



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

HOUSE BILL 748

STATE GOVERNMENT – COMMISSION ON HATE CRIME RESPONSE AND PREVENTION – CODE OF CONDUCT

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland, the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America – a renowned national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country, speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland.

The Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention is an attempt to ensure that the various cultural and faith communities of Maryland live in freedom from hate and intolerance. As a Jewish advocacy organization, we are well aware of the hate directed all too often against our community, and we stand against such hate just as we stand against hatred against others.

As such, it was with deep concern that we observed statements from a member of the Commission that failed to reflect that mission, to say the least. In the aftermath of that event, it became clear that no current code of conduct governs the members of the commission, nor is there currently any mechanism for the removal of a member in the event that they fail to live up to the purpose of the Commission.

It is important that Marylanders be able to place their trust in the participants in the Commission, secure in the knowledge that they are committed to combatting hate, and without worrying that they may in fact be harboring hate or bigotry in their hearts. As such, it is indeed advisable that a code of conduct be adopted, together with a policy of investigation and suspension in cases of violation of the code of conduct.

For this reason, we ask that you protect the Commission on Hate Crimes Response and Prevention from becoming compromised, and thus we urge a favorable report on House Bill 748.