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**Written Testimony**

**House Bill 1066- Hate Crimes - Commission on Hate Crime  
Response and Prevention – Establishment  
Judicial Proceedings Committee – April 6, 2023**

**Support**

**Background: House Bill 1066 (HB1066)** would codify the Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force, making it a formal, permanent Commission with dedicated staff. Members of the commission would include the JCRC of Greater Washington, the Baltimore Jewish Council, NAMI, Maryland State Police, the NAACP, the Immigration Outreach Service Center, and other key stakeholders that have already been established as members of the Task Force. The purpose of the commission would be to develop strategies to prevent and respond to hate crime activities and evaluate state laws and policies relating to hate. Annual findings would be reported to the General Assembly and the Governor's Office.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council, which represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and its agencies, respectfully urges the committee to formalize the Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force.

Statistics show a significant rise in antisemitic incidents in Maryland. Just a few weeks ago, the ADL reported that there were 109 antisemitic incidents in Maryland in 2022, a 98% increase from the 55 in 2021. 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.

The task force was created to directly address the recent climate of fear and intimidation caused by rising hate/bias incidents. It's clear that this issue directly affects our community and other minority groups throughout Maryland and across the country. By formalizing the Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force as a Commission, we believe that all religious and minority communities that have fallen victim to hate crimes will be better protected.

**For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on HB1066 to assist our state's collective fight against hate.**

*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.*