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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**House Bill 1386 – Education - Employee Training and Holocaust
 Education Study - Requirements
 Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee – March 27, 2024
 SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

Background: In an effort to address the need for our teachers and staff at all levels of education to be prepared to handle issues of hate-bias in the classroom, this legislation would require each county board of education and certain nonpublic schools to provide each employee with training on the prevention of antisemitism and Islamophobia each year; require institutions of higher education to include specific training on the prevention of antisemitism and Islamophobia in required cultural diversity training; and require the State Department of Education to contract with a consultant to conduct an independent study and assessment of Holocaust education in middle and high school instruction in the State.

Written Comments: It's impossible to turn a blind eye to the increased hateful rhetoric that is plaguing our school systems across the State. Whether it's a swastika next to the words "kill the Jews" in the bathroom at Pikesville Middle School or the numerous antisemitic incidents occurring in Montgomery County Public Schools, this is an epidemic and we must do something to address it. HB1386 takes a bold step by requiring teachers and administrators to learn about antisemitism and islamophobia prevention so they can better address and ultimately deter these types of incidents in schools and teach children why they are so harmful. Further, by requiring MSDE to assess Holocaust education in schools, we can better learn where they may be gaps in the system and correct them. Requiring cultural diversity training for our educators in a key piece of the puzzle to address the hate that is being spewed through our school systems.

For these reasons the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on HB1386.

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.