



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

March 15, 2023

House Bill 1244 – Maryland Holocaust Remembrance Day

POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chairperson Cullison, and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, and state contracts based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 1244 seeks to add to the Maryland General Provisions Article our state’s acknowledgement of a world-wide day of remembrance. Every year, January 27 is recognized by the international community as a day to reflect on the atrocities of the Holocaust, commemorate the lives that were taken, and honor those who fought for freedom. January 27 marks the anniversary of the day troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps in 1945, signaling the end of the Nazi reign. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to create International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and many countries and U.S. states have joined in to appreciate the importance of this horrific event. This year on January 26, President Joe Biden issued a statement to remind our nation of the significance of the following day and set an example in reaffirming our country’s commitment to combating antisemitism and renouncing complicity.

In 2023, many people in the State of Maryland continue to face intolerance, harassment, violence, and discrimination on the basis of religion, disability, and national origin. Additionally, as decade after decade goes by and Holocaust survivors and military members who fought in World War II age and pass away, our society is gradually forgetting the details of the Holocaust. Even more concerning, despite the plethora of historical records documenting the Holocaust, some individuals have increasingly spread false information about the Holocaust, even denying that it occurred at all. In light of these several worrying trends, our state must declare a day of Holocaust Remembrance and encourage all Maryland residents to take time to learn about the Holocaust and contemplate its cruelty and lasting effects, even 80 years later. Maryland shares in the responsibility of

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

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educating its people on one of the most important historical events of all time and keeping the memory of the victims alive for generations to come.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB1244. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.