



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *Senate Bill 841 –
Local School Systems – Student Field trips***
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 7, 2023

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, synagogues, and social services agencies 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 throughout the region to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders. The JCRC is focused on promoting social justice and intergroup relations and combating all forms of hatred.

In our ongoing effort to tackle the increase in hate crimes, address antisemitism and racism, and educate students about our nation's past, the JCRC supports Senate Bill 841 to require the Governor to include an appropriation of \$500,000 in the annual budget for the Department of Education. This funding will provide grants to schools for certain student field trips, specifically visits to four area museums including The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Jewish Museum of Maryland, and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture.

Research shows that experiential learning - including museum field trips - enhances students' understanding of material taught in the classroom and often provides an opportunity for questioning assumptions and deeper reflection. The JCRC understands that a museum field trip will not end antisemitism, racism, or other forms of hatred; however, it is a tool that teachers can use to help educate their students about the real-life consequences of intolerance. For these reasons, we ask this committee to give a favorable report on Senate Bill 841.