

Bill SB 1

Unfavorable

Judicial Proceeding Committee

To the Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceeding Committee,

I urge you to provide an unfavorable report on Bill SB 1. I know you want to make me safer, but this bill does the exact opposite.

Antisemitic incidents are on the rise in Maryland, particularly by white supremacistsⁱ. White supremacists are the most likely of all extremists to use violenceⁱⁱ. They target synagogues because these facilities serve the Jewish community and assure the presence of a significant number of Maryland citizens at certain times of the week. Furthermore, In the orthodox community, Sabbath synagogue attendees do not carry their phones, so there would be a delay in alerting police to an active threat.

An additional factor impacting incident response is that throughout the state, police are understaffed and recruitment is down. In Montgomery County, where I live, our sworn officers per capita is only half the national averageⁱⁱⁱ. It is unrealistic to expect police to be able to engage with an active threat fast enough to prevent mass casualties.

Furthermore, turning places of worship into gun free zones would do the precise opposite of this bill's intent. It would serve as a welcome sign for potential mass murderers as to which locations they can "safely" unleash their mayhem^{iv} — and there'll be nobody there (with a gun) to stop them! This is because the only people who will comply are law-abiding, licensed gun owners. Do you really think someone intent on mass murder will leave their gun at home because of this law?

CCW permit holders should be allowed to carry their concealed weapon to their place of worship specifically because of the heightened threat against places of worship. This bill will make it illegal for them to protect themselves specifically at the place they need it most. Therefore, I strongly urge you to provide an unfavorable report on Bill SB 1.

Larry Jaffe
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ⁱ [‘Way Out of Control’: I-Team Examines Rise in Antisemitic Incidents in Montgomery County – NBC4 Washington \(nbcwashington.com\)](https://www.nbc4.com/news/local/way-out-of-control-i-team-examines-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-montgomery-county)

“Sharp rise in anti-Semitism in Maryland, Virginia and D.C., ADL reports” <https://www.washingtonjewishweek.com/sharp-rise-in-anti-semitism-in-maryland-virginia-and-d-c-adl-reports/> and “ADL H.E.A.T. Map™ (Hate, Extremism, Antisemitism, Terrorism)” <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-to-track-hate/heat-map>

ⁱⁱ “Domestic Extremism in America: Examining White Supremacist Violence in the Wake of Recent Attacks” <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/domestic-extremism-america-examining-white-supremacist-violence-wake-recent-attacks> Relevant excerpt below:

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the killer who attacked worshippers in a synagogue wrote that he believed Western Civilization was facing “extinction” and that refugees were “invaders”;^[5]

The Christchurch, New Zealand killer titled his writings “The Great Replacement” and targeted Muslims in a country he was initially only visiting;^[6]

The shooter in El Paso, Texas targeted Latinx people in the United States but wrote that he “supported” the racist screed from Christchurch;^[7]

In Poway, California, the shooter first targeted a mosque and then a month later opened fire in a synagogue, claiming that Jews were orchestrating a “planned genocide of the European race”;^[8]

And most recently, the killer in Buffalo, New York, spent weeks identifying a locale in which to murder Black Americans. His own screed was largely a plagiarism of the Christchurch shooter’s “Great Replacement” text, but was so sloppy that at times he merely swapped out terms for one victimized community for another.^[9]

This heartbreaking trail of violence illustrates how fluidly the Great Replacement conspiracy theory travels across borders and populations.

Unfortunately, these mass casualty attacks are only one element in the larger phenomenon of violent white supremacy and domestic extremism.

Over the last decade in available data, white supremacist terrorism in the United States has increased many times over. Of the 100 white supremacist attacks between 2000 and 2019, 80 of them occurred after 2009, according to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).^[10] And while these terrorist attacks have increased, they have also become more lethal. Mass casualty attacks perpetrated by white supremacist terrorists like the horrific attack in Buffalo, used to be a rare occurrence. Now, they are frequent tragedies.

ⁱⁱⁱ “[Departures, sagging recruitment plague Montgomery County police \(bethesdamagazine.com\)](https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/police-fire/departures-sagging-recruitment-plague-montgomery-county-police-even-as-crime-soars/)”

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^{iv} “Mass Public Shootings keep occurring in Gun-Free Zones: 94% of attacks since 1950”

<https://crimeresearch.org/2018/06/more-misleading-information-from-bloombergs-everytown-for-gun-safety-on-guns-analysis-of-recent-mass-shootings/>