

March 9, 2023

Honorable Delegate Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB912 Academic Accommodations Policy

Dear Chair Barnes and House Appropriations Committee Members:

Honorable Committee Chair and Members:

I strongly support House Bill 912 and all the testimonies in favor. My name is Tahira Mussarat Hussain. I am a proud Marylander and am very active in advocacy and lobbying work in Annapolis and Washington, D.C. on the issues of domestic violence, gun violence, and human trafficking.

I'm sure some members in this room may recognize me as an activist and someone whose work has no boundaries, I advocate for everyone.

On behalf of the Muslim community and as a PTA mom of three daughters who went to public school in Howard County and are now attending the University of Maryland, I have experienced many things which could be modified to make the environment more inclusive for minority faith-based and immigrant communities.

There is no doubt Howard County and Maryland schools are excellent, but I believe students of all faiths should have a designated place to practice their religion and share a safe, spiritual space. For many, practicing one's faith gives them a sense of comfort.

This bill would not only allow our students to focus on their education without worrying about maintaining their faith, it also creates a stronger sense of cultural awareness in our diverse public institutions.

I humbly ask for a favorable vote on HB912 to give our children the ability to practice their faith freely while also ensuring it does not disturb their education.

Sincerely,

Tahira Mussarat Hussain
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