

# State of Maryland

## Commission on Civil Rights



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It has become all too common to hear another story about an act of hate or bias being committed against members of our communities both in Maryland and throughout the nation. We recently mourned the loss of Second Lieutenant Richard Collins III, who was fatally stabbed in College Park the weekend before he was to graduate from Bowie State University only because of the color of his skin. Meanwhile, staff at Crofton Middle School found a noose hung on its grounds, a display meant to intimidate. Thankfully, law enforcement was able to apprehend the perpetrators in these and other incidents, enabling justice to be sought for the victims of these senseless acts of hatred, violence, and intimidation.

It is clearer now perhaps more than ever that we must come together as residents of this great State if we hope to fully dismantle the vestiges of hate and bias that are the underpinnings of so many senseless acts of violence and bigotry.

As the lead State agency on matters of civil rights and anti-discrimination, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) continues to work alongside the Coalition Opposed to Violence & Extremism (COVE), the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service, the Maryland Attorney General's Office, and dozens of other leaders and organizations representing and serving communities from all walks of life. Together, we are engaging in comprehensive discussions to figure out just how Maryland identifies and responds to acts of hate and bias, as well as what steps can be taken to improve our responsiveness to the needs of the community. Most importantly, we are discussing how we can build bridges of respect, opportunity, and inclusion for all people.

Whether it is a community Hate Crime Prevention Forum at the Bender Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington or recently a seminar with members of law enforcement in North Laurel to understand how they work to protect individuals and groups from hate crimes, we at MCCR are out in communities throughout the State working tirelessly to fight against the many manifestations of hate that have appeared too regularly in our daily news.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights remains steadfast in our commitment to confront and eradicate acts of hate and bias. We call on our fellow Marylanders to join us in these efforts, for we can only achieve meaningful and lasting results by working together.