

JON S. CARDIN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Judiciary Committee

Chair
Civil Law and Procedure
Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 217
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3054 · 301-858-3054
800-492-7122 Ext. 3054
Fax: 410-841-3385 · 301-858-3385
Jon.Cardin@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

House Bill 748

State Government – Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention – Code of Conduct

Support

The Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention (“Commission”) was established by legislation during the 2023 legislative session and signed into law by Governor Moore.

The Commission is “charged with developing strategies to prevent and respond to hate crime activity, evaluating State laws and policies relating to hate crimes, and reporting annually to both the General Assembly and the Maryland State Department of Education...”

During the Commission’s first month, Attorney General Brown was confronted with the very situation for which the Commission was established. The Attorney General’s response demonstrated potential damage that needed to be fixed. It is too soon to predict whether the Commission’s laudable mission, its authority, or its ability to carry out its mandate is tainted. In his November 21, 2023, Statement, Attorney General Brown asserted as the Commission’s appointing authority any member of the commission that disrupts the Commission’s work and mission is subject to removal. Yet, days after the Attorney General temporarily suspended a Commissioner whose social media posts following October 7th “challenged the Commission’s ability to do its work,” he reinstated her.

In a December 6, 2023, update, he asserted the “law establishing the Commission directs the attorney general to appoint members to a 4-year fixed term but does not provide the Attorney General the authority to remove a Commissioner before the expiration of their term nor the authority to suspend a Commissioner during their term of service.”

HB 748, remedies the Attorney General's perceived lack of authority, by requiring the Attorney General to adopt and make publicly available a *code of conduct* for members of the Commission, a policy for investigating violations of the code of conduct, as well as the authority to suspend a member of the commission pending an investigation, and the authority to remove a member of the commission following an investigation, and a finding that the member violated the code of conduct. Additionally, the bill requires the Attorney General to establish a process for members of the public to report alleged violations of the code of conduct by members of the commission.

HB 748 accomplishes this important goal requested by the AG by setting standards by which all parties have to adhere.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas entered Israel from Gaza, slaughtered over 1,200 Israelis, perpetrated unimaginable atrocities, and subjected girls, boys, and women to unspeakable acts.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/112123s.pdf>

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/120623.pdf>