



SB0128 - Hate Crimes - Civil Remedy

Presented to the Hon. Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 28, 2021 11:00am

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to **issue a favorable report on SB0128 – Hate Crimes – Civil Remedy**, sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice for all Marylanders. We believe that all people deserve to live a full of dignity, autonomy, and security, and we know that this makes for healthier individuals, families, and communities. NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland recognizes that victims of hate crimes are often members of our most vulnerable populations—they may hold intersectional identities in regards to sex, gender, sexuality, and ability which put them at greater risk of bigoted attacks. When individuals are wrongly attacked, they deserve, at the very least, the necessary support from the state in order to heal physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially.

When an individual or a community is targeted, immense negative feelings arise and mental anguish results. Individuals will struggle to conduct their jobs while dealing with these emotions, and might suffer financially because of this. Additionally, individuals might require professional services to help them cope with lingering negative feelings which will add to their financial burden. This means that the families of victims of hate crimes will indubitably suffer financially and mentally. SB0128 seeks to establish a civil remedy for victims of hate crimes. As such, it will reduce the financial burden on families of those targeted by hate crimes.

Those of us in the reproductive health community are acutely aware of the types of domestic terrorism that clinic workers, and unfortunately patients as well, have experienced in our country that have culminated in gunfire, bombings, and arson. Our organization supports creating opportunities for legal relief that can be awarded to those seeking available remedies in the civil court system addition to or in place of criminal justice.

Economic justice and reproductive justice are deeply interconnected. In the context of hate crimes, a civil remedy allowing for economic and noneconomic damages is logical and just. For this reason, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on SB0128**. Thank you for your time and consideration.