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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### House Bill 1056 (HB1056) – Racing and Community Development Act of 2020

### House Appropriations and Ways & Means Committees February 25, 2020

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation  
American Jewish Committee  
Americans for Peace Now  
Baltimore Chapter  
American Israel Public Affairs Committee  
American Red Magen David for Israel  
American Zionist Movement  
Amit Women  
Association of Reform Zionists of America  
Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation  
Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance  
Baltimore Men's ORT  
Baltimore Zionist District  
Beth Am Congregation  
Beth El Congregation  
Beth Israel Congregation  
Beth Shalom Congregation of  
Howard County  
Beth Tfiloh Congregation  
B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region  
B'nai Israel Congregation  
B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation  
Bolton Street Synagogue  
Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.  
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation  
Chizuk Amuno Congregation  
Congregation Beit Tikvah  
Congregation Beth Shalom of  
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Congregation Tiferes Yisroel  
Federation of Jewish Women's  
Organizations of Maryland  
Hadassah  
Har Sinai – Oheb Shalom Congregation  
J Street  
Jewish Federation of Howard County  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Jewish War Veterans  
Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary  
Jewish Women International  
Jews For Judaism  
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah  
Hebrew Congregation  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Ner Tamid Congregation  
Rabbinical Council of America  
Religious Zionists of America  
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation  
Shomrei Eemunah Congregation  
Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society  
Suburban Orthodox Congregation  
Temple Beth Shalom  
Temple Isaiah  
Winands Road Synagogue Center  
Zionist Organization of America  
Baltimore District

## SUPPORT

**Background:** HB1056 lays out a vision for a redesigned and rebuilt Pimlico Race Course that offers modernized facilities for the Preakness, as well as ways to use the property year-round — athletic fields in the infield; spaces for community meetings, arts festivals, concerts and banquets; and parcels for mixed-use commercial, retail and residential development, such as a supermarket, family and senior housing, office space and more. The plan would also provide for a new clubhouse, training facilities, stables and housing for track workers at Laurel Park, and donate the Bowie Training Center to government and education entities for primarily recreational uses. The plan is the result of extensive negotiations by city leaders, the owners of the Maryland Jockey Club, and horse racing industry stakeholders.

**Written Comments:** Northwest Baltimore faces a pivotal moment for its future, and this legislation promises to bring a renaissance of economic opportunities and resources to the Northwest Baltimore community. HB1056 ensures the historic Preakness Stakes stays in Baltimore, offers a clear vision for horse racing's future in Maryland, and creates the kind of momentum that is critical for redeveloping and strengthening Central Park Heights and beyond. The redevelopment of the Pimlico site is an extraordinary job-creating opportunity during construction and the many years that follow.

The Jewish community has long believed that Pimlico and the Preakness play critical roles in the economic vitality of both the nearby neighborhoods of Northwest Baltimore and greater Baltimore City. Over the last 30 plus years, tens of millions of public, private and foundation dollars have been invested in strengthening the neighborhoods of Park Heights. Less than a mile away from Pimlico, The Associated maintains multimillion dollars of investment in the Jewish Community Center, as well as offices for such agencies as Jewish Community Services, the Baltimore Jewish Council and CHAI (Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc.). Also within a mile of the track, CHAI owns and operates a number of apartment buildings for seniors, and has millions of dollars on loan to homeowners who purchased and/or renovated their houses with CHAI's assistance. CHAI is investing in maintaining and developing housing

stock in the area through its Senior Home Repair, Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors and acquisition and rehab programs.

This is about more than just racing. It's about community investment. This plan will help ensure that Pimlico — and the communities of Park Heights — will be a vital part of the future of Baltimore City for many decades to come.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on HB1056.

*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.*