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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 708 – Public Health - Youth Camps, Development Organizations, and Programs - Criminal History Records Checks

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 21, 2023

Letter of Information

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 Shaaarei 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

The Baltimore Jewish Council Represents the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, including our Jewish Community Center's (JCC'S) in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Our JCC's run J Camps in Owings Mills, which have over 1300 campers and 400 counselors. We are concerned about the realistic implementation and execution of SB708. Currently our J Camps fingerprint and run that information through CJIS, however, we understand that due to a change in Federal law, private entities will no longer have access to FBI CJIS results, results that are needed in order to approve a job application for a counselor or volunteer. This is why SB708 is being introduced, so that a governmental entity, the Department of Health, will have access to these results. However, camps would be required to wait for the Department to let them know if they are able to hire the counselor/volunteer. We are concerned with the turnaround time and the negative affect this could have on camps throughout the state. Counselors are mainly hired from May and June, having tens of thousands of background checks that need to be approved by the Department and then that information given to the camps before the staff hiring process can finish. We need to know that the Department will have the staffing capability to give camps this necessary information in a few days so that camps can be properly staffed. We know the department is willing to hire staff, but the reality of hiring and keeping staff who would only work seasonally for the Department may be difficult and further hinder the ability of camps to staff up for summer. We would like to see a specific requirement of getting information back to camps with in 3 days. Camps are an integral part of society and while we understand the change in Federal law, we would like some specific insurances in the bill so that the department is held accountable for quick turn arounds.

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 Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.