

SENATE VERSION HB71 - Holocaust Education Grant Fu

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Position: FAV

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Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

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.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

 **The Associated**
Jewish Federation of Baltimore

HB71_HadassahGB_FAV_Senate_4-2-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Harriet Robinson

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of HB0071
Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
April 2, 2025**

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FAVORABLE

TO: Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair, Sen. Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

FROM: Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch, Co-Presidents
Hadassah Greater Baltimore

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On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Region of Hadassah, representing over 4,100 Marylanders, we are writing to urge you to **vote FOR House Bill 0071 - the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program.**

This bill will establish a grant assistance program dedicated to Holocaust Education in the State Department of Education to assist local school systems to teach the Holocaust in public schools.

It is important to equip our teachers with the tools they need to understand and properly teach this material to their students, and this grant funding is key to the professional development and materials needed to make this happen.

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 history 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.

One of the best ways to prevent history from repeating itself is through proper education and Hadassah urges the committee for a favorable report on HB0071.

Thank you,

Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch
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Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of House Bill 71
Education – Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program – Established

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
April 2, 2025

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 71, which would establish the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the Maryland State Department of Education to assist local school systems with Holocaust education in public schools, authorize a local school system to apply to the Department for a grant from the Program to be used only for certain Holocaust-related training, materials, and activities, and require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$50,000 to the Program.

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 our state and country has faced a profoundly disturbing rise in antisemitic hate in the form of vandalism and attacks over the past several years, it is of the utmost importance that students receive a complete and accurate history education that comprehensively addresses the Holocaust and the grave dangers of prejudice.¹² It is of the utmost importance that students receive a complete and accurate history education, which includes that comprehensively addresses the Holocaust and the grave dangers of prejudice. This bill provides important funding to that end. LEAs can use this grant to deepen students' understanding of Holocaust history by providing up-to-date instructional materials and opportunities to learn through field trips and assemblies.

We also recognize the benefits of making available professional development on Holocaust-related content knowledge, and we urge that any trainings should be subject to collective bargaining to ensure that educators can gain credit hours and receive the full benefit of this guidance. **We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 71.**

¹ 'Way Out of Control': I-Team Examines Rise in Antisemitic Incidents in Montgomery County (2023).
<https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/way-out-of-control-i-team-examines-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-montgomery-county/3266981/>

² Antisemitism is on the rise in the U.S., surveys say (2023).
<https://www.axios.com/2023/02/13/antisemitism-ajc-poll-survey-rise-online>

Testimony HB0071 pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Lesley Frost

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of HB0071
Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program**

April 2, 2025

FAVORABLE

TO: Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair, Sen. Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair and members of the 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 MD SPA) and I am writing to express our strong support for HB 0071, Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program.

Our support is based on NCJW resolution IV “Ensure and advance individual and civil rights”, and specifically on resolution IV.10, “The historically accurate study of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide as part of the regular curriculum in all schools.”

As we have witnessed a historic increase in antisemitic attacks in our schools, the advocates of NCJW, who live across the state, support legislation that provides assistance to our local school systems to increase and enhance Holocaust education. Maryland requires high schoolers to take history courses, which include lessons on the Holocaust. However, a 2020 report conducted by the Claims Conference that “studied young people’s familiarity.....ranked Maryland in the bottom 10 states for Holocaust knowledge.” In addition, the absence of appropriate instruction in the lower grades results in students whose knowledge and behavior are inadequate to mitigate the roots of the current spike in antisemitic incidents.

Maryland should have a public school program that addresses the need for Holocaust education with measures of success that confirm the merit of such programs. The grant-based approach to Holocaust education in HB0071 would allow for such targeted approaches to succeed. On behalf of the more than 700 advocates of the National Council of Jewish Women in Maryland, I urge the committee to support HB0071, Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Lesley Frost

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Agudah senate testimony - hb71- holocaust grant -

Uploaded by: Rabbi Ariel Sadwin

Position: FAV



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

APRIL 2, 2025

HOUSE BILL 71

EDUCATION – HOLOCAUST EDUCATION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM – ESTABLISHED

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, on behalf of the 10,000 students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state, and on behalf of many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and their families, who are such an important part of our communities.

While the geographical location of the perpetuation of the Holocaust may have been confined to Europe and northern Africa, its ramifications know no boundaries. Those who do not learn history, it is famously said, are doomed to repeat it. Enabling educators to provide proper Holocaust education is therefore a most worthy endeavor. Students can learn the value and importance of tolerance, of respect for all, and of refraining from dehumanizing others.

In light of the frightening resurgence of hate and resentment in today's times, it is all the more important that we remember the sobering lessons of the past. In addition to those who gleefully engage in Holocaust denial, we are all too familiar with instances where individuals invoke the Holocaust to describe situations or individuals that, in reality, bear little to no resemblance to that horrific event. Such comparisons often stem from a lack of awareness about the realities of the Holocaust. By accurately teaching children about this dark chapter in history, we can help prevent the trivializing the Holocaust and preserve its seriousness.

We respectfully request the members of the committee to help schools further Holocaust education by giving a favorable report on House Bill 71.

HB 71 Education - Holocaust Education Assistance G

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FWA



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 71 –
Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program - Established
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 2, 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 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. We also work to combat antisemitism and all forms of hatred, and one of our most sacred responsibilities is Holocaust remembrance.

The JCRC supports House Bill 71 With Amendments which is critical to our efforts to strengthen Holocaust education, teach tolerance, and reduce bigotry and prejudice. The purpose of the Bill is to establish the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the State Department of Education to help to fund Holocaust educational materials and training for teachers. The Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$50,00 for this program. The JCRC believes this fund is necessary to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to educate students about one of the darkest chapters of history and one of the oldest forms of hatred-antisemitism.

The lack of knowledge about the Holocaust is astounding. According to a recent survey by the Claims Conference, which tracks Holocaust awareness, two-thirds of young Marylanders did not know 6 million were killed in the Holocaust, more than half could not name a single concentration camp, and 13% said they believed Jews caused the Holocaust. Survey after survey, we continue to witness a decline in Holocaust knowledge and awareness. Equally disturbing is the trend towards Holocaust denial and distortion. According to Gideon Taylor, Claims Conference President, “to address this trend, we must put a greater focus on Holocaust education in our schools globally. If we do not, denial will soon outweigh knowledge, and future generations will have no exposure to the critical lessons of the Holocaust.”

Our school systems need support, and they need it now, given the relentless rise of antisemitism. Before the October 7th terrorist attack on Israel, the JCRC was fielding countless calls every week about antisemitism at elementary, middle, and high schools in the area. Since then, antisemitism has exploded, and we have been bombarded with requests to address this

spike and explain the roots and manifestations of antisemitism. We run a high school peer educational program, bring holocaust survivors into schools, and have led countless workshops and webinars on antisemitism throughout Montgomery County. Yet, all of this is not enough. Our community is demanding more. More education. More resources. More funding. As Former Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, has stated, “antisemitism is a virus that evolves and cannot be cured, but we can name it, condemn it, and then educate the community about history and hatred.”

There is no panacea or magic bullet to combating antisemitism, but enhanced teacher training is essential to empower educators to respond appropriately, and perhaps even prevent incidents from happening. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for House Bill 71 With Amendments.

HB0071 crossfile FWA - Education - Holocaust Educa

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FWA

HB0071_Crossfile Bill_RichardKaplowitz_FWA

04/02/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0071 - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
Education - Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program - Established

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, 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. I am submitting this testimony in support with its amendments of HB#/0071, Education - Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program - Established

This bill was passed with amendments 138-1 on 03/17/25.

The United Nations agency for Education, Science, Culture, Communication and Information (UNESCO) has studied the need for Holocaust education programs. They have documented why it should occur and the importance of that education.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/importance-teaching-and-learning-about-holocaust>

In a time where antisemitism is at critically high levels The Anti-Discrimination League has reported over 3,200 incidents since the start of the Israel-Hamas War. It is incumbent on us to provide education about how antisemitism led to the holocaust if we want to begin to combat this outbreak of hate.

The importance of teaching what hate can lead to can help students begin to feel empathy and compassion as they better understand the history behind hate.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report with its amendments on HB#/0071.