

SB293 - County Board Member Antibias Training Act

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FAV

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Written Testimony
Senate Bill 293 - County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for
Members – Requirement
County Board Member Antibias Training Act
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – January 29,
2025
Support

Background: Senate Bill 293 would require each member of a county board of education to complete certain antibias training at least once during the member's term.

Written Comments: : It's impossible to turn a blind eye to the increased hateful rhetoric that is plaguing our school systems across the State. In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation that would require all public school employees to undergo biennial antibias training. This was part of the Speaker's "Decency Package," and the Baltimore Jewish Council was grateful for this effort to incorporate cultural awareness and reduce implicit bias using evidence-based guidelines.

Piggybacking on last year's legislation, this bill would require the same antibias training that is crafted for school employees to be carried out for school board members once during each term served on the County School Board. This training would be performed separately from that which education staff receive. This is a critical step to fill a gap in last year's legislative efforts. It is imperative that members of our School Boards, as the decision-makers for what goes on in our school systems, are also educated around cultural awareness and preventing implicit bias. This is an essential piece of the puzzle to combat antisemitism and hate in our State.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB293.

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.

SB0293_County_Boards_of_Ed_Antibias_Training_MLC_F

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0293

County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Feldman

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0293 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

No one is free from bias. Sometimes, bias is so ingrained that we often don't recognize our own biases. But it does color the interactions that we have every day. Recognizing that no one person is representative of a race, or ethnicity, or a *type*, and seeing past the biases that we have helps us do our jobs better and treat people more fairly.

That's a good goal – to train people in positions of authority, and who are making decisions for the many, in such a way that they can be better at doing their jobs. In that respect, state and county leaders should set an example for everyone to follow.

This bill would require each member of a County Board of Education to take antibias once during their term. Our members would like to see the training take place at the beginning of the term, but see the once-per-term requirement as acceptable and fully support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0293 - County Board Member Antibias Training Act

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

Wren Massey (he/they)
Policy Intern

Wednesday 29, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

Senate Bill #293: County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland believes in protecting the rights of all Marylanders, particularly transgender community members, to have access to a quality education free of discrimination, whether it be on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national origin, native language, disability, or religion.

County Boards of Education play a particularly crucial role in ensuring that discrimination is not welcome in Maryland's schools, because it is in their hands to not only oversee what is happening in their county schools, but to also set county-wide policies. Yet, all too often, members of our County Boards of Education are left out of the room when best practices for combatting institutional discrimination and bias are discussed. The recurring antibias training required under Senate Bill 293 will ensure that these elected officials have this crucial training, putting them into a position better-suited to understand the real struggles faced by marginalized students, faculty, and staff within our school systems.

For these reasons, Trans Maryland encourages a favorable report on Senate Bill 293.

SB 293 - Favorable - 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 293 - Education, Energy, and the Environment - FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

Please support Senate Bill 293, which would require county Board of Education members to take antibias training during their terms.

We live in a time when rightwing extremist groups are fighting to get bigots onto the Boards of Education, so that they can pass policies that harm Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ students. While I'm not holding my breath, I would hope that requiring BOE members to take antibias training would make those members think twice, and maybe even provide an opening for them to care about marginalized students. At the very least, the training would help the Board of Education members who care about ALL of the students have a better understanding of what happens in the schools before they vote on policies.

I urge you to give Senate Bill 293 a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

SB 293 FINAL County Boards of Education - Antibias

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FAV



Testimony in SUPPORT of *Senate Bill 293 – County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)*
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 29, 2025

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 social service agencies, synagogues, and schools throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, equity, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports Senate Bill 293 which requires each member of a county board of education to complete antibias training at least once during a member's term. This Bill comes on the heels of the Maryland General Assembly's passage last year of legislation requiring all school employees to undergo biennial antibias training, including an understanding of implicit bias, antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of hatred against marginalized communities. SB 293 closes the loophole which did *not* include Board of Education members. It also specifies that the training will be performed separately from that of other school employees.

The JCRC runs a robust education outreach and programming department. Its mission is to combat school-based antisemitism; advocate on behalf of Jewish students, families, and employees; and promote safe, hate-free, respectful learning environments for all students. In Montgomery County, the JCRC is also deeply engaged in addressing all forms of academic inequity. We have strongly supported MCPS' anti-racist audit, we are a proud member of the Black and Brown Coalition for Educational Equity and Excellence, and we also work closely with Identity to support MCPS' Latino youth. The JCRC works tirelessly on a grassroots level to help educate school staff about what antisemitism is and how we can work together to address it in our schools. We know first-hand that there is a lack of understanding about what exactly antisemitism is, which leads to it being treated differently from other forms of hatred.

Dramatic spikes in antisemitism over the last several years have been well-documented and show no signs of abating. Immediately following Hamas' brutal October 7, 2023, antisemitism skyrocketed across the United States. Nationally there was a 300% increase in antisemitic incidents. And in our region, the JCRC has been on the frontlines of this crisis, responding to over 150 incidents in the 9 months following October 7th, a majority of them in Montgomery County Public Schools. These incidents have run the gamut from property vandalism to hate-

based bullying and more. Six schools with significant numbers of Jewish students and faculty, some located mere blocks from synagogues, were targeted with hateful graffiti.

School personnel often have limited familiarity with antisemitism and little cultural competency about Jewish ethnicity, Jewish practice, and the critical importance of Israel to the Jewish identities of an overwhelming majority of American Jews. To address this gap, the JCRC has developed an ever-expanding roster of teacher training opportunities for educators. Most critically, we have partnered with the ADL's DC regional office to develop a comprehensive 3-hour training on antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and Jewish identity that has been presented to over 1,400 MCPS personnel. The JCRC strongly believes that school employees should have a baseline competency in the forms of hatred that are significantly manifesting in our schools at this time, both those that are religiously based - antisemitism and Islamophobia - and otherwise. That includes xenophobia, anti-Asian hatred, homophobia, transphobia, and racism. This knowledge can help schools respond swiftly and effectively to hate and bias incidents when they occur.

SB 293 is an expression of our community's commitment to responding forcefully, consistently, and sensitively to a problem that has only continued to worsen over recent months and years, and which undermines the very fabric of our society. It is also a commitment to ensuring that our schools reflect the very best values that we wish to instill in future generations of leaders. For these reasons we urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 293.

SB-293_HadassahGB_FAV_2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Harriet Rubinson

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of SB293
County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members -
Requirement (County) Board Member Antibias Training Act)
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 29, 2025**

FAVORABLE

TO: Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair, Sen. Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
FROM: Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch, Co-Presidents
Hadassah Greater Baltimore

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Region of Hadassah, representing over 4,100 Marylanders, we are writing to urge you to **vote FOR Senate Bill 293 - County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**

This bill will require each member of a county board of education to complete antibias training at least once during the member's term to combat prejudices faced by various groups, as well as historically marginalized religious minorities, to include antisemitism.

It is important to equip our education leaders with the tools they need to understand and properly teach this material to their students.

The disturbing explosion of antisemitism in our country — and here in Maryland — underscores the need to teach our children about this heinous chapter in world history. It is critical that students receive a complete and accurate evidence based training of the Holocaust and the grave dangers of prejudice. Especially since the October 7, 2023 Hamas invasion of Israel, antisemitism and Holocaust denialism are rampant.

As seen in Hadassah's recently released report, *From Fear to Resilience: Women Facing Antisemitism*, the recent upsurge in antisemitism in our country deeply affects our daily sense of security and safety, and heightens the need to counter this scourge with an accurate history of the Holocaust. Two-thirds of the Jewish women we surveyed said antisemitism is affecting their lives, relationships and work.

One of the best ways to prevent history from repeating itself is through proper education and and Hadassah urges the committee for a favorable report on SB293.

Thank you,
Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch
Co-Presidents, Hadassah Greater Baltimore
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SB 293- FAVORABLE - One Pasadena 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 293 - Education, Energy, and the Environment -
FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

We urge a favorable vote on Senate Bill 293, the County Board Member Antibias Training Act.

One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community is an anti-bigotry group that works to change the culture of intolerance in Pasadena, MD. We, the One Pasadena Steering Committee, urge you to give Senate Bill 293 a favorable report.

In 2023, there was a concerted effort within the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to suppress support for marginalized communities, including Black folks and the LGBTQ+ community. This ill-advised piece of policy would have accidentally suppressed support for other marginalized communities such as people with disabilities, veterans, and POW/MIA movements.

Perhaps if we require anti-bias training for Board of Education members, they can do better.

Please vote favorably on SB 293, so that our board members will have the tools they need to serve all their students.

Sincerely,
The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD

Support SB0293 K.York Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie York

Position: FAV

**Testimony In Support of Senate Bill #293
County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members -
Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**


January 27, 2025

Position: Support

I urge you to support Senate Bill # 293 “County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act).” This type of training is very needed. I have personally witnessed several school board members in Maryland demonstrate both lack of awareness/sensitivity and outright bias towards a number of historically marginalized groups.

Please support Senate Bill #293.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie York', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katie York
Edgewood, Maryland
YorkForHarford@gmail.com

Support SB 293.pdf

Uploaded by: Kenneth Nelson

Position: FAV

13900 Berryville Road
Germantown, Maryland 20784
January 27, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee,

Support for Senate Bill 293 (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 293, introduced by you. I support this legislation as a spiritual leader of a multi-generational and multi-diverse congregation. It requires each county board of education member to complete anti-bias training at least once during their term. This legislation provides a practical and balanced approach to ensuring equity and accountability in our education system while respecting the diversity of thought among local leaders.

This bill is grounded in the principle of good governance. School board members oversee diverse student populations and make decisions that directly impact education outcomes. Antibias training ensures that they are equipped to navigate these responsibilities with fairness and cultural awareness, enabling them to serve all constituents effectively.

The training is structured to minimize burden, requiring completion only once per term. It focuses on universally shared values such as fairness, mutual respect, and effective leadership. It does not promote specific ideologies or impose rigid frameworks but instead fosters an understanding of how unconscious biases, often unintentionally, can shape policies and practices.

Senate Bill 293 is a thoughtful and balanced measure that promotes fairness, accountability, and respect in education governance. I urge the General Assembly to pass this legislation and affirm Maryland's commitment to equity and excellence in education.

If I can provide additional insights or support regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at kennethnelso@gmail.com or 301-367-0012.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Maryland's future.

Sincerely,



Rev. Kenneth Nelson

SB0293 antibias training FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Salganik

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Testimony: SB0293 – County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)
Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD
Submitting: Laura Salganik, Chair
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: January 29, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council is submitting this testimony in favor of SB0293 which requires each member of a county board of education to receive antibias training at least once during the member's term. Last year, the legislature required antibias training for school employees, and we believe it is critically important for Board of Education members to also receive this training.

Boards of Education have overall responsibility, among other things, for setting policies, budgeting, approving and revising curricula, and setting the school calendar. Surely, they should be knowledgeable and sensitive regarding biases, prejudices, intolerance, and discrimination faced by the many groups of students in our schools.

Our community is concerned not only that antisemitism and Islamophobia have become more salient, but also about longstanding biases against other groups. We are glad to see that the legislation casts a wide net around the need for cultural responsiveness and antibias training and requires that the training incorporates lessons learned from actual incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

We urge the committee to give a favorable report to this important legislation.

SB293_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 293
County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for Members – Requirement

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
January 29, 2025

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 293, which would require each member of a county board of education to complete antibias training at least once during the member's term.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As we continue to see a disturbing rise in hate crimes in our state, educators have a critical role to play as leaders within the school community, which is why we were proud to support the establishment of antibias training for educators in the 2024 legislative session.¹ Extending this training to county board members will help ensure that those making critical education policy decisions are well informed of their role in preventing bias, prejudice, and hate.

We support efforts to ensure that all decision makers in public education are prepared to address alarming incidents motivated by prejudice. Students and their families will benefit when everyone leading our schools, from educators to elected officials, has a deep understanding of bias and how to prevent it.

We urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 293.

¹2023 Hate Crime Statistics for Maryland. <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/state-data/maryland>

SB0293- Antibias Training Act Testimony to the Edu

Uploaded by: Lauren Pruitt

Position: FAV



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Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

SB0293 – County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Lauren Pruitt, and I am the Legal Director at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving LGBTQ+ Marylanders from diverse backgrounds. I am writing in support of **SB0293**, which seeks to require county board of education members to complete antibias training during their terms.

SB0293 addresses a critical gap in training for those working in the education system that affects students across Maryland. A lack of antibias training for county board members leaves students from marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+, students of color, those with disabilities, and others, susceptible to discriminatory policies, perpetuating an intolerant educational environment. Research indicates that supportive educational environments reduce the rates of suicide and symptoms of depression among LGBTQ+ youth.

Specifically, **SB0293** would:

- **Promote Inclusive Educational Environments:** Awareness of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students may encourage county board members to implement policies promoting more inclusive and safe educational environments.
- **Reduce Implicit Bias:** Antibias training may support county board members in identifying and reducing personal implicit biases, which may influence policy decisions positively affecting LGBTQ+ students.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Phillip Westry, Esq.
Executive Director

Lauren Pruitt, Esq.
Legal Director

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This bill is essential to address and mitigate harm to LGBTQ+ students. For example, LGBTQ+ youth face disproportionately high rates of bullying and discrimination. Studies show that supportive environments reduce bullying and improve mental health outcomes for students, particularly those from marginalized groups. Subsequently, LGBTQ+-affirming schools report significantly lower rates of bullying and mental health challenges among all students. Antibias training for county board members is critical to addressing these disparities and fostering supportive, safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students.

As an advocate, I recognize the systemic barriers faced by students in Maryland, particularly those from marginalized communities who do not have access to supportive and affirming environments in school. A lack of antibias training only exacerbates the harm faced by these students, especially for those who do not have supportive spaces away from school.

SB0293 fills a critical gap in training for educational leaders, equipping them to address biases and create equitable policies for all Maryland students. I urge the committee to issue a favorable report for **SB0293**. By requiring antibias training for county board members, Maryland will take a significant step toward ensuring equity, safety, and inclusion for all students, regardless of their identity or background.

Sincerely,

Lauren Pruitt
Legal Director
FreeState Justice

Sources:

1. Anti-LGBTQ+ School Policies and LGBTQ+ Young People, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/anti-lgbtq-school-policies-and-lgbtq-young-people/>
2. Bullying and Suicide Risk among LGBTQ Youth, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/bullying-and-suicide-risk-among-lgbtq-youth/>
3. School Climate for LGBTQ+ Students in Maryland, https://maps.glsen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GLSEN_2021_NSCS_State_Snapshots_MD.pdf

Testimony for SB0293 pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Lesley Frost

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 0293, County Boards of Education - Anti Bias Training - Requirements.

January 27, 2025

To the Chair and Honorable Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee.

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Co Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MDSPA) and I am writing to express strong support for SB 0293. This support is based on NCJW resolutions III.1 “The elimination of antisemitism” and resolution IV.1, “The enactment, enforcement, and preservation of laws and regulations that protect civil rights and individual liberties for all.”

The training requirements for County School Board members goes beyond raising awareness of biases, prejudices, intolerances, and discrimination of historically marginalized racial and ethnic minorities, to specifically address prejudices faced by historically marginalized religious minorities, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.

As we have witnessed a historic increase in antisemitic attacks in our schools, the advocates of NCJW, who live across the state, support every avenue that has remedies for these antisemitic attacks that make our students feel marginalized and less safe in their schools. We believe that all adults responsible for overseeing education must be informed and sensitive to all forms of bias so that this legislation succeeds in its aim “to achieve schools that are more inclusive and tolerant of students, faculty, and staff regardless of an individual’s race, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or disability.”

On behalf of the more than 700 advocates of the National Council of Jewish Women in Maryland, I urge the committee to support SB0293.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Lesley Frost
7707 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda MD 20814
lesleyfrost0@gmail.com

Co Chair NCJW MDSPA
ncjw.mdacts@gmail.com

SB0293 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Meredith Weisel

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
January 29, 2025

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel
ADL Washington D.C. Regional Director

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **support of Senate Bill 0293, County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**. This bill builds on the successes of the last session to expand the current antibias training law to now require each member of a county board of education to complete antibias training at least once during their term. It reinforces the importance of equipping decision-makers within our county school boards with tools and knowledge to address the unprecedented levels of hate crimes and bias incidents impacting our faith-based communities.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” As a leading anti-hate organization, for decades one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, producing research to inform the public, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices to effectively address and counter these threats. Further, ADL conducts an annual *Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents*, which is widely used by law enforcement, educational institutions, elected officials, and the community at large to understand not only how to respond to antisemitic incidents, but how to create change.

At a time of rising antisemitism across the country, including in the entire state of Maryland, this bill sends a clear message that our community is committed to ensuring that schools have the tools they need to push back against these trends. The need for robust training for our educators and decision-makers in K-12 schools could not be more urgent. When our local education leaders do not understand the history of antisemitism and how it manifests in modern day, or the elements leading to these incidents, they cannot fully grasp the significance of bias and bigotry, or the lasting impact that hateful words and conduct can have on the community at large. **Therefore, this bill is a measure ADL wholeheartedly supports and sees as a critically important step in the right direction.**

In 2023, ADL tabulated 8,873 antisemitic incidents across the United States, representing a 140% increase from the 3,698 incidents recorded in 2022 and marking the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. This dramatic increase reverses trends from the early 2010s, when antisemitic incidents were at some of the lowest levels in the history of the Audit. Since 2014, annual incident totals have risen year-over-year, breaking records in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, and now again in 2023. Even before October 7, 2023,

ADL observed significant monthly increases in antisemitic incidents compared to 2022. The previous monthly record of 394 incidents, set in November 2022, was surpassed in February, March, April, May, and September of 2023, with September alone reaching 513 incidents.

In 2023, there were 1,162 antisemitic incidents reported in K-12 schools across the United States, a 135% increase from the 495 incidents recorded in 2022. These incidents included 672 cases of harassment, 464 cases of vandalism, and 26 cases of assault. The 672 cases of harassment represent a staggering 161% increase from 2022, with 154 of these incidents (23%) involving swastikas drawn on classmates' notebooks, classroom chalkboards, and desks. The 464 cases of vandalism reflect a 100% increase from 2022, with swastikas present in 87% of these incidents (402 cases). Graffiti found in schools included hate-filled messages such as "Fuck the Jews Hitler was Right (sic)," "We hate Jews," and "I like what the Nazis Did, I hate Jews."

In Maryland, the surge in antisemitism has been particularly alarming. In 2023, ADL tracked 339 antisemitic incidents statewide, a 211% increase from the 109 incidents reported in 2022 and a 516% increase from the 55 incidents recorded in 2021. Maryland accounted for 4% of all antisemitic incidents nationwide and ranked seventh in the country for the total number of incidents. Among the incidents in Maryland, there were 210 cases of harassment, a 233% increase from 63 in 2022; 124 cases of vandalism, an 188% increase from 43 in 2022; and five assaults, up from three in 2022. **These incidents placed Maryland fourth in the nation for the number of antisemitic incidents at K-12 institutions and 19th for incidents at colleges and universities.**

Given the sharp increase in incidents targeting K-12 schools, this data underscores the urgent need for antibias training for educators and school board members. Given the insidious nature of bullying, compounded by the fact that many children may not feel empowered to report their experiences, it is likely that the actual number of school-based antisemitic incidents was significantly higher than the data reported in the Audit.

These incidents did not take place in a vacuum. They come at a time of rising bigotry, the emboldening of hate groups, and a resurgence of Holocaust denialism—a challenge that has existed on the fringes for many years, but in recent years has encroached on the mainstream of our politics and discourse. When our school employees and education decision-makers and leaders are not prepared to work with students or respond to parents and guardians, it can cause tremendous harm to the school community of those impacted by the hate incidents. Education is therefore key to combating hate in all its forms. By learning about the history of antisemitism, anti-Muslim hate, or other forms of religious discrimination, and how we are seeing it evident today, educators will have the opportunity to explore how stereotypes, prejudice, and religious and ethnic hatred can escalate to atrocity.

ADL has been a long-standing trainer on antisemitism and anti-bias education for schools throughout the entire state. Through initiatives like *No Place for Hate*® (NPFH), ADL partners with many schools to provide a framework designed to engage students and staff in dialogue and active learning on topics such as bias, bullying, inclusion, and allyship, tailored to the needs of each community. Additionally, ADL Education offers free online resources for educators, such as *Antisemitism: What Do Educators Need to Know?*, a self-paced module that introduces educators to Judaism and antisemitism, which has been widely accessed by teachers and administrators across Maryland. For students, the pilot program *Awareness to Action* provides

middle and high schoolers with lessons on the history and impact of antisemitism and how to support their peers as allies. Beyond virtual resources, ADL delivers in-person, facilitated workshops for educators, including *The First Steps to Challenging Antisemitism* and *Educators Challenging Antisemitism*, which introduce participants to the realities of contemporary antisemitism and equip them with tools to address and challenge bias in their schools. Through these comprehensive programs, ADL continues to lead efforts in combatting hate and fostering inclusivity in K-12 education.

Behind every hate crime statistic, there is a person, a family, a community – dealing with the unimaginable. Hate crimes and bias incidents cause a distinct type of harm that can have a lasting, immeasurable impact. This is because they target people due to their protected, immutable characteristics – race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, disability – things about a person that are central to identity and cannot be changed. ADL is proud to be the leading anti-hate organization that has been able to help thousands of people who report hate and bias incidents to us.

We feel very strongly that it is imperative to disrupt the cycle of hate with education, starting with those who are leading our school buildings and classrooms. **SB 0293** helps put this conversation front and center and continues the good work that ADL and many others have been focusing on in several area school districts. There is unfortunately no magic wand that we can wave to undo the irreparable harm that hate crimes or bias incidents cause. Yet here in Maryland, we can make sure that our policies are crafted in a way that will help stem the rising tide. We have an important obligation and unique opportunity to empower a new generation to learn from our past to build a safer, stronger, and more equitable society in the future.

**We urge the House Ways and Means Committee to give
Senate Bill 0293 a favorable report.**

Testimony in support of SB0293 - County Boards of

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

01/29/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0293- POSITION: FAVORABLE

County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0293, **County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**

Recently, the Frederick County Board of Education meeting shows the need for this bill.

Frederick County Board of Education member Colt Black is facing criticism over comments he made on Wednesday about transgender students while talking about the school district's policy on gender identity. Referring to the part of the policy that instructs teachers and Frederick County Public Schools staff members to use a student's preferred name and pronouns, Black said: "Just as much as you have a right to be you, we have our right to be free from you." ¹

This transphobic statement by a member of the Board of Education has been roundly condemned. It shows how important this bill is. This bill would require each member of a county board of education to complete certain antibias training at least once during the member's term.

Whether the bias is conscious or unconscious, the demonstration that an elected member of the board does not feel he represents all the students delineates the need for this training.

Unconscious bias training offers several benefits, including improved workplace diversity and inclusivity. It helps employees recognize and overcome ingrained prejudices, fostering a more open and respectful work environment. This training enhances decision-making processes and team collaboration by reducing biased behaviors. ²

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0293.

¹ https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/education/schools/public_k-12/school-board-members-comments-on-gender-identity-policy-spark-criticism/article_e1711cf2-aa47-5421-88ba-4fbb083d58b7.html

² <https://www.continu.com/blog/implicit-bias-training#:~:text=Unconscious%20bias%20training%20offers%20several,open%20and%20respectful%20work%20environment.>

SB 293

Uploaded by: Sharon Ringley

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE
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WRITTEN STATEMENT

FAVORABLE

SB 293 - County Board Member Antibias Training Act

Education, Energy, and Environment

January 29, 2025

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, **strongly supports SB 293**, which requires members of local boards of education to complete the same comprehensive antibias training currently required for public school employees.

School board members play a crucial role in shaping educational policy and culture and should receive antibias training to better understand and address issues of bias and discrimination in our educational system.

SB 293 builds upon legislation passed in 2024 that required the Maryland State Department of Education to develop antibias training for school employees. The training is to combat the bias faced by marginalized religious minorities, and will specifically address antisemitism and Islamophobia. Such training efforts directly align with the MLJC's mission to "*combat the rising frequency of hate crimes against Jewish communities and all protected populations under the hate crimes statute.*"

School board members are not considered employees of school districts and were, therefore, not covered by the 2024 legislation. SB 293 extends this required training to school board members, ensuring that our educators and our educational leaders in Maryland have the knowledge and understanding to combat bias at all levels of our school systems.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 293.

2025-01-29-County Board Member Antibias Training A

Uploaded by: Spencer Dove

Position: FAV



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

January 29, 2025

Senate Bill 293 - County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, commercial leasing, health services and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, MCCR supported HB1386/CH128 which requires all school employees to receive antibias training. MCCR now supports passage of SB293 so that members of county boards of education undergo the same antibias training mandated by last Session's HB1386/CH128. MCCR believes that this training is critical in ensuring that everyone responsible for educating Maryland's children are equipped to do so in an equitable and inclusive manner.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable report on SB293. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

Governor

Wes Moore

Lt. Governor

Aruna Miller

Commission Chair

Stephanie Suerth, MPA,
CCEP

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SB 293 - State Board - SUPPORT.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Zachary Hands

Position: FAV



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools
Joshua L. Michael, Ph.D.
President, State Board of Education

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 293 – County Boards of Education– Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)

DATE: January 29, 2025

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports **SB 293 – County Boards of Education– Antibias Training for Members – Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)** which requires local board of education members to participate in antibias training, provided by the local education agency (LEA) at least once during the board members’ term of services.

MSDE is developing guidelines for antibias training programs to support LEAs in implementing antibias training for public school employees. This requirement was enacted in the Maryland Code, Education Article, § 6-126 in 2024 (HB 1386, CH. 128, 2024). Each county board is responsible for developing antibias training for staff based on the guidelines developed by the State.

The State Board and MSDE support the requirement of SB 293 which would add school board members to the groups that receive training. School board members that undergo anti-bias training may find that it helps to ensure they are aware of and actively combat potential biases in their decision-making processes, which could impact student experiences, curriculum development, and resource allocation, ultimately creating a more equitable learning environment for all students from diverse backgrounds.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 293**. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D., Executive Director of Government Affairs, at akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or Zachary Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov for any additional information.

2025 Testimony SB 293.pdf

Uploaded by: Chuck Thompson

Position: UNF

Senate Bill 293 – Oppose

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
“County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board
Member Antibias Training Act)”**

Please vote for a **UNFAVORABLE** report for **SB0293**.

Guideline (viii) states the antibias training shall be evidence-based. What evidence supports the efficacy of this training?

My experience is if you associate people with oppressed groups then people will tend to think of these groups as oppressed. If you teach people about microaggressions then people will see everything as a microaggression. This isn't helping anything.

Training on values needs to be principle-based, and before any further expansion of this Article takes place an evaluation and assessment of desired outcomes and best practices to achieve these outcomes needs to take place.

Thank you for your consideration,



Chuck Thompson
Pasadena, MD

Written Testimony for HB 324_SB 293_ County Board

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HB 324/SB 293: County Boards of Education - Antibias Training for Members - Requirement (County Board Member Antibias Training Act)**: Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee & EEE Committee:

I understand the reasoning behind this bill. All County Board Members should be respectful of the public, students, teachers, etc.

I disagree with the need for this bill, however. I believe that when voters vote, they take into consideration how their chosen candidate treats other people. When you research a candidate, there are usually several different videos of that candidate speaking during their campaign, even if a voter has never seen the candidate in person. Therefore, we as voters already know (or have a really good idea, based on the candidate's videos and previous behavior) how a candidate will conduct himself or herself when that candidate reaches office. I do not see the need for this bill. I feel the State of Maryland will be approaching the arena of compelled speech if this bill is passed. Why else would this bill be passed unless our legislators want to compel a County Board member's right to free speech by indicating what they can and cannot talk about or how they are to word their comments? It makes no sense to have this bill passed into law otherwise.

One of the goals of this training is to "...Aim to reduce implicit bias..." Define implicit bias and explain who would use it. Would only white/caucasian Americans use "implicit bias"? Would members of "marginalized" minority groups be considered to have "implicit bias"? If not, why not? I know people from lots of different races and backgrounds, and I know people in your "marginalized" minority list that have what I would consider to be prejudices or stereotypes of other people in other minority groups.

Also, in your "list" of marginalized minorities, I do not see any mention of WOMEN. Why are WOMEN not listed in this legislation? I know the bill reads "...and other historically marginalized racial and ethnic minorities..." I don't think WOMEN count as either a racial minority or an ethnic minority. Yet WOMEN are not listed.

Also, there are policies in most County Boards that "...Seek to achieve schools that are more inclusive and tolerant of students, faculty, and staff regardless of an individual's race, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity,

religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or disability...” Therefore, it does not need to be duplicated in this bill.

In summary, I do not agree with the need for this bill. It encroaches into the arena of compelled speech, and is an affront to free speech. The “marginalized” minority list is incomplete. There is no definition or explanation of “implicit bias” and who would use “implicit bias” other than the implied white/caucasian Americans.

Therefore, I implore you to **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals
Mother of 3 and Maryland resident