



*Government Relations • Israel Advocacy
Inter-Group Relations • Social Justice
Maryland • Virginia • Washington, DC • Since 1938*

**Testimony in Support with Amendments of House Bill 1210 –
Corporate Diversity – Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission
Economic Matters Committee**
March 24, 2021

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

House Bill 1210 prohibits for profit and nonprofit companies from qualifying for certain State benefits unless the company satisfies criteria relating to underrepresented communities. This requirement affects state capital grant funding and state tax credits totaling \$1 million dollars or the receipt of a state contract with a value of \$1 million dollars or more in a fiscal year. HB 1210 defines underrepresented community as a community whose members self-identify as Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native.

The JCRC has a long history advocating and securing funding for all faith-based communities including those that are vulnerable and disadvantaged. In fact, the agencies we represent are non-sectarian and the services these agencies provide reach the diverse community in which we live including citizens of various races, ethnicities, and religions. For example, the Jewish Social Service Agency and Jewish Council for the Aging provide services on a non-discriminatory basis and post their non-discrimination policies.

Bringing diversity to board compositions and leadership roles in non-profits is a priority of the JCRC and we commend the Bill Sponsor's effort in this matter. In fact, many diverse members of our Jewish community are members of underrepresented communities and there is a growing recognition within the Jewish community of the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Given that context, we seek clarification regarding the language and requirement to demonstrate support for underrepresented communities in the entity's board composition and mission statement.

We appreciate the House Amendments regarding the funding to be disbursed within one fiscal year. However, we also ask the committee to clarify the wording of the legislation so as to ensure its commendable goal of fostering diversity while not unintentionally limiting the provision of social services to underrepresented communities and the ability of our day schools to educate Jewish students who are members of underrepresented communities. We support HB 1210 with Amendments and seek further clarity as outlined above.