



Agudath Israel of Maryland
אגודת ישראל במרילנד
PROTECTING  ADVOCATING  SERVING

SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 840

PUBLIC SAFETY - PROTECTING AGAINST HATE CRIMES GRANT FUND - ESTABLISHMENT

FEBRUARY 20, 2023

**TESTIMONY OF RABBI ARIEL SADWIN,
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AGUDATH ISRAEL OF MARYLAND**

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland (AIMD), the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America – a renown national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country, speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland.

We issue this testimony in **support** of SB 840 – to create a permanent funding program of \$5 million to protect religious institutions and non-profits – especially those who are assessed to be at a higher risk of being targeted with a hate crime.

It is with great concern and caution that we embrace the reality that our community faces as a target and victim of hate crimes. Throughout the generations, and with the alarming recent uptick, we are far too familiar with the wide variety of actions and threats of actions displayed by members of society who are simply unwilling to accept those who are different than them. Classic targets of those cowards who consider perpetrating crimes of this nature are facilities that house members of these targeted classes, such as their schools and day care centers.

As the Jewish community, our wounds are always fresh from one tragic occurrence or the next. Whether it was a synagogue in Pittsburgh or Poway, a kosher supermarket in Jersey City, a Chanukah celebration in a Monsey home, or the countless threats that come in to Jewish facilities – locally, nationally, or internationally – causing needless panic and fear.

People identified by their faith should be guaranteed the freedom to go about their lives with as much protection as we can possibly provide. This allocation is one critical way to see that through.

We strongly urge your support of SB 840 and hope you find it favorable.

Thank you.