

Date of Hearing: February 3

Heidi Rhodes
Silver Spring, 20904

TESTIMONY ON HBI 46 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Repeal Education – Reportable Offenses and Student Discipline – Alterations

TO: Chair Moon, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Heidi Rhodes

My name is Heidi Rhodes. I am a resident of District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of the repeal of HBI 46, the Reportable Offenses and Student Discipline bill.

As a Social Justice leader at my synagogue, Oseh Shalom in Laurel Maryland, I work hard to see that Maryland treats everyone fairly and we break our addiction to punishment in this Country and State. My beliefs are guided by the Jewish teachings in the Talmud that If a person commits an act for which he is liable to receive two separate punishments, Jewish law will only allow him to be punished once.

We must end the current practice where if a student commits or is accused of a crime outside of school, that can be reported to their school and they can be suspended or expelled. This, to me, is a case of a child receiving a double punishment for the same crime.

This double punishment is a demonstration of the addiction to punishment in both Maryland and the Country. We must provide other resources in this state to support our students besides punishment. Suspending or expelling from school only perpetuates the cycle of criminalization and incarceration, especially of the black and brown communities who we know are more overly policed. In addition, suspension and expulsion increase the likelihood that the child will not complete high school and will be on the streets, thus continuing the school to prison pipeline.

In closing I want to stress the need for the repeal of this law to align our state laws with the Constitution and break our addiction to punishment. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on the repeal of HBI 46.**