

SB785 - Domestic Terrorism Office Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

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 Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
 Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance
 Baltimore Men's ORT
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 Beth Am Congregation
 Beth El Congregation
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 Beth Shalom Congregation of
 Howard County
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 B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region
 B'nai Israel Congregation
 B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation
 Bolton Street Synagogue
 Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
 Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
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 Congregation Beit Tikvah
 Congregation Tiferes Yisroel
 Federation of Jewish Women's
 Organizations of Maryland
 Hadassah
 Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation
 J Street
 Jewish Federation of Howard County
 Jewish Labor Committee
 Jewish War Veterans
 Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary
 Jewish Women International
 Jews For Judaism
 Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah
 Hebrew Congregation
 National Council of Jewish Women
 Ner Tamid Congregation
 Rabbinical Council of America
 Religious Zionists of America
 Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
 Shomrei Emunah Congregation
 Suburban Orthodox Congregation
 Temple Beth Shalom
 Temple Isaiah
 Zionist Organization of America
 Baltimore District

Written Testimony

**Senate Bill 785 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Office
 of Domestic Terrorism Response
 Judicial Proceedings Committee – Mach 1, 2023**

Support

Background: Senate Bill 785 would establish the Office of Domestic Terrorism Response within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management for the purpose of implementing measures to prepare for, prevent, and recover from domestic terrorism and hate crimes; and generally relating to emergency management and the Office of Domestic Terrorism Response. The creation of the office is the explicit recommendation of Maryland’s Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism, which was first convened in fall 2021.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. The BJC’s responsibilities include helping to coordinate security preparations, trainings, and responses for The Associated system and the Jewish community institutions in most Maryland jurisdictions.

Domestic terrorism continues to be an increasing threat across our country. Just last month, the FBI stopped a plot by two neo-Nazis to target several BGE electric substations with gunfire in Baltimore County. This past weekend, we experienced a nationwide alert for a “Day of Hate” from far-right groups, prompting heightened patrols and vigilance across communities.

Statistics also show a significant rise in antisemitic incidents in Maryland. ADL reports a 17% increase in Maryland. Additionally, according to the Maryland State Police’s 2021 Hate Bias Report, anti-Jewish hate crime incidents account for more than 1 in 10 hate crime incidents, the second highest bias after anti-Black hate crimes.

To help address this unending threat, Maryland’s Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism was first convened in Fall 2021, with a goal of determining how to effectively oppose domestic terrorism in Maryland, including, but not limited to, countering online extremism while protecting First Amendment rights. Membership included representatives from the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention, State Police, the House of Delegates, the Office of the Attorney General, the Public Defender's

Office, the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, U.S. Dept of Homeland Security, and many other interested parties, including the Baltimore Jewish Council.

The creation of an Office of Domestic Terrorism Response is also critical to implement the other recommendations of Maryland's task force, including:

- Investing in a permanent State of Maryland capability focused on violent extremism prevention to include not only domestic terrorism but also homegrown violent extremism associated with international terrorism, as well as hate crimes.
- Adopting an approach to violence prevention that includes primary prevention (e.g., raising awareness of violent extremism, increasing trust and lines of communication between communities and local government), secondary prevention (e.g., multidisciplinary interventions for at-risk individuals), and tertiary prevention (e.g., rehabilitation and reintegration).

By establishing a formal Office of Domestic Terrorism Response under the Department of Emergency Management with the goal of preparing, preventing, and recovering from these malicious acts, we believe that not only the Jewish Community, but all other communities that are victims of hate crimes, will be better protected.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on SB785 to assist our state's collective fight against hate, antisemitism, extremism, and domestic terrorism.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

ADL Testimony MD_DT Office SB785.pdf

Uploaded by: Meredith Weisel

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 1, 2023

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel
ADL Washington D.C. Regional Director

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **support of SB785**, which would establish an Office of Domestic Terrorism Response within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including from white supremacists and other far-right violent extremists, producing research to inform the public, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices to effectively address and counter these threats.

The intelligence and law enforcement communities are gravely concerned about the threat of Domestic Violent Extremism (DVE).¹ According to Anti-Defamation League (ADL) research, data that shows antisemitism, extremism, and violence committed by extremists are in periods of historical highs. In 2022, domestic extremists killed at least 25 people in the U.S., 15 of whom were killed in incidents of mass casualty violence.² ADL tracked almost 130 counts of white supremacist propaganda in Maryland in 2022.

At the federal level, the Biden Administration released a National Strategy to Counter Domestic Terrorism, increased homeland security resources to address the threat, and established an office at the Department of Justice to deal specifically with domestic terrorism. The State of Maryland should follow suit. In its report this past December, the State of Maryland Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism identified the need for standing entities to address the threat on an ongoing basis. Without a dedicated team, specialized in the threat, it will be difficult to create ongoing, carefully curated efforts to address domestic terrorism.

To pass and enact SB785 would ensure that the Maryland Department of Emergency Management has a standing, specialized office focused on the domestic terrorist threat. It would also ensure that the Task Force would advise the office, mitigating the potential for duplicative

¹ E.g. DHS National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin. 30 November 2022.

<https://www.dhs.gov/ntas/advisory/national-terrorism-advisory-system-bulletin-november-30-2022>; ODNI “Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2021.” 1 March 2021.

<https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/UnclassSummaryofDVEAssessment-17MAR21.pdf>

² Anti-Defamation League. “Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2022.” 22 February 2023.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2022>

efforts and increasing the likelihood of multifaceted advice being provided to the office. With this office in place, the State of Maryland would be safer from the domestic violent extremist threat.

We accordingly urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give SB785 a favorable report.

SB0785-843128-01.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



SB0785/843128/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

28 FEB 23
10:13:59

BY: Senator Hettleman
(To be offered in the Judicial Proceedings Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 785

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, in line 27, strike “**ACT;**” and substitute “**ACTS; AND**”; and in line 30, strike the semicolon and substitute a period.

On page 3, strike in their entirety lines 1 through 4, inclusive.

SB785_FAV_Hettleman.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children, Youth,
and Families

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake
and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN SB 785 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM RESPONSE

In December 2022, the Maryland Department of Emergency Management submitted the Summary Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism. This report highlighted much needed actions to combat domestic terrorism in Maryland. SB 785 codifies the recommendations of the Task Force into state law and makes clear that the State of Maryland does not – and will never – tolerate violent extremism.

Unfortunately, domestic terrorism in the United States is on the rise. While the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 will forever be etched in history, it was not a one-off event. Since the insurrection, we have seen those in our country who defend and applaud domestic terrorism and hate crimes – who wrongfully characterize this behavior as patriotism. The State of Maryland is not immune to these threats. Indeed, just last month, the FBI charged a woman from Baltimore County with conspiring with a neo-Nazi leader in Florida to destroy energy facilities surrounding Baltimore City. We must address this behavior in a systematic way to keep Maryland families and communities safe.

SB 785 addresses violent extremism in our state by establishing an Office of Domestic Terrorism Response in the Department of Emergency Management. The Office will work with federal, state, and local agencies to:

1. Maximize the roles of colleges and universities in researching and developing professional training on how to combat violent extremism
2. Raise awareness among the public about violent extremism, especially in regard to hate crimes, domestic terrorism, and international terrorism
3. Develop multidisciplinary interventions for those at risk of becoming radicalized
4. Facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who participate in violent extremism

The bill also requires the Office and Department to report to the General Assembly and the Governor annually on its activities, recommended legislation, and resources required to carry out its purpose and duties.

One of the recommendations by the Task Force was for the State to invest in permanent capabilities to address and prevent violent extremism. Action is needed now to protect our citizens.

SB 785 is that action.

I urge a favorable report on SB 785, and I thank you for your consideration.

MDEM - SB0785- Office of Domestic Terrorism - FWA.

Uploaded by: Anna Sierra

Position: FWA



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS - SB0785
Maryland Department of Emergency Management -
Office of Domestic Terrorism Response

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing Date: 01 MAR 2023

Chairman William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Smith, Jr.,

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes today **in support with amendments of SB0785 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Office of Domestic Terrorism Response.**

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management is the principal department responsible for ensuring Maryland is adequately prepared to deal with emergencies that are beyond the capabilities of local authorities. This bill would establish a new Office of Domestic Terrorism within MDEM to “prepare for, prevent, and recover from domestic terrorism and hate crimes.”

MDEM recognizes and appreciates the work of the Maryland Task Force on Preventing and countering Domestic Terrorism and supports efforts to increase prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery coordination through a whole community approach. The two reports developed and submitted by the Task Force reflect thoughtful consideration of the complexities around domestic terrorism and violent extremism. The most recent [report recommended](#) that there be, “a permanent coordinating office - equipped with financial and personnel resources, executive authority, and a chain of command - intended to facilitate a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral task force to advance this mission,” (p. 6).



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

Subsections (C)(3) and (C)(4) requires MDEM to, “(3) develop multidisciplinary interventions for at-risk individuals; and (4) facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who participate in violent extremism,” (p. 3, lines 1-4). MDEM agrees these efforts as a key part of combating violent extremism, however the Department lacks the subject matter expertise in areas like social work, public health, and the justice system to be able to carry out the requirements in this bill. MDEM respectfully requests the bill be amended to remove these requirements.

MDEM thanks the Committee for your consideration, and urges a **FAVORABLE REPORT WITH AMENDMENTS on SB785**. Please contact Anna Sierra, legislative liaison, at anna.sierral@maryland.gov with any questions.



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

Additional Background

In 2021, MDEM (MEMA at the time) was required by the Joint Chairmen's Report "to convene the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism to determine how to effectively oppose domestic terrorism in Maryland..." (p. 41). The General Assembly at the time expressed concern regarding the rising threat of domestic terrorism in Maryland, and required MDEM to detail how Homeland Security Grant Program funds had been expended to support programs to counter domestic terrorism. MDEM submitted the report as required on November 15, 2021, and it can be found on the DLS [mandated reports website](#).

In 2022, the Joint Chairmen's Report required MDEM to continue holding "regular meetings," of the Task Force with the same membership identified in 2021 (p. 40-41). The task force was asked to:

- Review domestic terrorism threats from all potential sources
- Offer suggestions and guidance to MDEM on such areas as the following:
 - Coordinating with federal, State, and local agencies;
 - Consulting with the academic community
 - Working with public health professionals
 - Seeking new grant opportunities for the State;
 - Identifying trends in domestic terrorism; and
 - Collecting and implementing best practices

A summary report on the task force work was submitted as required on December 1, 2022 and it can be found on the DLS [mandated reports website](#).

SB0785.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Kolakoski

Position: UNF

SB0785 Unfavorable

We need to distinguish terrorist groups. These past couple of years parents were considered terrorists if they spoke out against rules and regulations being pushed. Everyone needs to have a voice.