



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
HB 515 – EDUCATION – STUDENT ATHLETES – UNIFORM MODIFICATIONS FOR
MODESTY (INCLUSIVE ATHLETIC ATTIRE ACT)
POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**By: Betsy Singer and Laura Salganik, Co-Chairs, Jewish Community Relations
Council
Hearing Date: February 17, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Howard County has worked closely with the Muslim and Indian communities in Howard County over the past several years. We have jointly represented and supported our communities as we advance cooperation and understanding through educational, social, and cultural activities. Many of these have been through and/or related to the Howard County Public School System.

The Jewish Community Relations Council is here today to support and urge a **favorable** report from this Committee on HB 515. This legislation would enable high school and college students to wear clothing or head coverings that are worn for religious reasons, including a Muslim hijab; a Sikh dastar or patka; or a Jewish kippah. This legislation would also enable students to wear an undershirt or long-sleeved bodysuit/legging undergarments for modesty. These permissible provisions would be in place without requiring a student to obtain prior approval from any school system or college personnel.

Once this legislation is approved a student will no longer have to choose between his or her religious beliefs and practices and participating as a member of a high school or college athletic team. The freedom to make these types of decisions should rest with the student and not be subject to decisions of an individual person at the high school, school system, and/or college level.

This bill does not have any fiscal impact on any school, school system or college. The bill specifically states that the student athlete is responsible for costs associated with any of the modifications.

Therefore, Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County urges a **FAVORABLE Report on HB 515**.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony and for your time and consideration.