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Written Testimony

**House Bill 71 - Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program - Established
 Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – April 2, 2025
 Support as Amended in the House**

Background: House Bill 71 would establish the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the Maryland State Department of Education with the purpose of assisting local school systems with the training of teachers to teach Holocaust curriculum in public schools. This grant program could only be used for teacher training classes and/or teaching materials. As amended in the House, the annual appropriation from the Governor's budget would \$50,000.

Written Comments: It's no secret that antisemitism continues to rise across our state and our country at an alarming rate. A look at the most recent laundry list of reported incidents in the Baltimore region, compiled by our Director of Security, is chilling.

As a society, we know that one of the best ways to prevent the harmful spewing of hate and ignorance is through education. The Baltimore Jewish community is grateful that The State Superintendent organized the "Educate to Stop the Hate Committee" last spring, naming Baltimore Jewish Council's Executive Director, Howard Libit, as co-chair. The Committee was tasked with looking at curriculum across all grades and making recommendations for improvement in social studies frameworks including holocaust education and providing guidance to the State Board of Education for improvement. This report will be presented to MSDE this month at its Board Meeting.

As Maryland moves toward a more substantive Holocaust education in its classrooms, we recognize that it is important to give our teachers the tools they need to both understand and properly teach the material to their students. Without funding for professional development and materials, this can be hard to achieve.

By establishing the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program, Maryland's local boards of education will be able to hire the proper entities to train their teachers on Holocaust curriculum; provide needed materials to both teachers and students for effective lessons; and allow funding to go to activities directly related to Holocaust education, which could allow for field trips, guest speakers, and more.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB71 as amended in the House.

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.