroom made me uncomfortable to be near and I would try my best to avoid and ignore them. By not getting personal repercussions for their actions, they are being taught that it's okay. A ban or more enforcement on preventing hate symbols would show these students that what they're doing is hateful and disgusting.

Sincerely,

Josie Mallon