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**Written Testimony**

**House Bill 1243 - Public Safety - Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Fund - Establishment**

**Judiciary Committee - March 14, 2023**

**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

Adat Chaim Congregation  
 American Jewish Committee  
 Americans for Peace Now  
 Baltimore Chapter  
 American Israel Public Affairs Committee  
 American Red Magen David for Israel  
 American Zionist Movement  
 Amit Women  
 Association of Reform Zionists of America  
 Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
 Baltimore Hebrew Congregation  
 Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance  
 Baltimore Men's ORT  
 Baltimore Zionist District  
 Beth Am Congregation  
 Beth El Congregation  
 Beth Israel Congregation  
 Beth Shalom Congregation of  
 Howard County  
 Beth Tfiloh Congregation  
 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  
 Chizuk Amuno Congregation  
 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

**Support**

**Background:** House Bill 1243 (HB1243) would codify the budget language of the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Program which was established in FY2020 because of the unfortunate rise in hate bias incidents in Maryland and throughout the country. These grants are used for infrastructure upgrades and security personnel for institutions deemed at-risk for hate crimes or attacks. The bill proposes \$5 million dollars for the grant program, the same as the FY24 budget allocation, with at least \$1 million set aside for religious institutions.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council, which represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and its agencies, respectfully urges the Committee to codify this grant program. This grant aims to directly address the recent climate of fear and intimidation caused by rising hate/bias incidents. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their places of worship and religious institutions. With the recent tragedies in Colleyville, Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City and Monsey fresh on everyone's minds, the concern of a similar tragedy in Maryland is very real. For the past five years, the Jewish community has been the 2nd most common target of hate/bias incidents reported to the Maryland State Police, with the highest percentage based on religion. We cannot allow the fear of antisemitism and hate crimes deter people from attending their own places of worship and religious institutions. Instead, we must act so that everyone feels free to practice their faith in a space that is secure. With this in mind we ask that you take bold action to protect more Marylanders from hate crimes and codify the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Program.

For these reasons the Baltimore Jewish Council asks for a favorable report on HB1243.

*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.*