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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
House Bill 1181 – Educate to Stop the Hate Act
Ways and Means Committee - February 28, 2024
SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 1181 would require the State Department of Education (MSDE) to:

- [expand on the curriculum recently implemented for middle school students](#) around Holocaust education and antisemitism in social studies classrooms;
- develop curriculum standards and resources for instructional content around disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups by January 1, 2025; and
- require all public schools and certain nonpublic schools to include the revised and enhanced instruction in school curricula beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

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; threats to black students at Middletown 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.

HB1181 takes a bold step to help educate our young people, by requiring comprehensive antihate curriculum in all our public schools and nonpublic schools that receive state funding. Teaching our students about contemporary racism, prejudice, and the Holocaust will help them to better understand why their words matter and can be extremely harmful. To ensure proper understanding, high schoolers will be required to learn about the contributions of many historically disadvantaged groups, including the African American, Native American, AAPI, Hispanic American, Jewish American, and Arab American communities. This will ensure better understanding of those who may not look like us or come from similar backgrounds.

Maryland is on the path of updating its curriculum about the Holocaust. In a [memo published by the Interim State Superintendent of Schools](#) on January 23rd, 2024, the new 6th and 7th grade social studies curriculums outline the inclusion of lessons on antisemitism and "analyzing the impact of physical geography, nationalism, World War I and II, and the actions of international organizations, the Holocaust, and the founding of Israel." However, with the increasing incidents of antisemitism in classrooms and across our younger populations, it's important that we expand on these efforts even further.

For these reasons the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on HB1181.

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.