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Written Testimony

House Bill 1164 - Criminal Law - Domestic Terrorism

Judiciary Committee

March 3, 2020

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 1164 defines and criminalizes Domestic Terrorism. It is defined as a crime committed with the intent to cause serious injury or kill another while attempting to intimidate the population or influence government policy. Additionally, this bill requires the Governor's Office of Homeland Security to report on the State's efforts to detect and prevent acts of Domestic Terrorism.

Written Comments: An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. Sadly, we have seen an unprecedented increase in mass shooting incidents fueled by white nationalism and other forms of hate or bias across the nation. According to the FBI, domestic terrorists are individuals who commit violent criminal acts in furtherance of ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as racial bias and anti-government sentiment. In recent years, Domestic Terrorists have been responsible for more American deaths than international terrorists. However, there is no legal mechanism for designating domestic extremist groups as terrorists and the charges now used against these homegrown extremists often do not even mention terrorism. HB1164 aims to give a name to a charge for this specific type of violent act.

The Jewish community is among the communities most targeted by domestic terrorists, from Tree of Life, Poway, Jersey City and Monsey, our community is under attack. It is important for our community, for our friends in other communities under attack and for the State and Nation, that there is a chargeable offense for domestic terrorism.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB1164.

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.