



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *House Bill 1181* –
Education - Curriculum Standards – Antihate and Holocaust Education
(Educate to Stop the Hate Act) –
Ways and Means Committee
February 28, 2024**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

House Bill 1181 requires that the State Board of Education develop curriculum standards and resources for antihate and Holocaust education by January 1, 2025. The Bill applies to elementary, middle, and high school classrooms in all public and nonpublic schools that receive state funding. Additionally, the curriculum would include utilizing historical contexts that have led to contemporary racism and prejudice and the Holocaust. It also will revise the high school history framework to include the contributions of historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups.

We are living in a time of heightened hate where every marginalized community seems to be under attack. The spike in racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Asian hate is unprecedented. House Bill 58 is a critical piece of legislation to combat such hatred. Students of all ages need to understand history, including bigotry and prejudice, so that horrific events of the past - like the Holocaust - will never be repeated. In the last few months, the Jewish community has seen a 361% increase in antisemitic incidents compared to the same period a year ago. At the JCRC, it seems like a week doesn't go by without a call about vandalism at a synagogue, bullying on a playground, or a swastika found on a school desk. It's unacceptable and has to be addressed.

The Educate to Stop the Hate Act is not a panacea, but it certainly is a necessary step to help stem the tide and fight back against the harmful impact of hatred which undermines the very fabric of our society. HB 1181 is an opportunity to attack all forms of hatred. It's an opportunity we can't afford to miss. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB 1181.

