



March 10, 2021

Honorable Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chair, House Health & Govt. Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1276 – Maryland Emergency Management Agency-  
Emergency Planning and Management Cultural Competence- Study**

Dear Chair Shane E. Pendergrass and House Health & Govt. Operations Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill **1276** entitled Maryland Emergency Management Agency - Emergency Planning and Management Cultural Competence. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization.

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency, or MEMA, works to reduce the risk of disaster emergencies by working with residents and stakeholders in the state of Maryland. Its critical work helps to proactively manage consequences through collaborative work with communities and partners across our state.

This bill will ensure that MEMA studies and makes recommendations on how to deal with emergency responder situations to specific populations such as minorities, disabled individuals, and individuals with limited English speaking proficiency. This research will help meet the needs of residents with unique circumstances by requiring MEMA to come up with emergency planning strategies which specifically cater to these individuals.

By mapping out a strategy to better serve marginalized or ignored groups, we can ensure that all Maryland residents can benefit from emergency strategies that fulfill their own needs. **We support this bill because it sets the tone for equitable access to a vital public agency's services. Therefore, we respectfully urge your vote in favor of HB1276.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Huzzaifa Muhammad  
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