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Temple Isaiah  
Temple Oheb Shalom  
Winands Road Synagogue Center  
Zionist Organization of America  
Baltimore District



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### Senate Bill 606 Criminal Law - Hate Crimes - Basis (2nd Lieutenant Richard Collins, III's Law)

Judicial Proceedings – February 11, 2020

## SUPPORT

**Background:** Senate Bill 606 (SB606) would ensure that if the race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or national origin of a victim is only partially a motivating factor for the commission of a crime, that the perpetrator can still be charged with a hate crime.

**Written Comments:** Hate crimes targeted at an individual are often accompanied by another more violent offence. We need to ensure that prosecutors are able to charge these crimes as incidents of hate in addition to whatever heinous crimes were also committed. Rarely does a week go by where we are not alerted of a report of a hate incident in our community. While they range in severity, each incident is disturbing and unacceptable. As incidents of hate continue to rise, this change to the law will unfortunately only continue to be more necessary.

According to the FBI's most recent report on hate crimes, law enforcement agencies from across the nation reported that there were 8,819 victims of hate crimes in 2018. The Bureau found that attacks on Jews accounted for 56.9 % of all religion-based hate crimes, by far the highest of any targeted religious group. 59.6% of all hate crimes victims were targeted because of the offenders' bias against race, ethnicity, or ancestry, in other words simply because of who the victim is. According to the 2018 State of Maryland Hate/Bias Report authored by the Maryland State Police, we have seen a sharp increase in hate/bias incidents over the past decade. This sharp rise affected a geographically and demographically diverse array of Marylanders, with increases seen in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Somerset counties, and Baltimore City. These reported incidents targeted both individual people and some of our most vital arenas for community engagement, including schools, community centers, and places of worship.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on SB606.

*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.*