



**State Senator Nickie J. Antonio**  
**District 23**

**State Senator Tina Maharath**  
**District 3**

Senate Judiciary Committee  
December 6, 2022  
Sponsor Testimony SB 149

Good afternoon Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 149, which would address the rise of bias-motivated crimes occurring in Ohio and throughout the United States.

This legislation addresses this important issue in several ways:

- Renames the offense of ethnic intimidation to bias-motivated crime
- Expands the scope of bias-motivated crime
- Requires peace officer training on identifying, responding to and reporting bias-motivated crime
- Requires data collection and reporting on bias-motivated crime in accordance with guidelines established under the federal Hate Crime Statistics Act
- Require this data to be made available to the public through annual reports prepared and released by the division of criminal justice services

It is important to note that “bias-motivated crime” more accurately encompasses crimes which an offender commits because of one’s race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of a person or group.

Some of us may think of bias-motivated crimes as a relic of the past, but the reality is that they are very much a part of our present. On November 20, 2022, a mass shooting occurred at Club Q, an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs. Five people were killed, and 19 were injured by the gunfire. This shooting is being investigated as a potential bias-motivated crime against members of the LGBTQ community.

The issue touches our state as well. In 2020 alone, Ohio reported 580 bias-motivated crimes, representing a 41 percent increase over 2019<sup>1</sup>. The rise in bias-motivated crimes against Asian Americans throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has been shocking, but so many of us have experienced this countless times before. Bias-motivated crime occurs every day in our country against individuals because of their race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. In the last few years alone, bias-motivated crimes have made the national news on an almost weekly basis.

Our legislation would help make Ohio a safer place for all by improving the training of peace officers to better identify, respond to and report bias-motivated crime; requiring state and local law enforcement to submit data regarding bias-motivated crime to the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the FBI, and making this data available to the public.

With this bill, we have the opportunity to ensure Ohio's bias-motivated crimes law protects everyone who needs it. Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Committee, thank you and I am happy to respond to questions at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/ohio-hate-crime-data-us/2021/09/10/8f18fb28-1261-11ec-882f-2dd15a067dc4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/ohio-hate-crime-data-us/2021/09/10/8f18fb28-1261-11ec-882f-2dd15a067dc4_story.html)