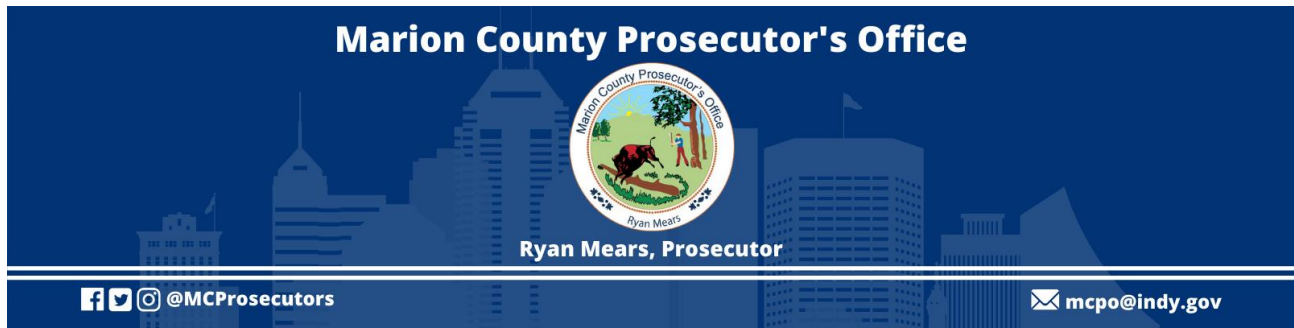




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Marion County Prosecutor's Office launches Hate Crimes Hotline

New hotline provides opportunity for residents to report potential acts of hate

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind - Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears is combating hate in Indianapolis through the launch of the office's new non-emergent hate crimes hotline. The Marion County Hate Crimes Hotline can be reached at 317-327-5314 and provides a reporting mechanism for individuals who believe they have experienced or witnessed a potential bias-motivated crime.

"We want to send a clear message that hate has no place in Indianapolis and Marion County. For those who have experienced a bias-motivated incident, we stand with you," Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears stated. "By providing this hotline and support through a victim advocate, we believe our office can reduce the barriers of reporting and improve law enforcement's response and support for victims of these crimes."

The Marion County Hate Crimes Hotline is monitored by a trained Social Worker and Victim Advocate employed by the Marion County Prosecutor's Office. Once a report is recorded, the victim can choose to file a formal report with the local law enforcement agency or be referred to an identity-based community service provider for trauma counseling and other assistance. Interpretation for Spanish-speaking individuals and other languages is available to ensure equitable access to this service. This is a non-emergent hotline, and all emergencies or immediate threats should be reported to 911.

A hate crime is a crime committed against someone due to their social identifier. Hate crimes do not only just affect the victim, but can impact the entire community who identifies with the victim's racial, religious, ethnic, sexual, or gender identity. In Indiana, an aggravated sentence can be sought on a conviction if the crime was hate or bias-motivated. Hate crimes within the United States have reached a decade high. Unfortunately, hate crimes often go unreported due to the intimidating nature in which the crime was committed or other barriers for communicating with law enforcement.

"A big part of this effort is education. We are available to the community to share information about what constitutes a hate crime, why reporting is so important, and how to support victims of these incidents," Prosecutor Mears added. Faith-based organizations, schools, and other community organizations can request a presentation by the Prosecutor's Office at mcpo@indy.gov.

If you or anyone you know within Marion County has been the victim of a hate crime or the victim of a hate-based incident, you are encouraged to report the incident to the Marion County Hate Crimes Hotline at 317-327-5314.

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