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House Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I urge you to oppose HB 0763 and keep CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, on the Maryland Hate Crimes Commission.

I am a 69 year old native of the beautiful state of Maryland and am of Syrian and Irish ancestry. Growing up in Baltimore County I experienced discrimination because of my Arab ancestry in my Kingsville neighborhood, during my high school years at Perry Hall Senior High, at Essex Community College and Towson State University as a student, and in Baltimore City Public Schools and Harford County Public Schools as a teacher. Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim sentiment is real and deadly.

As a Maryland Muslim who values our First Amendment Rights I urge you to keep CAIR on the Hate Crimes Commission at this critical time in our history. I feel it would be a hate crime to remove it from the commission when we have increased incidences of hate crimes targeted at Muslims and at Palestinians (no matter their religion) just because they are or have solidarity with Palestinians. I am thinking of the 6 year old Illinois boy, Wadea Al Fayoume, stabbed to death by his landlord, and Hisham Awartani, now paralyzed after being shot in Burlington, Vermont. And I think of the many slurs and threats I have experienced throughout my lifetime for simply being of Arab ancestry. And those experienced by my children whose father is a Palestinian immigrant to this country and US citizen since 1981.

Our fear for life and liberty is less intense knowing we have CAIR to rely on and represent us on the Maryland Hate Crimes Commission. I urge you to keep it on the commission as it represents Muslims including Arab Muslims so faithfully and diligently. To consider its removal would be yet another hate crime.

Sincerely,

Maria A. Baroody

