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TESTIMONY: H. 3620 BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL LAWS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 9, 2021

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina encourages your support for H. 3620, an overdue measure in our state. South Carolina is one of the few states in which there is no law providing enhanced penalties for those who commit criminal acts in which the victim is selected based on beliefs or perceptions about the race or other attributes of the victim.

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has taken a strong position against hate crimes. For example, the LWVUS joined with more than a hundred other national organizations that are members of *The Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights* to appeal to the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the killing of Ahmaud Arbery and proceed under federal hate crime laws.<sup>1</sup> However, no one should have to go to the federal government to achieve justice when South Carolinians are the victims of hate crimes. South Carolina can and should provide justice for its citizens.

We hope that the state will also undertake training that would help law enforcement officers identify and respond to hate crimes appropriately. We encourage statewide data collection addressing hate crimes so that the frequency of such crimes and effectiveness in addressing them can be accurately evaluated.

We believe that this bill will be a much-needed step forward for our state and we strongly encourage your favorable report on it.

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/lwv-urges-department-justice-investigate-killing-ahmaud-arbery>