

## OFFICERS

RABBI ANDREW BUSCH

President

ELIZABETH GREEN

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

THE HON. CHAYA FRIEDMAN

BENJAMIN ROSENBERG

RABBI STEVEN SCHWARTZ

MELANIE SHAPIRO

ROBIN WEIMAN

YEHUDA NEUBERGER

Past President

HOWARD LIBIT

Executive Director



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### House Bill 1210 (HB1210) – Corporate Diversity - Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission

Senate Finance Committee

March 24, 2021

## 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

Carroll County

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 Emunah Congregation

Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society

Suburban Orthodox Congregation

Temple Beth Shalom

Temple Isaiah

Zionist Organization of America

Baltimore District

## SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

**Background:** HB1210, as amended, would prohibit a corporation or nonprofit from qualifying for certain state benefits unless the entity is able to demonstrate either membership of underrepresented communities in the entity's board or executive leadership; or support for underrepresented communities in the entity's mission. The requirement would apply to corporations and non-profit organizations, including foundations, schools, and hospitals, and would include state capital grant funding totaling \$1 million or more in a single fiscal year; state tax credits totaling \$1 million or more in a single fiscal year; or the receipt of a state contract with a total value of \$1 million or more in a fiscal year. Underrepresented community is defined in the bill as a community whose members self-identify as Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native. Regulations and compliance would be determined by Department of Commerce and the Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies and programs. As a Jewish community, we are strongly in support of efforts to encourage greater diversity, particularly in the ranks of people who are making leadership decisions for organizations. We also are passionately committed to efforts to support the communities in which we live, and our agencies routinely provide services to members of vulnerable communities without regard to race or religion. We collectively see our mission as including improving our broader communities, and we have been particularly focused on such city neighborhoods of Park Heights, Reservoir Hill and Jonestown.

We urge committee members to consider ways to better define legislative intent for diversity within this legislation. We are concerned that too much room is left up to interpretation of executive branch agencies, without more direction from the General Assembly. For example, would it be sufficient for the 20-member board of a corporation or foundation to have just one member of an underrepresented community? Is there a process that the executive branch agencies should follow to determine proper representation levels? And would

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

5750 Park Heights Avenue, Suite 329 • Baltimore, Maryland 21215

410-542-4850 • fax 410-542-4834 • baltjc.org

Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated



it be sufficient for a corporation or non-profit to simply amend its mission statement to say that it supports underrepresented communities? Should there be a requirement that a certain level of resources be committed to helping such communities? We are concerned that without a clearer definition of legislative intent within the wording of the bill, the executive branch agencies might set the requirements too low, or regulators might make them unattainable for too many organizations.

The Baltimore Jewish Council believes that bringing greater diversity to the leadership of corporations and nonprofit organizations in Maryland is an important goal for the General Assembly. We support HB1210, with amendments that would further clarify the intent of legislators and give better guidance to the executive branch agencies that will be charged with implementing the bill.

*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 Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*