

OFFICERS

ELIZABETH GREEN

President

ROBIN WEIMAN

1st Vice President

AMALIA HONICK

BENJAMIN ROSENBERG

RABBI STEVEN SCHWARTZ

RABBI JONATHAN SEIDEMANN

MELANIE SHAPIRO

RABBI ANDREW BUSCH

Past President

HOWARD LIBIT

Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation

American Jewish Committee

Americans for Peace Now

Baltimore Chapter

American Israel Public Affairs Committee

American Red Magen David for Israel

American Zionist Movement

Amit Women

Association of Reform Zionists of America

Baltimore Board of Rabbis

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance

Baltimore Men's ORT

Baltimore Zionist District

Beth Am Congregation

Beth El Congregation

Beth Israel Congregation

Beth Shalom Congregation of

Howard County

Beth Tfiloh Congregation

B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region

B'nai Israel Congregation

B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

Bolton Street Synagogue

Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.

Chevrei Tzedek Congregation

Chizuk Amuno Congregation

Congregation Beit Tikvah

Congregation Tiferes Yisroel

Federation of Jewish Women's

Organizations of Maryland

Hadassah

Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation

J Street

Jewish Federation of Howard County

Jewish Labor Committee

Jewish War Veterans

Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary

Jewish Women International

Jews For Judaism

Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah

Hebrew Congregation

National Council of Jewish Women

Ner Tamid Congregation

Rabbinical Council of America

Religious Zionists of America

Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation

Shomrei Emunah Congregation

Suburban Orthodox Congregation

Temple Beth Shalom

Temple Isaiah

Zionist Organization of America

Baltimore District

Written Testimony

Senate Bill 840- Public Safety - Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Fund - Establishment

Judiciary Committee - March 30, 2023

Support

Background: Senate Bill 840 (SB840) would codify the budget language of the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Program which was established in FY2020 because of the unfortunate rise in hate bias incidents in Maryland and throughout the country. These grants are used for infrastructure upgrades and security personnel for institutions deemed at-risk for hate crimes or attacks. The bill proposes \$5 million dollars for the grant program, the same as the FY24 budget allocation, with at least \$1 million set aside for religious institutions.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council, which represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and its agencies, respectfully urges the Committee to codify this grant program. This grant aims to directly address the recent climate of fear and intimidation caused by rising hate/bias incidents. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their places of worship and religious institutions. With the recent tragedies in Colleyville, Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City and Monsey fresh on everyone's minds, the concern of a similar tragedy in Maryland is very real. For the past five years, the Jewish community has been the 2nd most common target of hate/bias incidents reported to the Maryland State Police, with the highest percentage based on religion. We cannot allow the fear of antisemitism and hate crimes deter people from attending their own places of worship and religious institutions. Instead, we must act so that everyone feels free to practice their faith in a space that is secure. With this in mind we ask that you take bold action to protect more Marylanders from hate crimes and codify the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Program.

For these reasons the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on SB840.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.