

# MARYLAND COMMISSION ON HATE CRIMES RESPONSE AND PREVENTION



**STOP HATE**

2025  
Annual Report

December 1, 2025  
[nohomeforhate.md.gov](http://nohomeforhate.md.gov)



# Contents

<b>A Message from the Chair</b> .....	3
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	5
Commission Accomplishments.....	5
Critical Policy Recommendations.....	6
1. Define "Hate Bias Incident" (RENEWED FROM 2024) .....	6
2. Update Definition of "Sexual Orientation" (RENEWED FROM 2024) .....	6
3. Address Artificial Intelligence in Hate Crime Context (NEW) .....	6
Looking Ahead: 2026 Priorities.....	7
The Path Forward.....	7
<b>Background</b> .....	8
<b>Commission Work</b> .....	8
<b>Commissioners Confirmed by the Maryland Senate</b> .....	9
<b>Appointed and Re-Appointed Commissioners</b> .....	10
<b>Reporting Hate Bias Incidents Work Group Established</b> .....	10
<b>Advocated for House Bill 1452</b> .....	11
<b>Federal Grant Activities</b> .....	12
<b>Maintenance of Online Reporting and Resource Portal</b> .....	12
<b>Hate Bias Reporting Forums</b> .....	16
<b>Development of Law Enforcement Training Platform</b> .....	17
<b>Commission Recommendations</b> .....	19
<b>Clarify the Hate Crimes Statute and Defining Hate Bias Incidents:     Maryland Code, Public Safety § 2-307</b> .....	19
<b>Update the Definition of Sexual Orientation: Maryland Criminal Law     Code § 10-301</b> .....	20
<b>Addressing How Generative Artificial Intelligence has been Used to     Perpetuate Hate in New Legislation</b> .....	21
<b>Resource Created by the Commission: Law Enforcement Postcard for     Individuals Reporting Hate</b> .....	22
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	23
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	26
Appendix A: Commission Staffing and Membership.....	28

Commission Members .....	28
Commission Staff .....	30
Appendix B: Committee Work.....	31
<b>Committee Work</b> .....	31
Addressing Hate Crimes in Schools .....	31
Community Engagement.....	31
Law Enforcement.....	32
Online and Cyberbullying .....	32
Restorative Justice.....	32
Appendix C: Lessons Learned .....	33
<b>Creating Operating Guidelines</b> .....	33
<b>Further Formalizing Forum Planning</b> .....	33
<b>Understanding Event Timing</b> .....	34
<b>Modifying the Commissioner Application Process</b> .....	35
Appendix D: Updated Application Questions.....	36
Appendix E: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2023.....	40
Appendix F: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2024 .....	42
Appendix G: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2025 Through the End of October .....	45
Appendix H: Statistics Comparing Reports of Hate Made to OAG from April 2023 to October 2025 .....	47
Appendix I: Law Enforcement Handout for Individuals Reporting Incidents of Hate.....	49

# A Message from the Chair

Dear Marylanders:

I am pleased to transmit the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention's second annual report, which contains critical recommendations to strengthen Maryland's response to the persistent rise in hate crimes across our State. This report is submitted pursuant to § 6-801 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and covers the Commission's work and findings for the period from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

The report contains the Commission's legislative and policy recommendations developed through the collaborative work of our five standing committees: Addressing Hate in Schools, Community Engagement, Law Enforcement, Online and Cyberbullying, and Restorative Justice. These recommendations identify specific legislative proposals that require action by the General Assembly, as well as administrative recommendations for state agencies.

This work directly supports my highest priority as Attorney General: keeping Marylanders safe. Every person in Maryland deserves to feel safe in their home, neighborhood, workplace, and place of worship, no matter where they live, who they are, or who they love. The Commission advances this goal by developing strategies to prevent and respond to hate crimes and by evaluating relevant State laws and policies.

The General Assembly established this permanent mechanism to address hate crimes when it created the Commission in 2023. Building on that foundation, the General Assembly restructured the Commission's membership in 2024 to enhance representation of communities most targeted by hate crimes and to strengthen the Commission's capacity to fulfill its mission. This restructuring has enabled the Commission to provide Maryland with more comprehensive and sustained attention to hate crime prevention and response.

The Commission's primary recommendations focus on clarifying and defining the terms in existing hate crime laws. This focus addresses a critical gap: the lack of clarity in current law makes it difficult to assess the true scope of hate incidents and harder for law enforcement to accurately track how often Maryland residents experience hate-motivated crimes. Clearer statutory definitions will help both law enforcement officers and community members better understand what incidents should be reported when someone is targeted by hate.

The Commission has also focused on developing practical tools to help Maryland residents understand and address hate. During the reporting period, we created a resource explaining what happens when someone submits a hate crime report. This resource makes it easier to recognize and report hate incidents across our State, directly supporting our legislative recommendations with practical assistance for affected communities.

The data demonstrates the urgency of this work. Hate crimes have increased sharply nationwide in recent years, and Maryland has experienced this troubling trend. In 2023, reports to local law enforcement more than doubled compared to 2022. Although 2024 shows a modest decrease from 2023, reported incidents remain substantially higher than pre-2023 levels and likely undercount the actual incidence, as many victims do not report to law enforcement. This persistent elevation underscores both the importance of the Commission's recommendations and the urgent need for legislative action.

I commend the Commission members for their dedication and hard work during this reporting period. The recommendations contained in this report represent significant progress as we respond to rising hate crimes across our State. I also want to recognize every Maryland resident who has shared concerns and ideas with the Commissioners by attending forums or participating in committee meetings. This engagement with the Commission's work is essential – together with our Commissioners, these individuals are doing difficult but vital work to make our communities safer for everyone.

The recommendations in this report deserve careful consideration and prompt action. The Commission and I look forward to working closely with the General Assembly to advance these proposals during the 2026 legislative session, and we are available to provide briefings, testimony, or technical assistance as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony G. Brown  
Attorney General  
Chair, Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention

# Executive Summary

The Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention submits this second annual report documenting significant progress in developing comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to hate activity across Maryland.

## Commission Accomplishments

**Commissioners Confirmed by Senate** in February and March 2025 as fourteen Commissioners successfully completed Maryland Senate confirmation. This marked the first time Maryland Senators reviewed and confirmed commissioners specifically appointed to represent communities most targeted by hate crimes.

**Legislative Advocacy** was undertaken by Commissioner in support of House Bill 1452, which incorporated both recommendations from our 2024 annual report. Despite broad stakeholder support, the bill did not advance due to late introduction and lack of Senate sponsorship. The Commission remains committed to these critical statutory reforms and will support reintroduction in the 2026 session with earlier timing and bicameral sponsorship.

**Completed Federal Grant Activities** following the Maryland Office of the Attorney General (OAG) receiving a four-year, \$833,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. The grant concluded in September 2025. The OAG achieved numerous deliverables:

- Launched multilingual online reporting portal ([nohomeforhate.md.gov](http://nohomeforhate.md.gov))
- Conducted seven regional forums across Maryland (2023-2025)
- Developed comprehensive law enforcement training platform
- Enhanced community partnerships statewide

## Community Engagement Expanded

- **77 Marylanders** contacted the OAG through the hate crimes hotline from April 2023 through December 2023
- **260 Marylanders** contacted the OAG through the hate crimes hotline and online portal in 2024
- **221 Marylanders** contacted OAG in 2025 as of October 31
  - The targeting of multiple protected classes in individual incidents demonstrates the complexity of contemporary hate activity. In 2025, there were 147 motivations underlying 117 reports, with many victims targeted based on multiple aspects of their identity.
  - Race-based hate remains most frequently reported category, followed by religion and sexual orientation
- **Two regional forums** held in 2025 (Anne Arundel County, Lower Shore)
- **Five standing committees** met regularly to advance policy development

**The Underreporting Challenge:** These figures represent only individuals who contacted OAG directly. The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center 2024 annual report shows significantly more reports of hate. However, even those numbers substantially undercount actual hate activity.

**Practical Resources Created** by the Commission. The Commission developed a law enforcement postcard explaining the difference between hate crimes and hate bias incidents, providing victims with clear information about what happens after they report and connecting them to support resources beyond the criminal justice system.

## Critical Policy Recommendations

The Commission advances three priority recommendations requiring legislative and executive action:

### 1. Define "Hate Bias Incident" (RENEWED FROM 2024)

Maryland law requires law enforcement to collect information about "hate bias incidents" but provides no definition of what constitutes such a. This ambiguity undermines data collection, confuses law enforcement agencies, and leaves victims uncertain about what should be reported.

**Proposed Solution:** Amend Maryland Public Safety Code § 2-307 to provide a clear statutory definition with concrete examples.

**Expected Impact:** Improved data accuracy, enhanced law enforcement response, increased victim reporting, better resource allocation based on actual hate activity patterns.

### 2. Update Definition of "Sexual Orientation" (RENEWED FROM 2024)

Maryland's current definition—limited to "male or female homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality"—no longer reflects contemporary understanding of sexual orientation's diversity. This outdated language creates protection gaps and does not evolve with society's understanding of sexual orientation.

**Proposed Solution:** Amend Maryland Criminal Law Code §10-301(d) to better reflect the contemporary understanding of sexual orientation.

**Expected Impact:** Comprehensive protection for all Marylanders regardless of sexual orientation, ensure Maryland law remains relevant as understanding evolves, clearer guidance for law enforcement and prosecutors.

### 3. Address Artificial Intelligence in Hate Crime Context (NEW)

Generative AI enables sophisticated hate activity at an unprecedented scale, including deepfake impersonation (as demonstrated in the 2024 Baltimore

County school incident), automated hate content generation, and synthetic harassment campaigns. Maryland's hate crimes statutes predate this technology and may not adequately address AI-facilitated hate.

**Proposed Action:** As the General Assembly considers regulating AI, it should consider how AI has been used for hate activity and amend existing hate crimes laws to explicitly penalize this conduct where possible.

## Looking Ahead: 2026 Priorities

### Policy and Resource Development

- Addressing Hate in Schools Committee: Developing recommendations about peer-to-peer interventions
- Community Engagement Committee: Complete county and statewide resource tree for victims of hate
- Law Enforcement Committee: Finalize recommendations on preventing office involvement with extremist organizations
- Online and Cyberbullying Committee: Assess digital literacy curriculums and release resource on addressing online hate
- Restorative Justice Committee: Develop community prevention and response toolkit
- Reporting Hate Bias Incidents Work Group: Finalize recommendations for non-law enforcement reporting mechanisms

### Training and Outreach

- Secure Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission approval for statewide law enforcement training platform rollout
- Conduct additional regional forum on Upper Eastern Shore
- Distribute law enforcement postcard statewide

## The Path Forward

MCAC has shown hate activity in Maryland remains elevated compared to pre-2023 levels. This persistent elevation demands sustained, comprehensive response. The Commission's second year demonstrates institutional maturity, productive partnerships, and evidence-based policy development.

Our three priority recommendations address fundamental gaps in Maryland's current legal framework. Enacting these reforms will provide law enforcement with clearer guidance, offer victims better protection, and position Maryland as a national leader in adapting hate crimes law to contemporary challenges including emerging technology.

The Commission respectfully requests the General Assembly's prompt consideration of these recommendations during the 2026 legislative session. We stand ready to provide briefings, testimony, and technical assistance to advance these critical reforms.

## Background

As detailed in our 2024 annual report, the Commission's establishment culminated years of Maryland Office of the Attorney General (OAG) efforts to combat hate, including creation of the Hate Crimes Hotline (2016), establishment of the Hate Crimes Task Force (2019), issuance of reporting guidance (2020), and securing federal grant funding (2021).

The General Assembly codified the Task Force as the permanent Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention in 2023 (HB1066), then restructured membership in 2024 (HB0763) to enhance representation of communities most targeted by hate crimes. This restructuring required Senate confirmation for fifteen commissioners which was accomplished in early 2025.

The Commission has now been able to operate at full capacity for a year with only one commissioner serving in an acting capacity following the Maryland Senate confirming commissioners. Our five standing committees (Addressing Hate in Schools, Community Engagement, Law Enforcement, Online/Cyberbullying, Restorative Justice) meet monthly.

For complete Commission history, see our 2024 annual report available at [nohomeforhate.md.gov](http://nohomeforhate.md.gov).



## Commission Work

The Commission accomplished the following tasks during its first year:

- Commissioners Confirmed by the Maryland Senate
- Appointed and Re-appointed commissioners to fill open seats
- Reporting Hate Bias Incidents Working Group Established
- Advocated in support of House Bill 1452
- Conducted 3 Commission meetings

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<sup>1</sup> This picture is from the Commission meeting on September 17, 2024.

- Helped to advance Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Activities
  - Maintained online reporting and resource portal
  - Participated in Regional Hate Bias Reporting Forums
  - Development of Maryland State Police Portal

## Commissioners Confirmed by the Maryland Senate

Following the passage of House Bill 763 (HB0763) in 2024, fifteen of the twenty-five commissioners were required to be confirmed by the Maryland Senate. The fifteen that must be confirmed are individuals who represent or advocate on behalf of a protected class. The Commission presented fourteen people to the Senate for confirmation as there was one empty seat at the time of confirmation.

Commissioners were appointed in the summer and fall of 2024. However, the commissioners serving to represent or advocate on behalf of a protected class served in an acting capacity until they could appear before the Senate. This allowed for the Commission's vital work to continue before all commissioners were fully confirmed by the Senate's Executive Nominations Committee.

In February and March of 2025, fourteen Commissioners were successfully confirmed by the Maryland Senate, a historic milestone marking the first time the Senate reviewed and confirmed commissioners specifically appointed to represent communities most targeted by hate crimes.

### Commission Leadership:

- **Chair:** Anthony G. Brown, Maryland Attorney General
- **Chair Designee:** Zenita Wickham Hurley, Deputy Attorney General

### Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs:

- **Addressing Hate in Schools:** Kate Bryan, Domonique Flowers
- **Community Engagement:** Adileh Sharieff
- **Law Enforcement:** Cleveland L. Horton II, Carmen Jackson
- **Online/Cyberbullying:** Carissa Mattern
- **Restorative Justice:** Sylvia Royster, Ronnie Taylor

Commissioners Carissa Mattern, Sylvia Royster, and Ronnie Taylor serve in acting capacity pending confirmation during the 2026 Legislative Session.

For the complete roster of all 25 Commissioners with full affiliations and roles, see Appendix A. For complete membership and objectives of the Commission's committees, see Appendix B.

## **Appointed and Re-Appointed Commissioners**

As terms are staggered on the Commission, individuals must be appointed or re-appointed every year. Terms are staggered so as to not appoint all of the commissioners every year. This year, six commissioners had their terms expire.

At the beginning of August, commissioners were notified if their terms were coming to an end. Commissioners appointed on behalf of a designated agency or organization were given the chance to continue as the designee or for a new person to be recommended as a commissioner. Some commissioners who were not from a designated organization decided to return to the Commission. This left two open seats, one for a person who advocates on behalf of or is a member of a protected class and one for a member of the general public.

Given that a seat or two is likely to become available every year at a minimum, the OAG opted to post a standard interest form on the No Home for Hate portal.<sup>2</sup> The interest form includes all of the original questions from the first round of applications plus some additional questions that had come up during the process of the first appointments in 2024. In addition, applicants must submit a resume. This will allow for the OAG to receive applications year-round as people become interested and follow up with candidates as commissioner positions become available.

Review of the applicants started as each were received. Appointments were made in winter of 2025. All commissioners requiring confirmation will be submitted to the Maryland Senate for consideration when the 2026 legislative begins.

## **Reporting Hate Bias Incidents Work Group Established**

As the Commission continued its work, Commissioners realized that there was a critical need to address the broad issue of assessing the best way for the State to take reports of hate bias incidents. Given how the reporting of hate bias incidents is such a broad task and as numerous commissioners across the different committees wished to take part, a temporary work group was formed to assess what organization or agency would be the best suited to take reports of hate bias incidents.

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<sup>2</sup> See here:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=aS8vZtduuUyYS38EGbmpnCqF1xwbFfpDo7utWEDQkC5URUxQOU9PWDRBMjZRU0kyR00xUDRFUTQwTi4u&route=shorturl>

Under current law, for a report of hate to be officially documented in Maryland, only law enforcement and fire marshals are able to take reports of hate bias incidents and hate crimes.<sup>3</sup> A report of hate made anywhere else does not count as an official report. This current system creates a few issues.

First, law enforcement are not generally used to responding to non-criminal behavior. Hate bias incidents, by definition, do not reach the level of criminal activity. As such, responding to hate bias incidents is generally outside of their training even though it is required by law. Additionally, law enforcement is not accustomed to offering resources for non-criminal activity.

Second, many communities do not wish to reach out to law enforcement for non-criminal acts. This results in low reporting of hate bias incidents. As such, the state of Maryland does not have proper data to ensure that we are putting resources where they need to be to address hate. We are also likely missing restorative opportunities to address hate before it reaches the level of criminal activity.

For the above reasons, the Commission created a work group to take on the task of assessing where else hate bias incidents could possibly be reported. The work group, chaired by Zenita Wickham Hurley, crafted a proposal to address this issue.

During two virtual meetings, potential organizations were identified to take reports of hate bias incidents. One was the public schools, and the other was 211 or 988. 211 is an encouraging option because it is already set up in some way to handle reports of hate activity.<sup>4</sup> These require additional research into what such a system would look like, including what contracts, training, and funding would be needed for that kind of training. The OAG is conducting this research to inform the work group's efforts.

This workgroup will continue to meet on an as needed basis in 2026 to finish its goal of identifying additional, non-law enforcement organizations to take reports of hate bias incidents.

## **Advocated for House Bill 1452**

During the 2025 legislative session, Delegate Joe Vogel sponsored House Bill 1452. This bill contained both of the recommendations from the Commission's 2024 annual report. HB1452 would have updated the definition of sexual orientation and clarified the definition of hate bias incidents in Maryland's hate crimes statutes.

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<sup>3</sup> MD Public Safety Code § 2-307 (b).

<sup>4</sup> <https://211md.org/stophate/>

Originally, the bill was supposed to be heard on March 6, 2025. However, all hearings were canceled that day and the bill was rescheduled for hearing on March 11<sup>th</sup> in front of the Maryland House's Judiciary Committee. Alongside Delegate Vogel, four people testified on the bill. Cleveland Horton from MCCR, Jennifer Frederick from the OAG, and Ronnie Taylor from FreeState Justice offered favorable testimony. Colonel Orlando Lilly, Superintendent of Natural Resources Police, gave informational testimony. Additionally, numerous individuals and organizations submitted written testimony in support of the bill.

Unfortunately, despite broad support for HB 1452, it did not pass. We attribute this failure to the bill's late introduction late and late hearing date, along with lack of Senate sponsor, which did not allow for timely discussion before crossover (the deadline for bills to cross over to the other chamber).

Nonetheless, because the bill addresses issues important to combatting hate crime activity and is supported not only from commissioners but also from a number of community members, the Commission supports reintroducing it in the upcoming legislative session.

## **Federal Grant Activities**

As mentioned above, in November of 2021, the OAG launched a 3-year effort, supported by a U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance grant of more than \$800,000 to combat increased hate crime activity in Maryland. Under the grant, the OAG sought to enhance community-based partnerships through the AG Hate Crimes Task Force (now codified as the Commission), provide law enforcement training on hate crime investigation and prosecution, develop a web portal for hate bias incident/hate crime resources and reporting, and conduct regional hate bias forums.

In 2023 and 2024, the Commission supported the OAG in fulfilling the objectives of this grant. Building upon Commissioners' expertise and existing community partnerships, the grant created additional opportunities to connect law enforcement and community organizations with local community members to talk about hate activity. These 2-day forums also include a day focused on training law enforcement on hate crime trends and investigative best practices. To ensure that all planned grant activities will be completed, the OAG applied for and was granted an extension to use the funding for a fourth year, terminating in September of 2025.

### **Maintenance of Online Reporting and Resource Portal**

The creation of an online reporting form and resource portal is one of the deliverables funded by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice

Assistance grant. Development of the portal started during the summer of 2023 with the support of the Maryland Department of Information Technology.

An important goal of the portal is to provide resources to Marylanders on combatting hate activity and stay engaged in the hate crime work of the OAG and the Commission. Thus, the portal includes pages describing the Commission's work, an events calendar, definitions of a hate crime and hate bias incident, resources for victims of hate activity, links to the State's hate activity reports, and a history of OAG activity in addressing hate activity.

The portal is also home to the online reporting form for victims and witnesses of hate activity. The reporting form is a supplemental reporting tool and will not always be sent to law enforcement for investigation and prosecution. The information provided in the form will be used for: tracking hate crimes and hate bias incidents; identifying trends in hate crimes and hate bias incidents; and informing the work of the OAG and the Commission to develop recommendations for improving Maryland's response to hate crimes and hate bias incidents.

Critically, the form is not a replacement for contacting the local law enforcement.

Commissioners assisted OAG in developing the portal and reporting form by reviewing and providing feedback to the form's language and functionality. The reporting form was then manually translated to make it available in the eleven most commonly spoken languages in Maryland based on US Census data. The portal itself can be translated to additional languages using Google Translate.

The portal went live on June 4, 2024, and can be found at [nohomeforhate.md.gov](https://nohomeforhate.md.gov).

### **Hate Crime Hotline and Portal Reports**

During 2024, the OAG communicated with 260 individuals, 60 of whom contacted the office through the reporting form on the portal. From January to October 2025, the OAG was in touch with 221 individuals, 46 of whom contacted the office the online portal.

Importantly, not all of these calls were about hate incidents. Some callers needed a referral to other units like the Consumer Protection

Division or the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services<sup>5</sup> and were located outside of Maryland.<sup>6</sup>

Following enhancement of the data received from reports made to the OAG, reports for 2024 and 2025 are listed below by the protected class that was targeted. Because individuals reporting to OAG are not required to disclose specific information, data from the hate crimes portal and hotline is not representative of all hate crime activity reported to OAG.

For a comprehensive understanding of broad trends of hate in Maryland, the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center releases annual reports tracking counties of origin. It is important to note that hate incidents remain vastly underreported even in MCAC data. The report for 2024 was released on October 1, 2025.<sup>7</sup>

For reports where a protected class could be identified in 2024, the data recognizes 173 motivations across 135 total incidents. Reports were received from the following protected classes:

- Race/Color: 70
- National Origin: 19
- Gender/Gender Identity: 24
- Religion: 24
- Sexual Orientation: 19
- Disability: 14
- Homelessness: 3

For reports where a protected class could be identified from January 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025, the data recognizes 147 motivations across 117 total incidents. Reports were received from the following protected classes:

- Race/Color: 53
- National Origin: 23
- Gender/Gender Identity: 20
- Religion: 23
- Sexual Orientation: 10
- Disability: 16
- Homelessness: 2

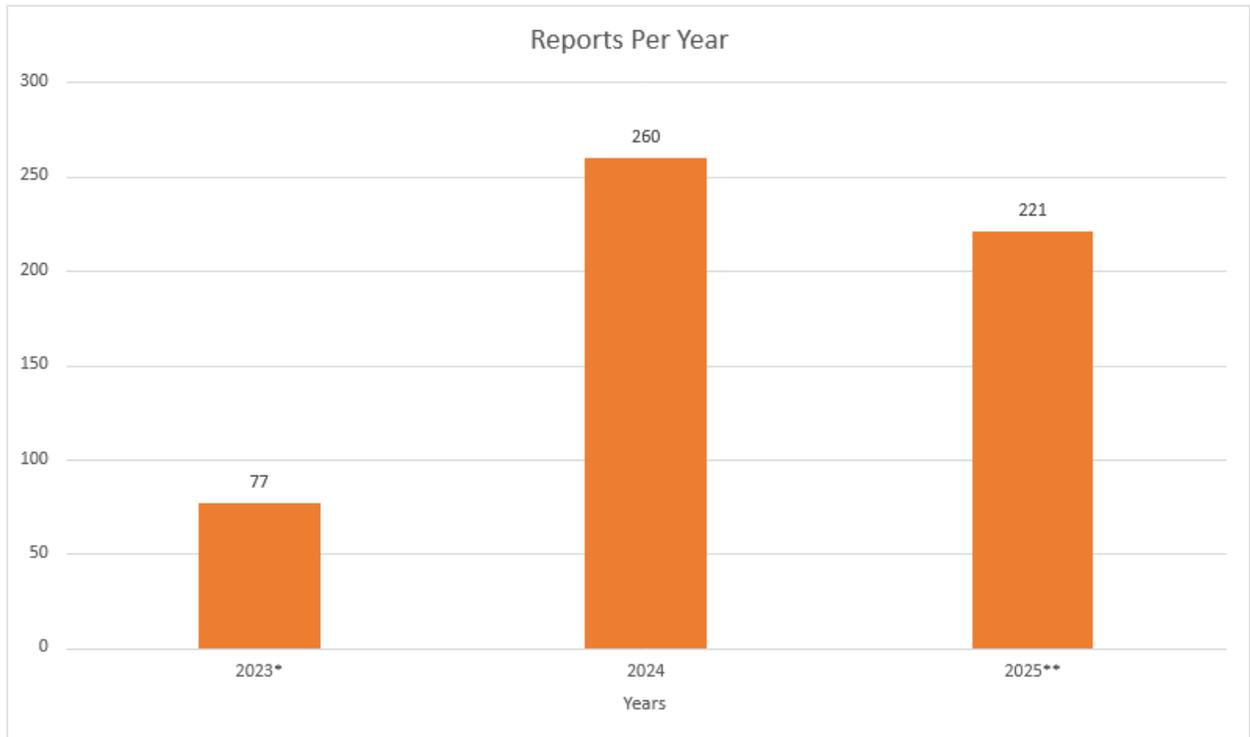
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<sup>5</sup> 26 in 2024 and 30 in 2025.

<sup>6</sup> 8 in 2024 and 15 in 2025.

<sup>7</sup> <https://mcac.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2024-Hate-Bias-Report.pdf>

Both 2024 and 2025 reflect that multiple protected classes are often targeted simultaneously, reflecting the complex nature of contemporary hate activity.



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Comparing reports received between January 1 through October 31, 2024, to the same period in 2025, there has been a 117% increase in reporting. This spike follows increased outreach and education around reporting hate to the OAG and mirrors the large spike in the MCAC annual report between 2022 and 2023. This indicates a sustained elevation of hate activity across Maryland.

This data only gives a small snapshot of hate in Maryland. Actual hate activity in Maryland is substantially higher than documented by the OAG and the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) reports.

Complete data on the reports received by the OAG for 2023, 2024, and 2025 is available in Appendixes E, F, and G. A brief comparison of this data is available in Appendix H.

<sup>8</sup> \*2023 only reflects late April through December.

\*\* 2025 represents through October 31, 2025. 2025 is currently on track to have more reports made to the OAG than were made in 2024.

## Hate Bias Reporting Forums

As part of the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance grant, OAG and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights have partnered to conduct Hate Bias Reporting Forums across the state. Each forum usually lasts two days and is focused on a specific region. The forums aim to educate law enforcement and the general public about hate crime and hate bias incident activity in the local region. They also serve as an opportunity to engage communities about their experiences and needs around combatting hate activity.

Day One of these forums is dedicated to training law enforcement. The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center leads the outreach to local law enforcement agencies to ensure maximum participation. The day includes panels from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC), and local officials to provide information and answer questions about best practices in investigating hate crimes and trends in hate activity in their communities.

Day Two is dedicated to the general public and is advertised by MCCR, the OAG, and local partners to encourage attendance. It consists of some of the same presentations on data from MCAC while also having more panels from local schools, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders on hate crime trends and strategies for addressing hate activity. Day Two gives OAG, MCCR, and local law enforcement a chance to hear from the public about their experiences and needs and to brainstorm solutions for improving reporting and preventing and responding to hate activity.

Commissioners have played an important role in these forums. Both days have featured presentations from Commissioners as well as their participation on a variety of panels. These have included sharing current statistics on hate incidents and presenting on different forms of extremism and recognizing extremist symbolism. Commissioners have also been involved behind the scenes in the planning process, helping to find locations, conduct outreach, and provide support during the forums.

Three forums were held in 2025:

- March 28 - 29 – Anne Arundel County at Anne Arundel Community College



- October 11 – Lower Eastern Shore at WorWic Community College<sup>9</sup>

Hosting seven forums in total from 2023 through 2025, the OAG and MCCR have made substantial progress in our work to reach every county in Maryland to begin the discussion of reporting and addressing hate. Next year, the OAG and MCCR will travel to the Upper and Mid-Eastern Shore to ensure there are also conversations with law enforcement and community members across the state. These forums have provided valuable insight for the Commission's work, influencing its recommendations, additional outreach, partnerships, and events.

## **Development of Law Enforcement Training Platform**

Under the DOJ grant, the OAG designated the Maryland State Police as a subgrantee to create a training platform for local law enforcement. This training platform would be used by all Maryland law enforcement to be trained on how to respond to hate crimes and hate bias incidents.

The vendor, X is Possible, was announced in April 2025 and work on the platform began in May. After meeting with the vendor, a schedule was set to complete the development of the portal before the end of the grant on September 30, 2025.

During May and June, the vendor was able to meet with community groups represented on the Commission, state agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, and college campus safety for input on the training. These meetings gave a diverse perspective on learning outcomes from not only law enforcement but also members of the general public and legal professionals, creating a more well-rounded training. These conversations helped inform the content of the training, including the creation of supplemental resources to address subject areas like trauma informed care, schools, online hate, and information for prosecutorial staff.

In July, the training team began the process of script development with review by the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center and the OAG. By September, the vendor also began to create supplemental materials based on the feedback they had received during May and June.

Development of the portal was finished at the end of September with small tweaks made during the month of October as the training platform entered its maintenance period with the vendor. The next steps will require receiving approval from the Maryland Police and Correctional

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<sup>9</sup> This forum was only the public day. Due to scheduling issues, the first day was cancelled. The OAG and MCCR will be returning to the Lower Eastern Shore in the future to conduct a law enforcement focused day.

Training Commission to roll out the training platform to all law enforcement across the state.

## The Commission's Year in Review: 2025

### January 2025

Commissioners begin first full year of work following reconstitution

### February-March 2025

14 Commissioners appear before and are confirmed by the Maryland Senate, allowing for all Commissioners to work in their full capacity

### March 11, 2025

Commissioners Testify on HB1452 before House Judiciary Committee  
Commission's first direct legislative effort

### March 28-29, 2025

**Regional Forum**  
Anne Arundel County at Anne Arundel Community College

### May - September 2025

**Law Enforce Training Portal Development**  
Partnership with Maryland State Police and Vendor, X is Possible  
Community input sessions conducted

### September 30, 2025

**Federal Grant Completed**  
\$800K+ BJA grant concluded Numerous deliverables achieved

### October 11, 2025

**Regional Forum**  
Lower Eastern Shore at WorWic Community College

### November - December 2025

**Annual Report Preparation**  
Documentation of Accomplishments  
Identifying 2026 Priorities  
Finalizing Recommendations

## Commission Recommendations

With their first full year behind them, Commissioners were able to meet regularly to focus on developing recommendations for improving the State's response to hate activity. During this time, Commissioners identified several new recommendations to enhance the State's hate crimes laws as well as creating resources to assist individuals in better understanding and addressing hate. Additionally, the Commission opted to continue to support its original recommendations from its first annual report to strengthen and clarify Maryland's hate crimes laws.

### **Clarify the Hate Crimes Statute and Defining Hate Bias Incidents: Maryland Code, Public Safety § 2-307**

The Commission's first and most critical recommendation is to clearly define a hate bias incident. Currently, law enforcement agencies in Maryland are required to collect information about hate bias incidents under Maryland Code, Public Safety § 2-307. However, the statute is silent as to what constitutes a hate bias incident, which has led to confusion among both law enforcement agencies and the general public.

In developing a definition of hate bias incident, the Commission looked to other state's definitions. Oregon had the most developed statute under Oregon Revised Statutes 339.347 which included discussions of how hate bias incidents are hostile but do not rise to the level of a prosecutable offense. In an effort to use plainer language, the Commission also looked to the New Jersey Bias-Related Act which used clearer language.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the Commission looked to the California Department of Justice which included examples for better explanation.<sup>11</sup> In considering these three models, as well as several other State and federal definitions, Commissioners were able to develop consensus around the following definition of hate bias incidents:

"A hate bias incident is an act of hostility or aggression that: (1) is directed at a person, group of persons, private property, or public property; (2) is motivated in whole or in substantial part by another person's or group's actual or perceived protected class as listed in (2-307(b)(1)); and (3) does not constitute a crime under State or federal law.

A hate bias incident includes but is not limited to: slurs; name-calling; insults; displaying hate material on private property; posting hate material that does not result in property damage; electronic and online

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<sup>10</sup> <https://nj.gov/oag/dcj/obccr/pdfs/biasagree.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://oag.ca.gov/hatecrimes>

distributions of hate material; and distribution of materials with hate messages in a public place.”

This addition would provide clarity to law enforcement when addressing hate bias incidents and ensure officers know when reports are required to be taken. The addition also provides examples to ensure better understanding of hate bias incidents.

### **Update the Definition of Sexual Orientation: Maryland Criminal Law Code § 10-301**

Maryland Criminal Law Code §10-301 sets forth the definitions for the State’s hate crimes statutes. While many of the definitions have held up well since original passage, society’s understanding of sexual orientation has evolved significantly. Currently, § 10-301(d) defines sexual orientation as meaning “the identification of an individual as to male or female homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.”

This definition does not encapsulate the present-day understanding of how diversely people experience sexual orientation beyond the three identities recognized here. As a result, the Commission proposes new language to replace the definition in § 10-301(d).

In developing the recommended new language, the Commission looked to other state definitions. In the research of states leading the way on this matter, Colorado uses a broader definition of sexual orientation that will not be subject to how terms are used in the future. By enacting a definition in Colorado Revised Statutes 24-34-301 that recognized the actual definition of sexual orientation rather than only listing a limited number of identities, Colorado provided the Commission a framework to create a similar definition for Maryland that can continue to evolve in the future. Additionally, advocacy organizations, nonprofits, and professional associations also take a similar route in defining sexual orientation such as the Human Rights Campaign<sup>12</sup>, Planned Parenthood<sup>13</sup>, and the American Psychological Association.<sup>14</sup> New York City also uses a similar definition.<sup>15</sup>

The new proposed language is as follows:

“Sexual orientation means an individual’s identity or another’s perception thereof, in relation to the genders to which the individual is sexually or emotionally attracted to. This includes but is not limited to people who are heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual. Sexual

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation/sexual-orientation>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq>

<sup>15</sup> NYC Admin. Code § 8-102

orientation is distinct from gender identity as defined under § 20-101(e).”

This change would provide a new definition that would be able to grow with society’s understanding of sexual orientation while also providing additional examples for people to look to in better understanding the term.

## **Addressing How Generative Artificial Intelligence has been Used to Perpetuate Hate in New Legislation**

The Commission recognizes that artificial intelligence represents one of the most significant technological advances of our time, with enormous potential to benefit Maryland's economy, improve government services, enhance education, advance medical research, and solve complex societal challenges. Maryland is home to leading AI researchers, innovative technology companies, and federal agencies at the forefront of AI development. The Commission strongly supports continued AI innovation and Maryland's leadership role in this transformative field.

AI is a tool—neutral in itself—that can be used for tremendous good or, unfortunately, for harm. The Commission's concern is not with AI technology itself, but with ensuring that Maryland's laws keep pace with how bad actors might misuse this powerful tool to perpetuate hate.

### **How AI Has Been Misused to Perpetuate Hate**

Recent incidents demonstrate that while AI offers enormous benefits, it can also be misused in ways that existing hate crimes statutes may not adequately address:

**The Baltimore County Incident (2024):** A school employee used AI to create fake audio of the school's principal making racist and anti-Semitic statements.<sup>16</sup> This incident harmed the principal's reputation, damaged community trust, diverted law enforcement resources, and inflamed tensions—yet existing impersonation and harassment statutes may not fully address AI-generated deepfakes.

**AI-Generated Hate Content:** Some AI systems have generated hateful rhetoric when improperly configured or deliberately misused. For example, Grok, the AI system on X (formerly Twitter), posted content supporting Hitler and Nazism earlier in 2025.<sup>17</sup> While this particular incident resulted

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/teacher-arrested-ai-generated-racist-rant-maryland-school-principal-rcna149345>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/09/nx-s1-5462609/grok-elon-musk-antisemitic-racist-content>

from inadequate safeguards rather than malicious intent, it illustrates the potential for AI systems to generate and amplify hate content at scale.

**Automated Harassment Campaigns:** Individuals have faced AI bots programmed to harass them with hateful messages,<sup>18</sup> enabling sustained harassment campaigns that would be impractical for human perpetrators to conduct manually.

**Electoral Deepfakes:** AI-generated deepfakes of political figures, such as fake content featuring former President Biden, have been used to spread disinformation and suppress voter participation.<sup>19</sup>

Spurred by these incidents and many others seen across the country, Commissioners discussed how Maryland's laws have not kept up with the rapid expansion of AI and its potential use in hate activity. Deceptive uses of AI will only become harder to recognize as the technology continues to advance. As such, the Commission urges the General Assembly to consider tools for regulating the use of AI to spread hate.

Maryland has already demonstrated it can address AI-related harms while supporting innovation. Senate Bill 360 (2025) recognized how deepfake technology could be misused for nonconsensual intimate imagery, adding AI-generated deepfakes to civil remedies for revenge porn.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission does not propose specific statutory language at this time because developing effective, balanced legislation requires extensive consultation with AI researchers and developers, technology companies, civil liberties organizations, prosecutors and law enforcement, and victim advocacy organizations. That said, the Commission is committed to working with the General Assembly and impacted stakeholders to develop thoughtful, targeted legislation to protect vulnerable communities from AI-facilitated hate while maintaining an environment that encourages AI research, development, and economic growth.

### **Resource Created by the Commission: Law Enforcement Postcard for Individuals Reporting Hate**

In addition to policy and legislative recommendations, the Commission has created a resource for Marylanders to better understand how hate can impact them and what happens when reporting hate. The Commission recommends state and local law enforcement agencies use this resource

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<sup>18</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/US/ai-chatbots-creating-hateful-online-content-researchers/story?id=125020318>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2024/12/21/nx-s1-5220301/deepfakes-memes-artificial-intelligence-elections>

<sup>20</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0360?ys=2025RS>

to help Marylanders better understand how the State responds to reports of hate activity.

A common issue individuals have mentioned when they report an incident of hate is that there is no follow up after the report. This frustration and perceived nonresponse makes them less likely to report hate activity in the future. In turn, Maryland's data becomes less accurate over time as underreporting persists and hate activity continues unchecked.

To help address this issue, the Commission created a clear and concise card that local law enforcement can give to any individual reporting hate that explains the difference between a hate crime and a hate bias incident and how law enforcement responds to both.<sup>21</sup>

The front of the card explains the difference between hate crimes and hate bias incidents as well as what happens with a report. The back of the card provides common resources for legal assistance, community organizations, and mental health and other services which people can utilize when an incident of hate occurs. By explaining what will happen with reports and offering resources for questions and additional assistance, Marylanders will gain a better understanding of what happens when an incident of hate is reported. This will help prevent the frustration that keeps people from reporting subsequent incidents of hate while also providing victims with resources to find assistance.

Similar to the Victims' Brochures and Forms that the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shares,<sup>22</sup> this postcard will assist in creating a better informed public about the complex system that controls how incidents of hate are handled in Maryland.

## Next Steps

In the coming year, Commissioners will focus on collecting data, performing research, and engaging stakeholders to develop additional policy recommendations for enhancing the State's response to hate activity. Following the reconstitution of the Commission in June of 2024, Commissioners have been using committee meetings to review the work of prior Commissioners and identify areas where additional research and consideration are warranted.

### Addressing Hate in Schools Committee

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix I for postcard.

<sup>22</sup> <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/victim-services/rights-resources/brochures-forms/>

The Addressing Hate in Schools Committee has been looking into ways to involve peer-to-peer solutions in addressing hate in schools. Students in kindergarten through twelfth grade are the focus for this research as students often are testing the boundaries of what is and is not acceptable. Unsurprisingly, hate bias incidents occur regularly in schools. By looking to programs and practices in Maryland and other jurisdictions designed to combat these non-criminal acts, the committee intends to develop recommendations about how to better involve students in combatting hate in their schools and communities.

### **Community Engagement Committee**

The Community Engagement Committee has begun the process of creating a comprehensive resource tree to assess what services exist to serve local communities when an act of hate occurs. Resources include where to report, local government resources, legal assistance, funds for victims, and community and nonprofit support. Some are focused on specific protected classes while others are more general. This county-searchable resource will enhance current resource referral efforts for victims and impacted communities and also help identify where victim services are currently lacking — informing future recommendations.

Additionally, the Community Engagement Committee is tasked with conducting outreach on the Commission’s recommendations. This will be particularly vital in sharing resources the Commission has created so that Marylanders are aware they exist and can be useful in helping individuals navigate incidents of hate.

### **Law Enforcement Committee**

The Law Enforcement Committee will spend the next year assessing strategies for prohibiting law enforcement from being involved with extremist organizations that undermine the State’s ability to effectively combat hate. Several such bills have been proposed in the past but have failed, and the committee has become interested in identifying strategies for accomplishing this goal that do not run afoul of constitutional protections of free speech.

### **Online Cyberbullying Committee**

The Online/Cyberbullying Committee is looking into how to educate students on combatting hate online. By age 2, 40% of children have their own tablets, a number that only grows as children age.<sup>23</sup> As such, the committee wants to ensure that children receive a full education on how

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.common-sense-media.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2025-common-sense-census-web-2.pdf>

to recognize hate and misinformation online. During the next year, finding a recommendation for a curriculum about addressing and reporting online hate will be a main goal of the committee.

Additionally, the committee is crafting a handout to help individuals understand how to moderate their online experience to be used as a resource anywhere people are learning about using the internet, such as schools and public libraries. Hate on the internet and in online spaces has evolved rapidly with technology, particularly on social media. While a person cannot stop others from being hateful on social media, there are ways to understand and control what you see online. This will be released in the coming year with additional guidance from the OAG on strategies for recognizing common scenarios that occur online, understanding the law around online hate, and addressing other common questions about online hate and cyberbullying.

### **Restorative Justice Committee**

The Restorative Justice Committee is developing a toolkit for communities to assess the state of hate locally and work to address incidents as they arise. This toolkit is meant to be used by anyone working with the local community, whether that is a nonprofit or local government. The toolkit will include how to assess the occurrence and severity of local hate activity, how to encourage reporting, how to identify partners, how to plan events, and how to assist a community in healing after an incident occurs.

### **Reporting Hate Bias Incidents Work Group**

The working group will continue to assess the best way for Maryland to gather reports on hate bias incidents. Progress has been made in identifying who can take these reports as 211 and Maryland Public Schools both are potential candidates to take reports. However, these recommendations will need further research into their implementation, including the necessity and scope of new training protocols, ensuring compatibility with current reporting structures, developing educational plan, and assessing related costs, to ensure that Marylanders receive the resources they need when an incident of hate occurs.

To assist with the committees' research efforts, the OAG will be identifying guest speakers that can inform each of the committees' work. By bringing Commissioners together with other experts and practitioners in their respective fields, Commissioners will be able to work with and learn from others to recommend policies that will work best for Maryland.

Beyond research, the committees have also identified the need for coordination and collaboration to fully accomplish their respective missions. Many of the committees have substantial overlap in their missions when developing recommendations to address hate. As the committees continue to meet regularly, we will explore hosting several joint committee meetings to ensure work is not needlessly duplicated and allow committees to share ideas.

Lastly, the Commission will continue to explore ways to improve the data received from the hate crimes hotline, submission portal, and stophate email. Progress was made this year in aggregating the details of reports, including the impacted protected classes as well as the date of submission by month. Next year, the focus will be on breaking down the protected classes into their subgroups where possible. This will allow for a better understanding of who is impacted by the hate activity reported to the OAG and enhance our ability to compare that information to the official reports made to law enforcement each year.

## **Conclusion**

The Commission's three priority recommendations address fundamental gaps in Maryland's hate crimes framework that have existed for years. Each year of delay means: more victims remain uncertain whether to report; more data unreliability which hinders prevention; and more opportunities for bad actors to exploit legal ambiguities. We urge the General Assembly to act on these recommendations in the 2026 session. Maryland's communities targeted by hate cannot wait another year for clarity, protection, and justice. The Commission stands ready to provide technical assistance, draft statutory language, and testimony to advance these critical reforms.

In the meantime, consistent with its legislative mandate, the Commission will continue its work of developing strategies to respond to hate incidents in Maryland and make the State safer for all residents. In the new year, three Commissioners will go through the confirmation process with the Senate to be either reconfirmed or to become full Commissioners.

Committee meetings will continue to occur on at least a monthly basis. The public is welcome to attend these meetings, and all meeting notices will be placed on the online hate crimes portal. This provides an opportunity for community members' expertise, experiences, and opinions to inform the work of the Commission.

Discussions and recommendations developed by the committees will continue to be raised to the Commission as a whole, allowing the

Commission to continue making recommendations to the Maryland Legislature and the Maryland Department of Education as the landscape of our State continues to evolve.

# Appendix A: Commission Staffing and Membership

## Commission Members

As mandated by State law, the Commission is currently composed of 25 members representing various government agencies, non-profits, academic institutions, and individuals representing protected classes. Commissioners serve staggered terms. The Commission is required to submit its annual report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and Maryland Department of Education on or before December 1 of each year.

During 2025, the Maryland Commission on Hate Crimes Response and Prevention was made up of the following members:

- Anthony G. Brown, Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General (OAG), Commission Chair
- Allyson Abrams, Pastor, Empowerment Liberation Cathedral
- Jennifer Brown, Director of Community Engagement Department, On Our Own of Maryland
- Kate Bryan, Executive Director, Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS)
- Kirsten Gettys Downs, MEJC Director of Systemic Reform, Maryland Office of the Public Defender
- Christine Dulla, Deputy State's Attorney, Queen Anne's County State's Attorney's Office
- David Engel, Director, Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC)
- Domonique Flowers Attorney Analyst, Social Security Administration
- Ama S. Frimpong-Houser, Legal Director, CASA
- Michael Gray, Deputy Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI MD)
- Cleveland L. Horton II, Interim Director, Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR)
- Zenita Wickham Hurley, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General (OAG)
- Carmen Jackson, Volunteer with Carver Community Center, Women's Action Coalition, and the Allegany/Garrett Citizen Review Board
- Vicki Jones, President, Harford County NAACP, City of Havre de Grace City Council Member
- Rachel Lindley, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Maryland Office of the Public Defender
- Orlando Lilly, Superintendent Natural Resources Police Department, Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

- Carissa Mattern, Policy Analyst, Police Accountability Division of the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights\*
- Deborah Miller, Director of Maryland Government and Community Relations, The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC)
- Gabriel Maximilian Moreno, Chief Executive Officer, Luminus
- Katie Curran O'Malley, Executive Director, The Women's Law Center
- Sylvia Royster, Director of Educational Partnerships, College of Southern Maryland\*
- Everett Sesker, Anne Arundel County Sheriff, Maryland Sheriffs Association
- Adileh Sharieff, Social Services and Outreach Volunteer, Islamic Center of Maryland
- Joraver Singh, Member, The Sikh Coalition
- Asha Smith, Director, Anne Arundel County Office of Equity and Human Rights
- Ronnie Taylor, Community Impact Director, FreeState Justice\*
- Lanlan Xu, Chair, Howard County Asian American Pacific Islander Commission

\* These Commissioners will go before the Maryland Senate to be confirmed during the 2026 Legislative Session.

## Commission Staff

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## Appendix B: Committee Work

### Committee Work

During the first meeting of the Commission in 2023, the idea of committees was brought up to support the Commission’s work between meetings. Ultimately, the Commission established five Committees: Addressing Hate Crimes in Schools, Community Engagement, Law Enforcement, Online/Cyberbullying, and Restorative Justice.

All committees consider the following in their work: what data they need to collect and the process for collecting it; an evaluation of current best practices and current state laws; what measures can be taken to prevent hate crimes and hate bias incidents in their area of focus; and costs associated with any new policy recommendations (and if needed, a funding strategy).

Committees aim to meet once a month, often with tasks completed between meetings. Each committee has a group of Commissioners who are dedicated to keeping the work moving forward, and Commissioners are welcome to attend other committee meetings as well if they choose. All committee meetings are open to the public with a sign-up form for the general public on the OAG hate crimes resource portal.

#### Addressing Hate Crimes in Schools

The Addressing Hate Crimes in Schools Committee focuses on: recommending training for teachers to combat hate activity; identifying strategies for engaging parents and caregivers; recommending tools for students; the impact of curriculum on hate activity; addressing reporting challenges for hate crime activity in schools; and best practices and training for school resource officers.

The committee is co-chaired by Commissioners Kate Bryan and Domonique Flowers. Members include Commissioners Lanlan Xu, Vicki Jones, and Katie Curan O’Malley.

#### Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Committee focuses on: recommending community outreach/media campaigns like “see something, say something;” identifying strategies for addressing the unique needs of each protected class covered by Maryland’s laws including but not limited to homeless persons, people with disabilities, immigrant communities, racial minorities, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community; evaluating whether additional groups should be added to those protected by the State’s hate crimes laws; and recommending strategies for supporting

victims including how community organizations can assist in improving hate crime reporting.

The committee is chaired by Commissioner Adileh Sharieff. Members include Commissioners Jennifer Brown, Gabriel Moreno, Deborah Miller, and Asha Smith.

### Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement Committee focuses on recommending steps law enforcement agencies can take to improve the response to hate crime activity including by increasing diversity among officers, providing training on hate crime investigation and prosecution best practices, and designating hate crime liaisons.

The committee is co-chaired by Commissioners Cleveland Horton and Carmen Jackson. Members include Commissioners Christine Dulla, Orlando Lilly, and Joraver Singh.

### Online and Cyberbullying

The Online and Cyberbullying Committee focuses on how online gaming and social media is used to spread/encourage hate and best practices in governing these spaces.

The committee is chaired by Commissioner Carissa Mattern. Members include Commissioners Everett Sesker, Michael Gray, Rachel Lindley, and Dave Engel.

### Restorative Justice

The Restorative Justice Committee focuses on strategies for promoting healing within communities for both perpetrators and victims and identifying areas for non-law enforcement intervention.

The committee is co-chaired by Commissioners Sylvia Royster and Ronnie Taylor. Members include Commissioners Ama S. Frimpong-Houser, and Kirsten Gettys Downs.

## Appendix C: Lessons Learned

Since its inception in 2023, the Commission has learned several lessons, particularly through its engagement with the community, that will enable it to improve the execution of its work. They include:

### **Creating Operating Guidelines**

When the Commission was formed in 2023, it was a continuation of a Task Force formed to address hate. The original Task Force did not have a set of operating guidelines as it was not a formal group at the time but rather dedicated individuals that had come together to combat hate in Maryland.

As the Commission began its work, the OAG recognized the need for Operating Guidelines to steer the conduct of and communications between Commissioners. Addressing hate requires complex and difficult dialogues, often across or about our differences and identities. These guidelines were developed to ensure meetings and discussions between commissioners are grounded in mutual respect with the aims of seeking common understanding, working towards resolution, and a core focus on our shared mission to eradicate hate in the State of Maryland. They also set expectations for Commissioners as well as the standards to which they would be held. The Operating Guidelines were developed with input from Commissioners. Feedback received from Commissioners ensured that the Operating Guidelines referenced all protected classes and included a list of resources for Commissioners at the end of the document if they had questions.

### **Further Formalizing Forum Planning**

The OAG and MCCR have worked together to conduct forums across the state of Maryland since May of 2023. These forums are designed to ensure that Marylanders understand how to report incidents of hate while building connections with communities across the State with the aim of understanding challenges and barriers to reporting as well as opportunities to strengthen our efforts to respond to and prevent hate crimes and hate bias incidents. These events have identified several challenges to engaging community members on the topic of hate.

For example, it became clear early on that staff needed to create ground rules for the forums – similar to the Commission’s Operating Guidelines – to ensure conversations remain productive as difficult topics are being discussed. Recognizing the trauma and harm associated with hate crimes and hate bias incidents, as well as the emotional toll that can come from discussing them, the OAG developed these ground rules with the aim of

creating a safe space in which participants can engage with one another on complex and difficult topics while remaining focused on a shared goal of reducing hate in their communities. Creating a common understanding of what participants can expect and what is expected of participants at the forums has created a more welcoming space in which to have these difficult discussions.

The ground rules that have created this common understanding at forums are:

- Be mentally and physically present while in the room
- Bring genuine intent and assume genuine intent from fellow attendees.
- Be curious and ask clarifying questions;
- Listen to seek understanding from one another instead of only seeking to respond;
- Make room for everyone to participate and ensure that no one dominates.
- When disagreements arise, focus on tackling problems and ideas, not people.
- Remember our shared purpose: Eradicating hate in our community

### **Understanding Event Timing**

As the OAG and the Commission have planned not only meetings and forums but also participated in a number of events across the State, the timing of those events has varied significantly. The differences in when an event is held has a tremendous impact on community access: namely, who and how many people may attend. In the OAG and Commission's planning, a question of when to have an event is a common question. Through our planning efforts, we have come across a number of considerations.

When trying to include as many groups as possible, one major consideration is the timing of religious holy days and holidays. Depending on the time of day or the day of the week, religious communities may be unable to attend, so understanding the basics of their practices is important to reaching those communities.

Another consideration is the work and school day. Many people work during the week, so a weekday event during the day is more likely to draw practitioners within the field whereas a weekend may have more availability for the general public. However, a weekend or evening event will need special considerations for childcare as students are home from

school and will need specific programming for their age groups when talking about topics like hate and bias.

Finally, these events have taught us how longer events can be necessary for sharing a lot of information, but it may also draw a lower turnout. This has required us to think differently about how to streamline content while ensuring educational value and promoting engagement goals.

### **Modifying the Commissioner Application Process**

When it was originally started, the Commission did not require an application as it was created of designated organizations rather than individuals. When this changed in 2024, the OAG created an application process to appoint a new set of commissioners with the input of organizations that would remain on the Commission. Throughout the process, the OAG developed additional questions that helped us better understand the Marylanders applying for a position on the Commission. In 2024, this was a supplemental sheet that individuals had to fill out after the original application. Now, the entire application can be accessed on the same form.

Due to staggered terms, the Commission will not need to re-fill every seat annually to continue its operations. Instead, only a handful are open each year to appointment or re-appointment. To assist in this ongoing recruitment effort, OAG created a standing interest form that accepts applications year-round. This allows the appointment process to be more spread across the year rather than consolidated to a few weeks.

## Appendix D: Updated Application Questions

The application form for the Commission reads:

### **Interest Form for the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention**

\* Required

1. Name \*

2. What pronouns do you use? \*

3. Email \*

4. Phone Number \*

5. What protected class would you represent or do you advocate on behalf of? \*

Race Ancestry/National Origin Ethnicity/Color Religion Sexual Orientation  
Gender Identity Gender Disability Unhoused Individuals

6. Do you represent or advocate for the groups selected above? \*

Represent Advocate Both Represent one and Advocate for another

7. If applicable, please specify what specific group(s) you represent/advocate for within the protected class you selected.

8. If you are the member of another marginalized but not protected class under the Hate Crimes statute, please indicate which below.

Veteran Felon Elderly Other

9. What is your connection to Maryland? What city/county do you live or work in? \*

10. If you are willing to share, have you been the victim of a hate crime or bias incident?

11. What organization do you work for? What organization(s) do you volunteer with that work in this space? \*

12. What sector do you work in? \*

Nonprofit Government Legal Academia Business Other

13. How often do you interact with the community you would represent on the Commission? \*

14. Why are you interested in serving on the Commission? \*

15. What experience you have advocating for a protected class/in the hate crimes space? If you do not have experience advocating to eradicate hate, what will you bring from your experience that will be helpful in addressing hate in Maryland? \*

16. Will you be generally able to make a quarterly, in person commission meeting? \*

Yes No

17. Will you be able to generally attend virtual subcommittee meetings once a month? \*

Yes No

18. Please rank the possible subcommittees listed below from 1 to 5 starting with the one you would like to serve on most. We will do our best to accommodate your preferences.

All subcommittees will consider in their work: what data they need to collect and process of collecting it; an evaluation of current best practices and current state laws; what measures can be taken to prevent hate crimes and bias incidents in their area of focus; and costs associated with any new policy recommendations (and if needed, a funding strategy). Thus, there are not subcommittees below that address each of those individually since it will be included within other subcommittee work. \*

19. Are you interested in chairing or co-chairing a subcommittee? \*

Yes No

20. If so, which one?

21. Do you have any experience in the area of focus of the subcommittee you wish to serve on?

22. Are you willing and able to adhere to our operating guidelines?

Operating guidelines can be found here: <https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/a0ba384c8f754f44b7daf3ad6d2a14a4/data> \*

Yes No

23. Please share links to your publicly accessible social media accounts with us. These could include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tiktok, etc. \*

24. Have you ever been cited for a breach of ethics for unprofessional conduct, or been named in a complaint to any court, administrative agency,

regulatory body, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

25. Have you ever been convicted of or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or forfeited collateral for any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

26. Are you currently under charges for any violation of law? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

27. Do you expect any group or individual to voice concern about your possible appointment? If yes, please provide additional information on what group and why. \*

28. In last 5 years, have you submitted any oral or written views to any governmental authority, whether executive or legislative, or to the news media on any particularly controversial issue other than in an official governmental capacity? If yes, please provide additional information on what you wrote on and what your stance was. \*

29. Presently or in last 5 years, have you been a party of interest in any administrative agency proceeding or civil litigation, including any action regarding a professional license? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

30. Have criminal charge(s) been filed against any firm or organization during your affiliation with it? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

31. Has a complaint of discrimination based on race, color, religion or creed, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, genetic information, familial status or source of income ever been filed in any administrative agency or court against you or against any firm or organization during your affiliation with it? If yes, please provide additional information on what happened. \*

32. Is there anything in personal or professional life that would cause controversy during a public review of your candidacy or service as a commission appointee? If yes, please provide additional information on what could cause controversy. \*

33. Are you currently serving or have you served on other boards and commissions in the last 5 years? If so, which one(s)? \*

34. Do you have any business relationship, dealing or financial transaction which you have had during the last five years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, which you believe may constitute an appearance of impropriety or could result in a potential conflict of interest in the commission member position? If yes, please list these potential conflicts of interest. \*

35. Please list each organization, club, association, or group that you are, or have been a member of, in the past five years. Please include a link to website and their mission statement. \*

36. Please list, to the best of your knowledge:

1. All articles, books, or other publications in which you were an author, co-author, editor, or publisher

2. All letters to the editor, blog posts, newsletter articles or other publications within the last five years

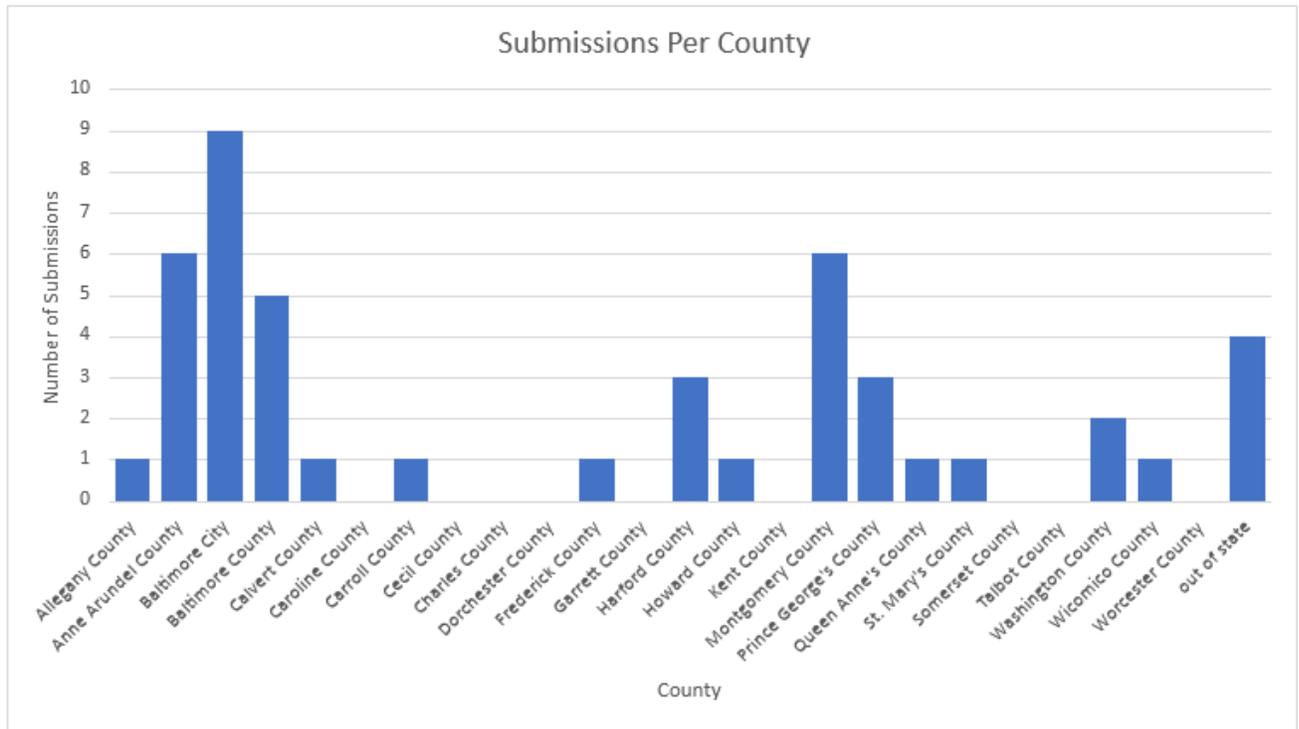
3. All instances in which you have been quoted in a news article within the last five years

4. All conference presentations, speeches, or lectures you have made in the last five years including the subject matter, date, and whether the event was video or audio taped

\*

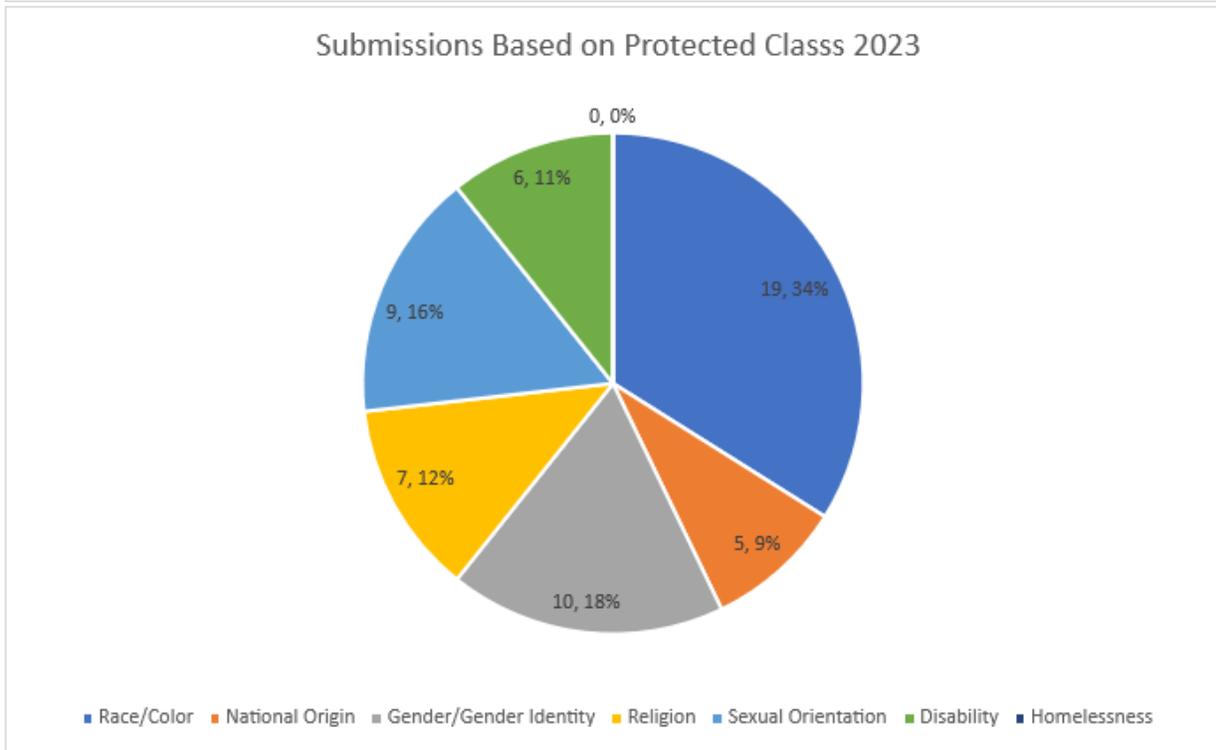
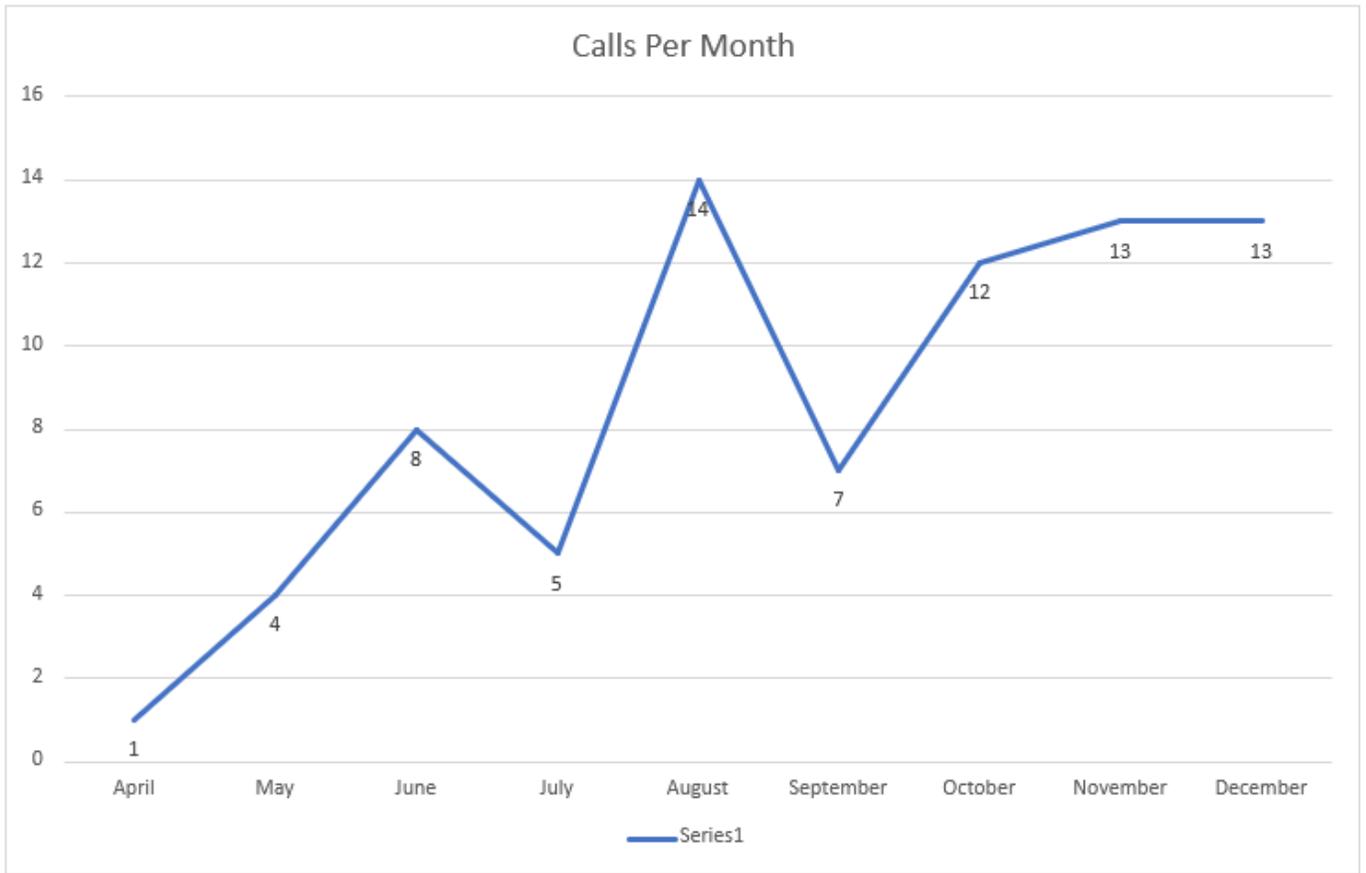
37. Please provide contact information for three references. After completing this question and the application, please email your resume to [jfrederick@oag.state.md.us](mailto:jfrederick@oag.state.md.us). Your application will not be complete until you send your resume. \*Addressing these challenges has informed and improved the Commission's work of eradicating hate in Maryland. Whether from its own meetings, external events, or other activities, the Commission continues to learn from each step it takes to continue to better serve Maryland.

# Appendix E: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2023



24

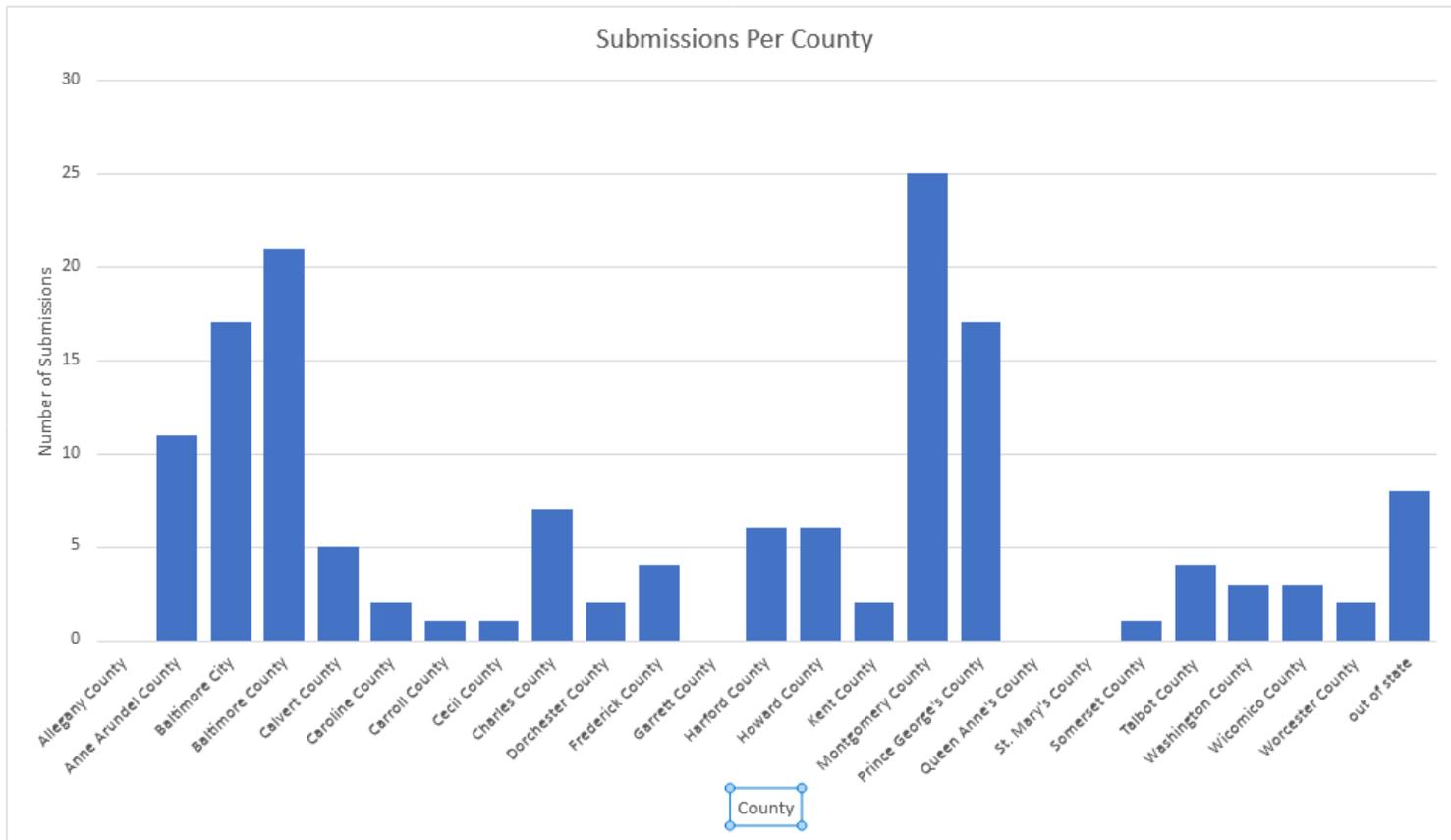
<sup>24</sup> The graph with county submissions does not contain the number of contacts where no county was indicated as it makes the graph difficult to read. In 2023, the OAG received 31 submissions where no county was indicated.



25

<sup>25</sup> 34 reports are not shown on this graph as they were either from out of state callers or a protected class was unable to be determined due to inability to get in touch or the caller did not provide the information necessary.

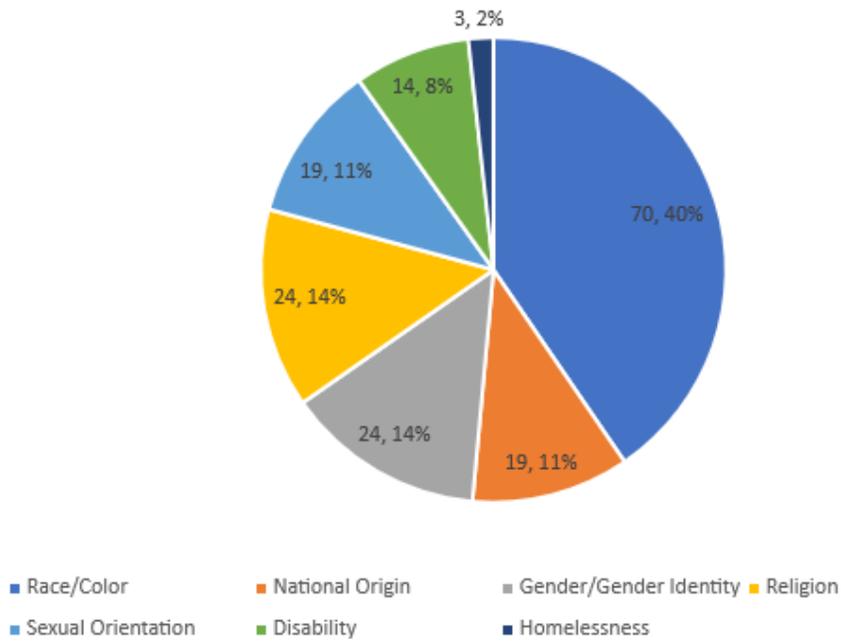
# Appendix F: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2024



26

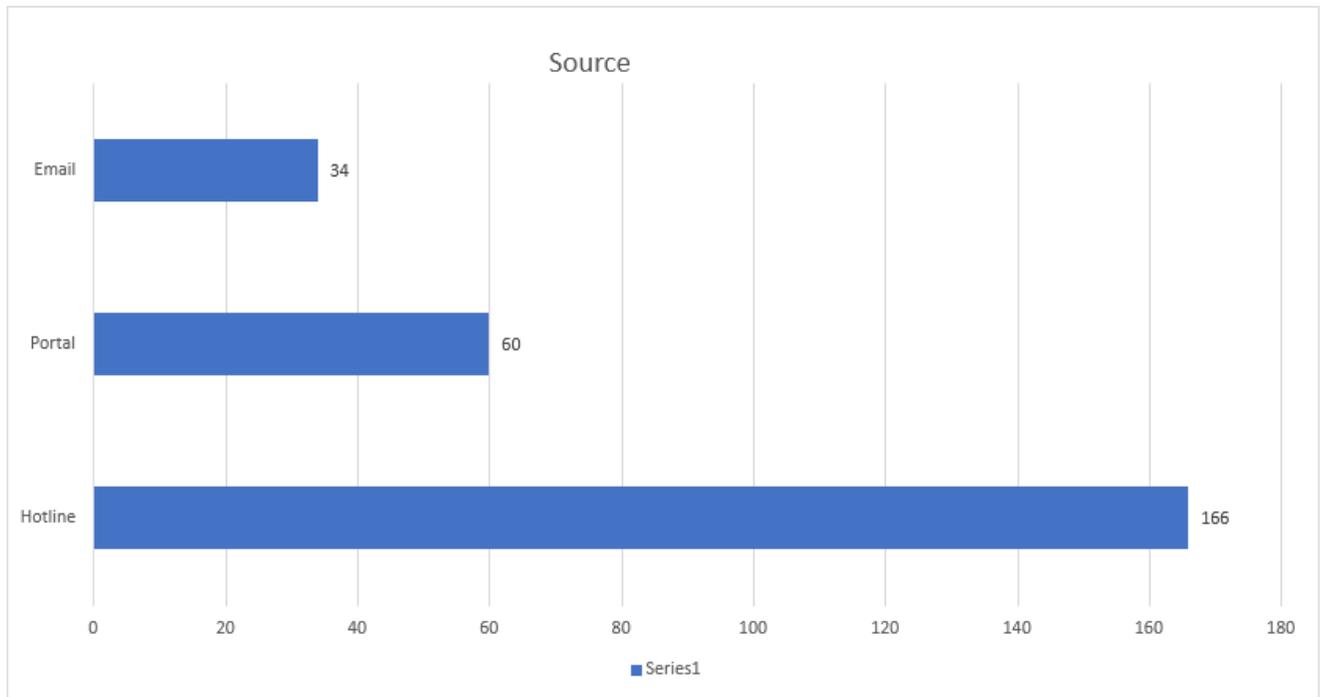
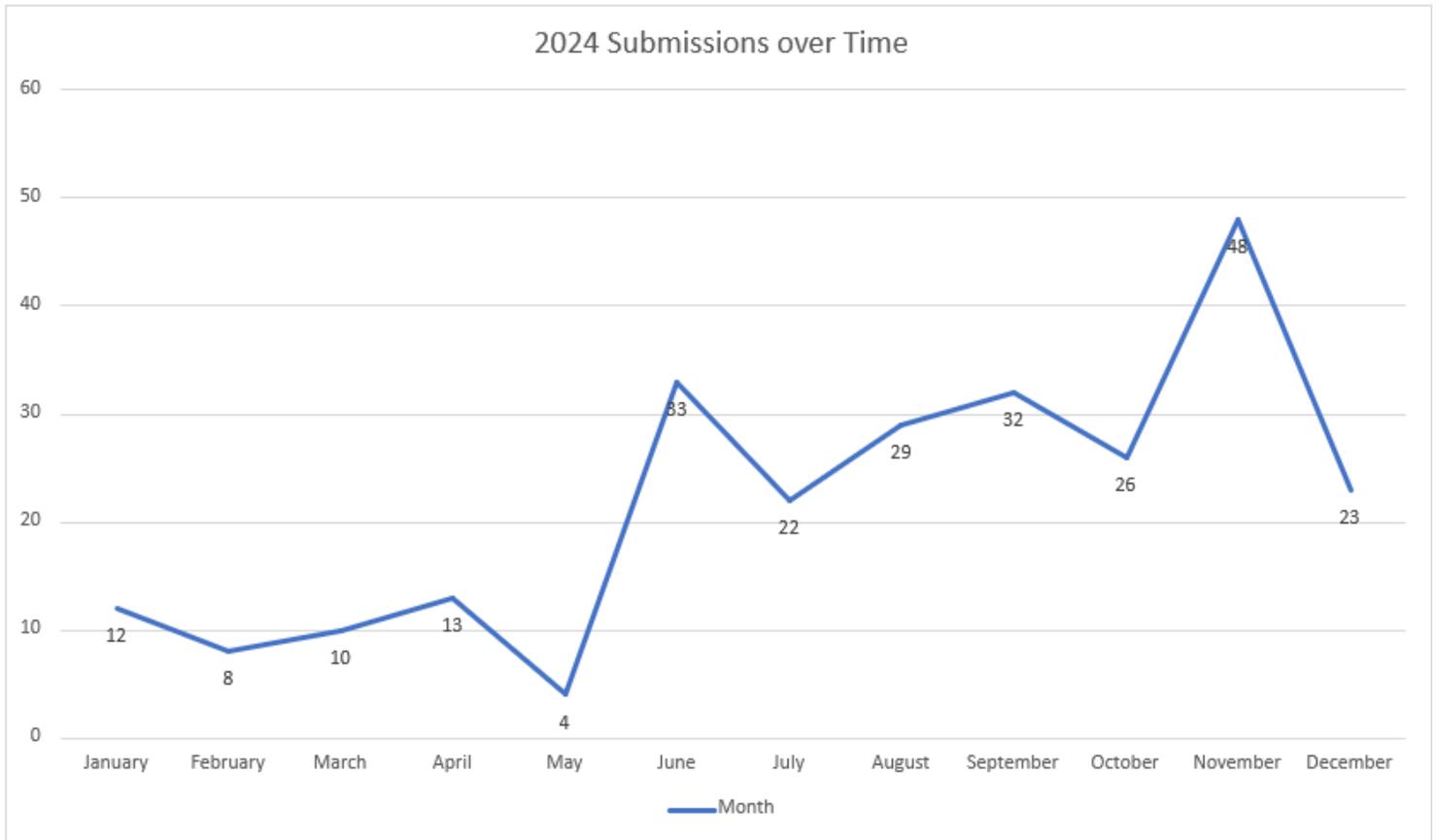
<sup>26</sup> The graph with county submissions does not contain the number of contacts where no county was indicated as it makes the graph difficult to read. In 2024, the OAG received 113 submissions where no county was indicated.

### Submissions Based on Protected Class 2024

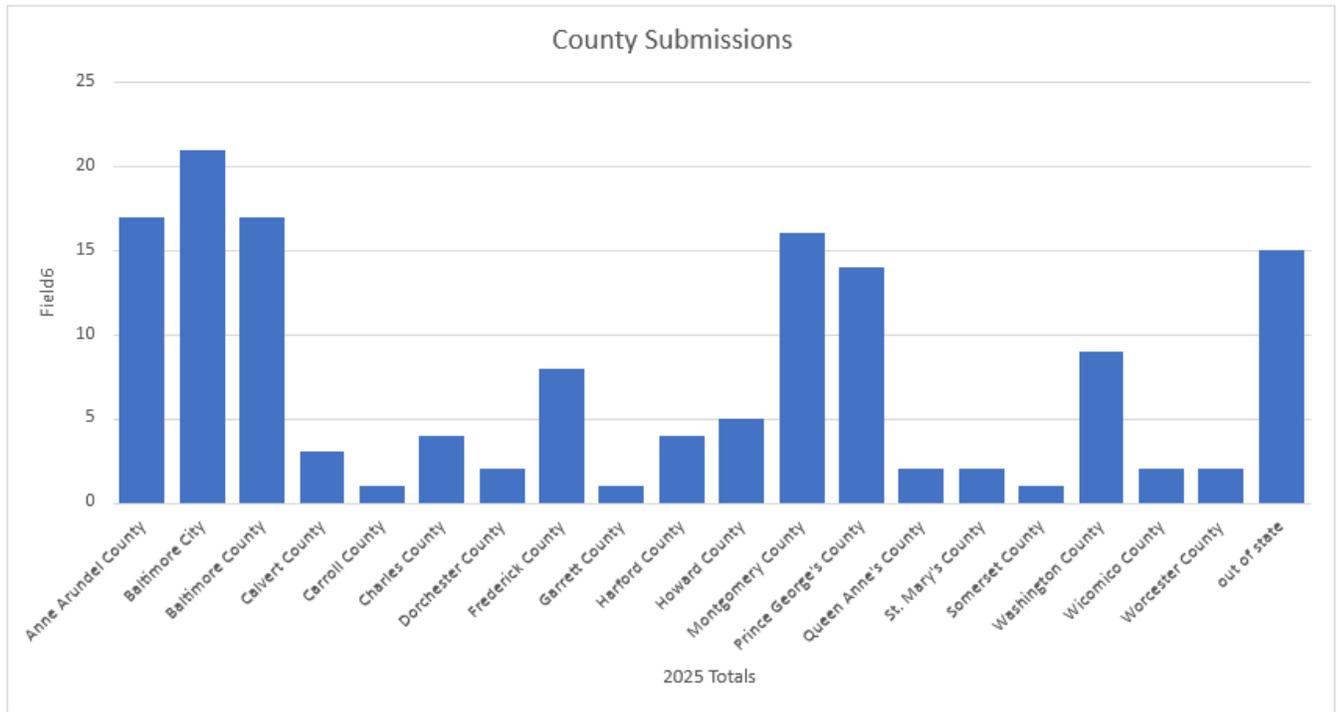


27

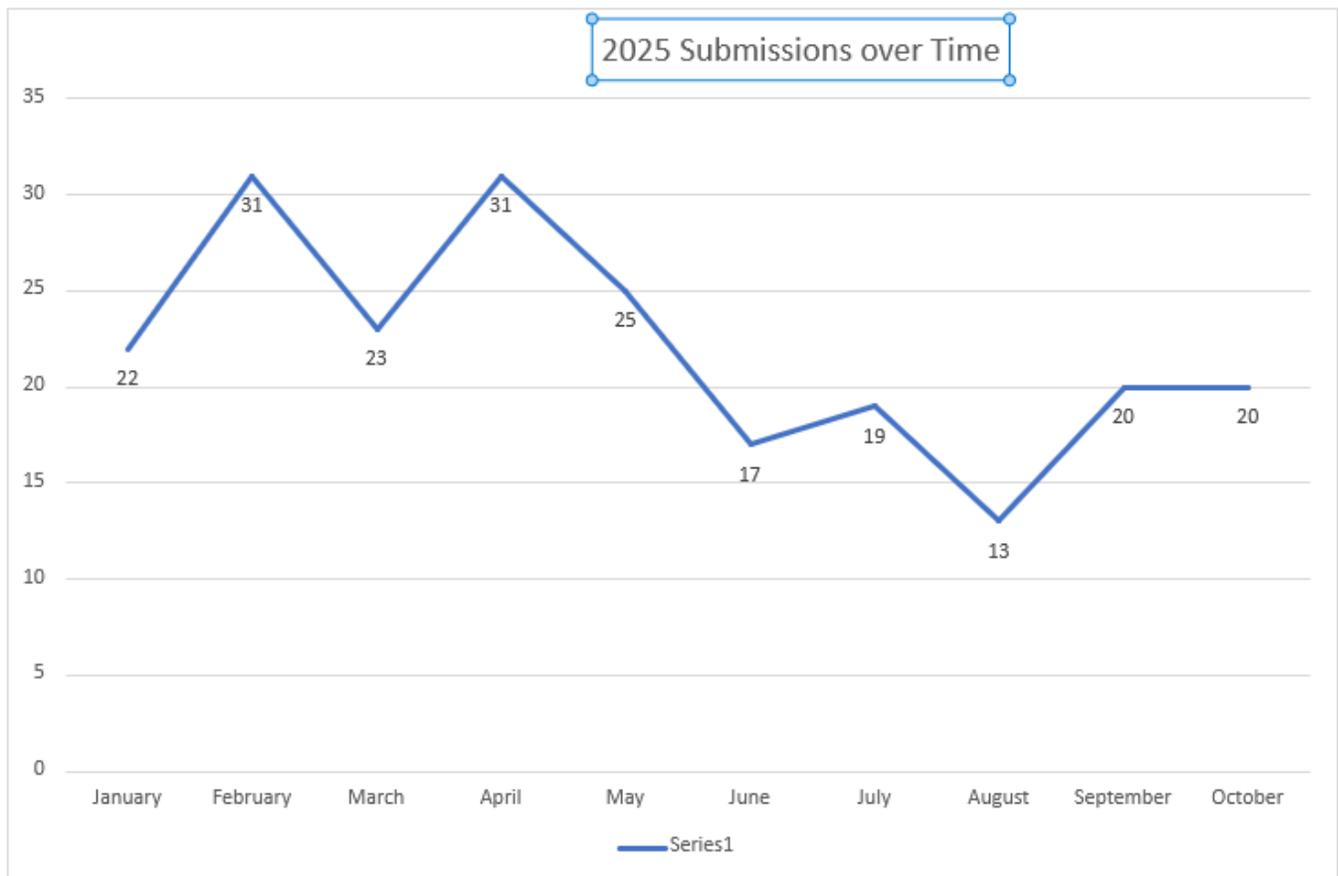
<sup>27</sup> 125 reports are not shown on this graph as they were either from out of state callers or a protected class was unable to be determined due to inability to get in touch or the caller did not provide the information necessary. This graph reflects 173 motivations for 135 reports made to the Office of the Attorney General.



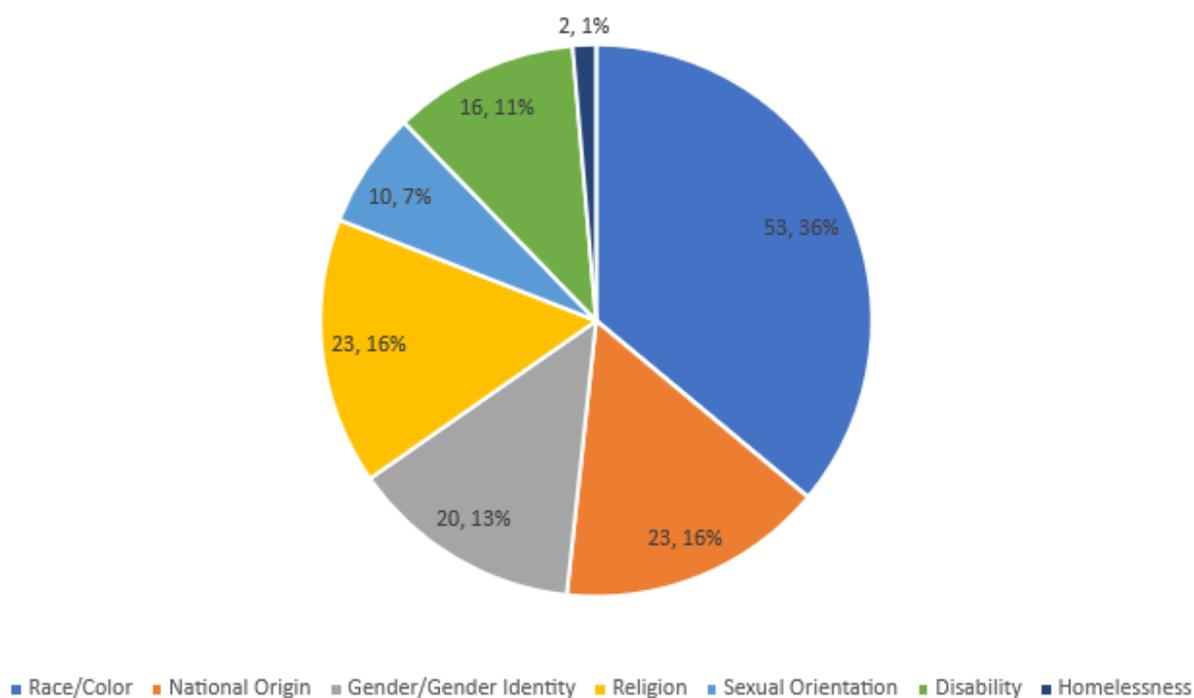
# Appendix G: Statistics of Reports of Hate Made to OAG for 2025 Through the End of October



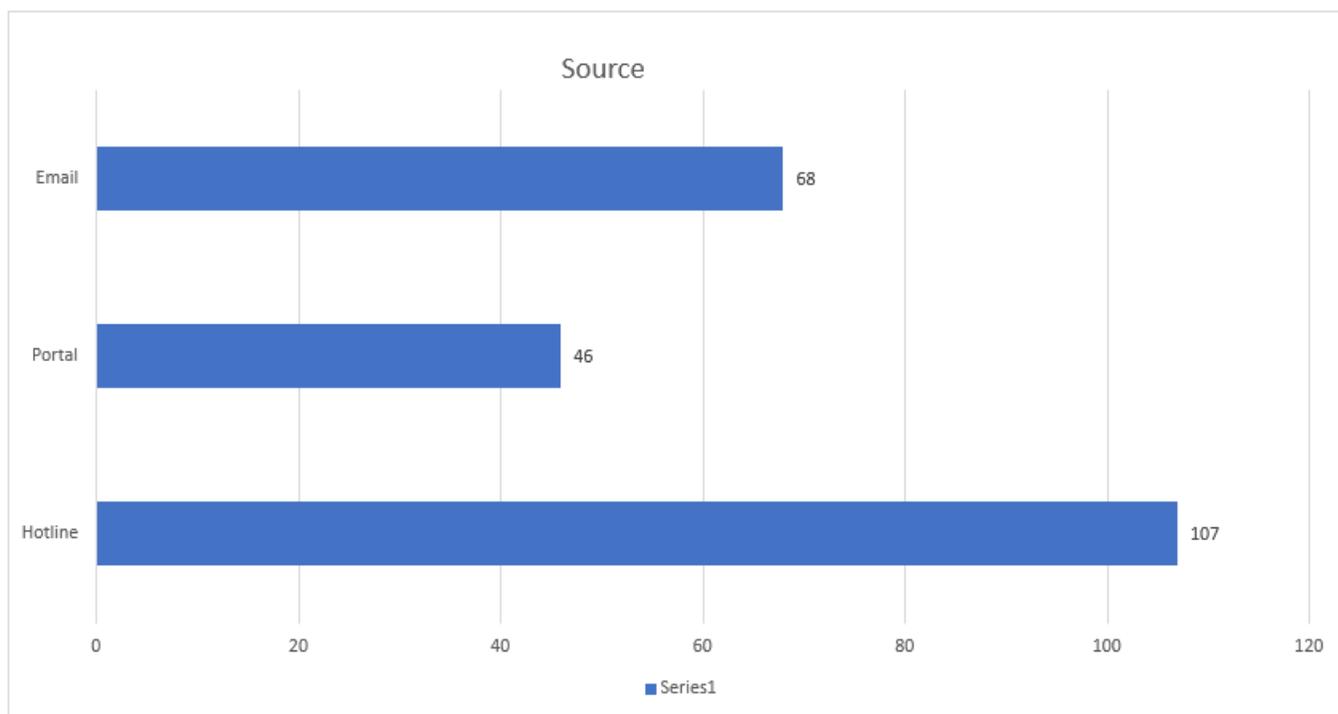
28



### Submissions Based on Protected Class 2025

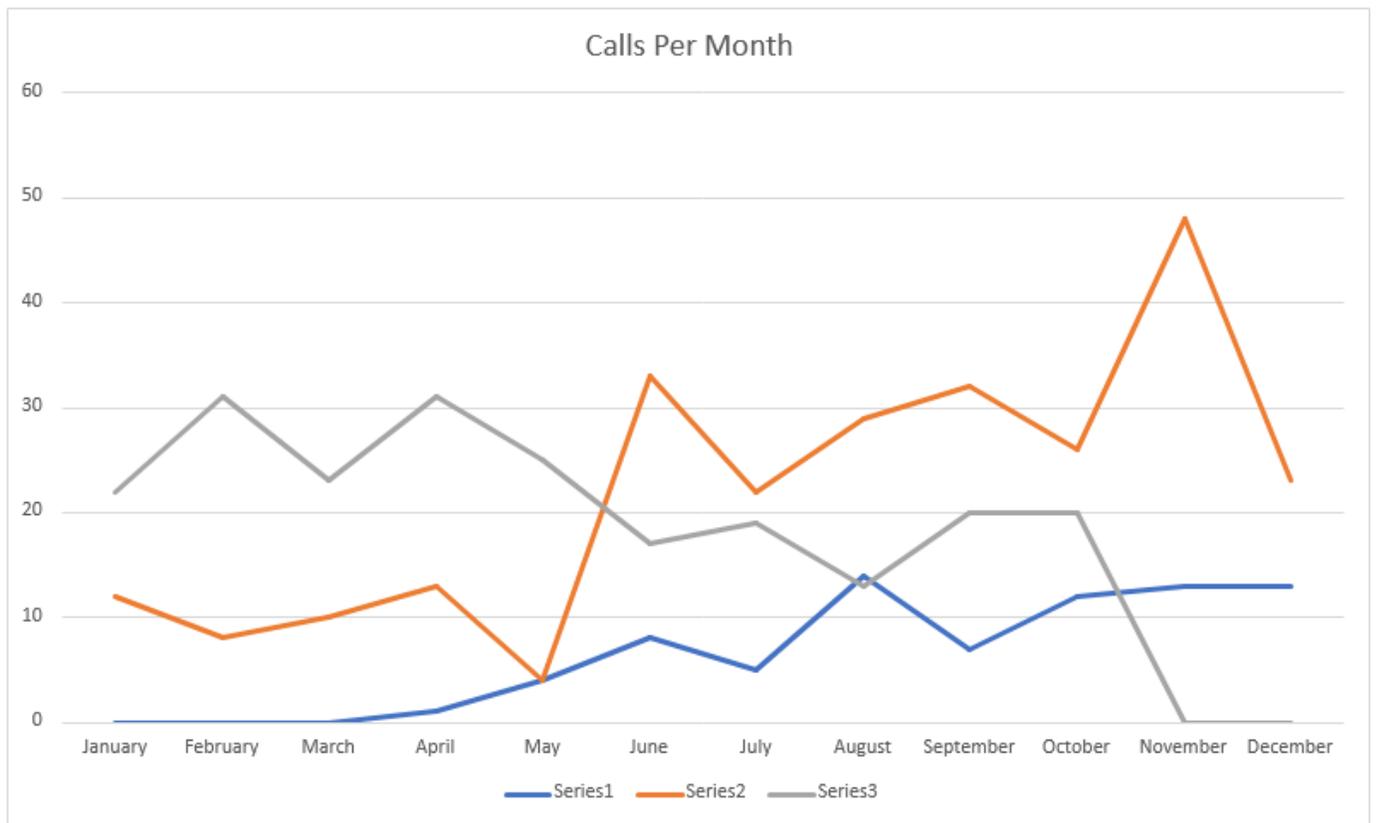
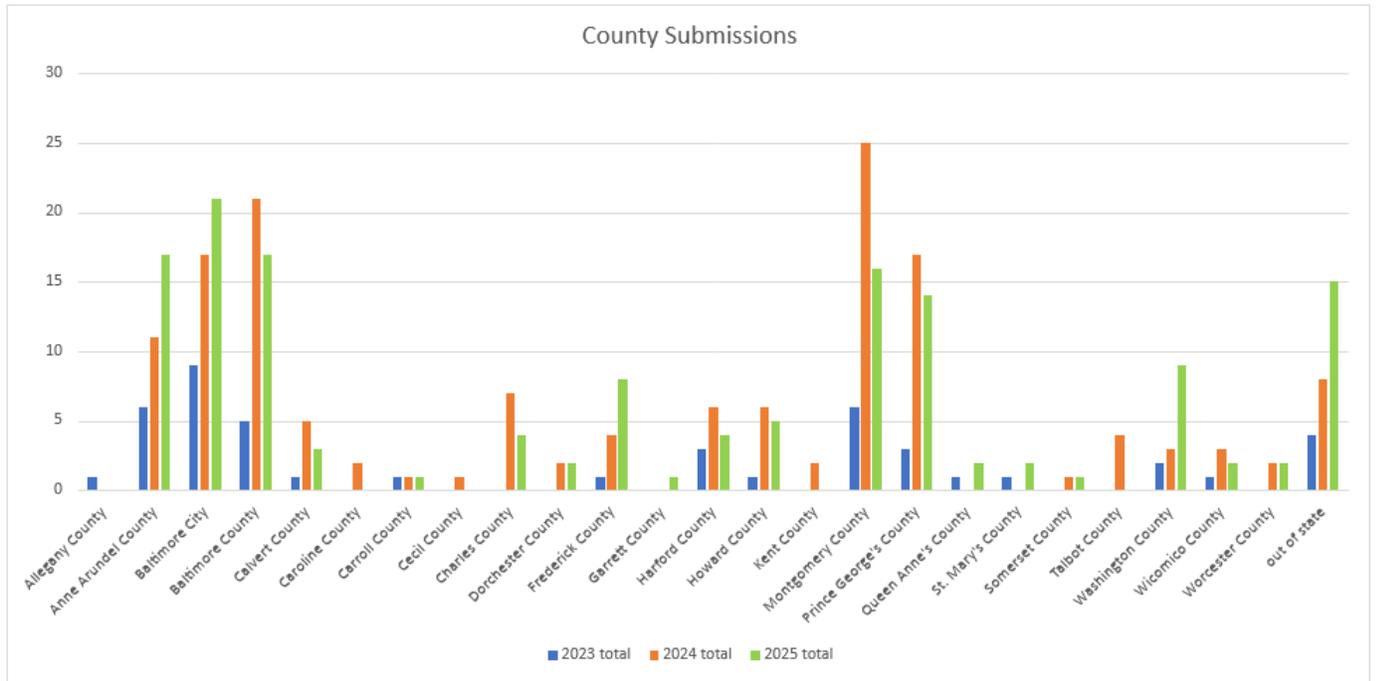


29

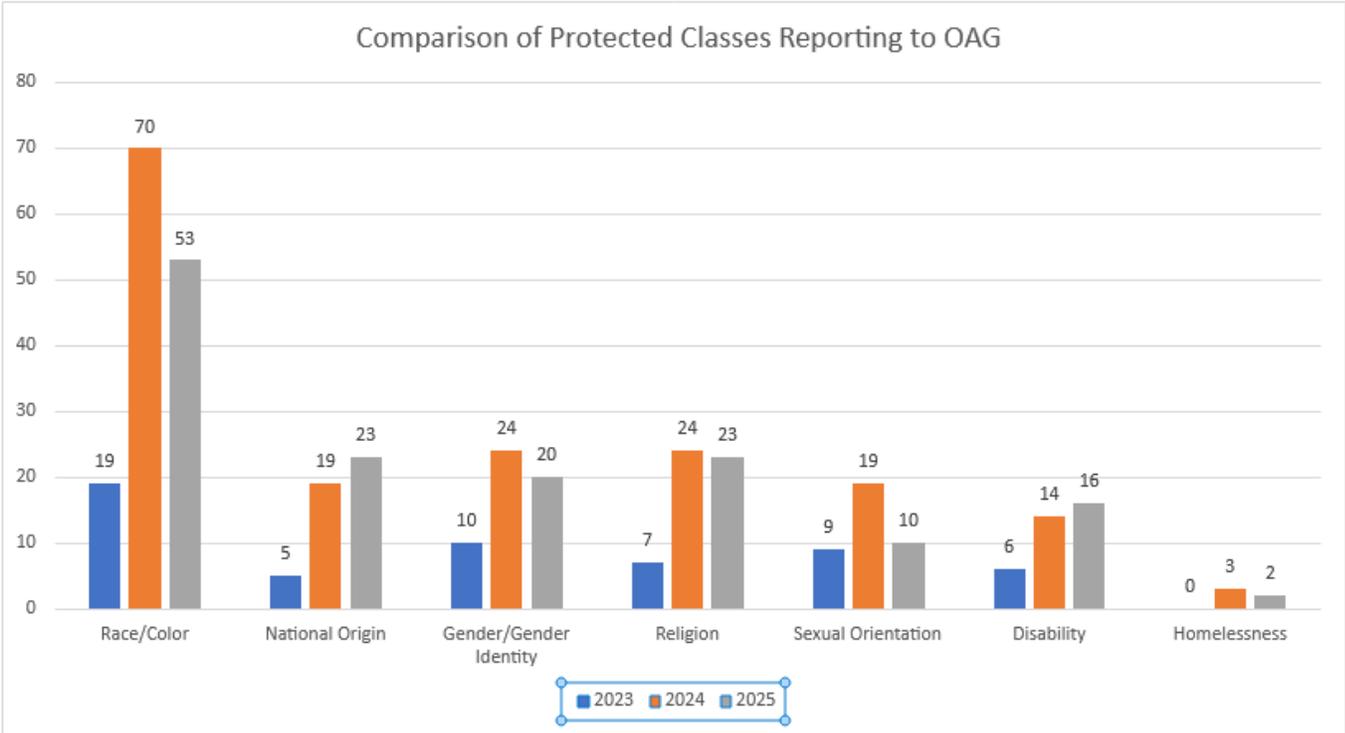


<sup>29</sup> 104 reports are not shown on this graph as they were either from out of state callers or a protected class was unable to be determined due to inability to get in touch or the caller did not provide the information necessary. This graph reflects 147 motivations for 117 reports made to the Office of the Attorney General.

# Appendix H: Statistics Comparing Reports of Hate Made to OAG from April 2023 to October 2025



Data from Protected Classes Reported Over Time			
Protected Classes	2023	2024	2025
Race/Color	19	70	53
National Origin	5	19	23
Gender/Gender Identity	10	24	20
Religion	7	24	23
Sexual Orientation	9	19	10
Disability	6	14	16
Homelessness	0	3	2
Total Motivations	56	173	147
Total Incidents	44	135	117



# Appendix I: Law Enforcement Handout for Individuals Reporting Incidents of Hate<sup>30</sup>

## What Happens After You Report a Hate Crime or Hate Bias Incident



### What is a hate crime?

A crime, or threat of a crime, motivated by hate bias against another person or group's perceived membership in a protected class.

*Examples:* Physically assaulting someone because of their protected class membership, vandalizing a place of worship, or destroying property while using slurs related to a protected class.

### What is a hate bias incident?

A hostile, biased act against a protected class that is not a crime. It is an act that is lawful but harmful and offensive to the victim.

*Examples:* using slurs, distributing hateful literature in public, or displaying hate material on one's own property.

### What are Maryland's protected classes?

Race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, national origin, and homelessness.

### What happens when you make a report?

*A hate crime:* Law enforcement will investigate further and share information with local prosecutors and court clerks.

*A hate bias incident:* Local law enforcement will document what happened for data collection and community awareness purposes.

### Your Rights and Protections

**Whether an incident is crime or not, law enforcement are required to take a report of the incident.** Maryland requires reports about all incidents of hate to be taken as data from all reports is used to identify patterns and hot spots as well as to craft better policies and responses to address hate.

<sup>30</sup> For easy printing, this can be downloaded here:

<https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/a4b2a92e544f4d698c2cc7357497ae4a/data>

# Resources

## **To Report Discrimination**

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights  
1-800-637-6247

## **For Financial Assistance**

Maryland Crime Victims Compensation Program  
410-585-3010

## **Additional Assistance for Crime Victims**

Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center  
301-952-0063

## **For Mental Health Support**

Maryland Pro Bono Counseling Project  
410-825-1001

## **For Additional Resources and Questions**

Maryland Hate Crimes Hotline: 1-866-481-8361  
Website: [nohomeforhate.md.gov](http://nohomeforhate.md.gov)  
Email: [stophate@oag.state.md.us](mailto:stophate@oag.state.md.us)