

# **Genie O. Massey**

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## **House of Delegates Ways & Means Committee**

### **SB1058 Education – Curriculum Standards – Antihate and Holocaust Education (Educate to Stop the Hate Act)**

**March 27, 2024**

#### **Position: Support**

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Ways & Means Committee,

For 24 years, I have lived in Washington County, dedicating my life to education and raising three children. My experiences have deepened my commitment to American ideals of liberty, rights, equality, opportunity, and democracy—the very principles upon which America was founded. These principles demand a government that protects all its citizens from the tyranny of faction, a responsibility that extends to combating the insidious threats of bias, discrimination, and extremist violence through education.

Senate Bill 1058 embodies a proactive approach to these challenges. It seeks to enrich our curriculum by addressing antisemitism, Holocaust education, and promoting empathy and inclusivity. This initiative is critical, especially as we confront the reality that the voices of our last World War II veterans and Holocaust survivors are fading away. Their stories have been a vital part of our educational efforts to remember the past and prevent its darkest chapters from repeating.

Maryland's rich and diverse Jewish community is integral to our state's identity. Yet, recent years have seen a disturbing rise in antisemitic incidents and extremist violence, highlighting the urgency of taking legislative action. SB1058 aims to empower our students to understand the cultural, political, and economic roots of antisemitism and to build stronger community bonds through empathy. This is not just about curriculum enhancement; it's about preparing a generation to stand firmly against hate in all its forms.

The complexity of today's domestic and international politics only underscores the need for such education. However, the challenge of teaching these contentious issues in diverse classrooms is significant. Fortunately, Maryland has access to a wealth of resources from in-state organizations, including the Jewish Museum of Maryland, the Baltimore Hebrew Institute at Towson University, and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore, dedicated to Holocaust education and combating antisemitism. Many more respected institutions offer invaluable materials and professional development to support educators, alleviating the curriculum-development burden to local school districts, including these:

- Facing History and Ourselves
- Echoes & Reflections
- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
- Learning for Justice
- Yad Vashem
- Centropa

Despite the General Assembly's usual stance on curriculum mandates, the pressing need to address the reluctance or obstruction faced by educators in teaching about marginalized groups calls for an exception. SB1058 is an essential step toward ensuring all Maryland students receive a comprehensive education that includes the history, struggles, and contributions of marginalized communities, particularly the Jewish community.

In conclusion, supporting SB1058 is a declaration of our collective commitment to fostering a more informed, empathetic, and inclusive society. It reaffirms our social contract to protect and uplift every community, ensuring Maryland continues to shine as a beacon of freedom and democracy.

Thank you for considering this vital piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Genie O. Massey