



HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 534

**NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS – TRANSCRIPTS – PROHIBITION ON PUNITIVE MEASURES
RELATED TO STUDENT DEBT**

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

OPPOSE

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, and on behalf of the 10,000+ students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state.

Tuition is a primary way through which a school maintains its ability to operate. As such, it is important that the schools retain mechanisms through which proper tuition collection can be enforced. The tuition agreement between parent or caregiver and the school is freely entered into, and with clear terms. If a parent or caregiver then attempts to evade or renege, it is important that the school have the ability to incentivize them to change course. It is therefore important that schools have the ability to exercise the threat of taking various punitive measures in the event that the other party attempts to evade paying the agreed-upon tuition payments for the education their child or ward has received.

While our schools respect our parent body immensely, we do recognize that on occasion the ability to withhold a transcript until the parent meets their obligation is a necessary means of ensuring the school receives the funds it needs to pay salaries and properly function.

It should be noted that many of our schools are forced to operate on a tight budget, and thus even small amounts of payment can have a great impact on their operations. It is important that our schools retain their independence rather than be constrained, as House Bill 534 would do. Of note as well is that House Bill 534 would create a significant increase in litigation as schools would be forced to utilize the courts, rather than settling disputes independently.

We therefore respectfully request an UNFAVORABLE report on House Bill 534.