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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

**House Bill 1386 – Education - Employee Training and Holocaust  
Education Study - Requirements**

**Ways and Means Committee**

**February 27, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

**Background:** In an effort to gauge the current preparedness of our teachers and staff at all levels of education with regard to antisemitism and islamophobia and fill gaps where needed, this legislation would accomplish the following three things: 1) require that each employee in public elementary, middle, and high school classrooms, as well as nonpublic elementary, middle, and high schools that receive state funding, be given training on the prevention of antisemitism and islamophobia each year; 2) tweak current requirements for “cultural diversity” programing in public institutions of higher education across the state to specifically include training on the prevention of antisemitism and islamophobia; and 3) require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to assess Holocaust education in elementary and secondary schools across the state, and report the findings to the Governor and members of the General Assembly by December 31, 2024.

**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 or the numerous antisemitic incidents occurring in Montgomery County Public Schools, this is an epidemic and we must do something to address it. HB1386 takes a bold step by requiring teachers and administrators to learn about antisemitism and islamophobia so they can better address and ultimately deter these types of incidents in schools and teach children why they are so harmful. Further, by requiring MSDE to assess Holocaust education in schools, we can better learn where they may be gaps in the system and correct them.

For these reasons the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on HB1386.

*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.*