



Testimony in OPPOSITION to *House Bill 1124 –*
Civil Actions – Nonprofit Organizations – Unauthorized Support of Israeli
Settlement Activity (Not on Our Dime Act)
Judiciary Committee
March 6, 2024

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC strongly opposes House Bill 1124 which prohibits nonprofits from working with the Government of Israel and Israelis who support “settlement activity.” The Bill demonizes and delegitimizes Israel, focusing on certain activities and alleged violence that is not unique to Israel, yet singles it out. The language of HB 1124 is dangerous and misleading, criminalizing support for the mere presence of Jews in areas where they have lived for thousands of years. The Bill also is overly broad. It gives the Maryland Secretary of State power to revoke a nonprofit’s status and the Attorney General power to sue a nonprofit and its officers for damages of not less than \$1 million and with a statute of limitation of ten years.

House Bill 1124 promotes an agenda that is harmful to Israelis, Palestinians, and Marylanders, by taking action against charitable organizations which are actually delivering critical services and humanitarian aid to the region. The language of the Bill demonstrates a lack of understanding of the history and dynamics of the region. It refers to East Jerusalem as “occupied territory” although the most holy sites in Judaism including the Old City and Western Wall are in East Jerusalem. Instead of working towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the region, HB 1124 undermines those efforts and only causes more harm and fuels more hatred and division. For these reasons, we ask for an unfavorable report on HB 1124.