



March 9, 2023

Written Testimony re: HB1066: **Against**

Dear Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Peace Action Montgomery would like to provide comments against HB 1066: Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention

[Peace Action Montgomery](#) is a county chapter of [Peace Action](#), the largest grassroots peace network. Our advocacy focuses on human rights and democracy, eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and diplomacy with the world community. We organize against pre-emptive wars, and advocate for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors from the endless wars. As such, we have developed strong alliances with county residents of Middle Eastern descent.

Our concern with bill HB1066 revolves around the membership composition which includes organizations that are engaged or advocate for surveillance activities of Marylanders (e.g., the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center as well as the Coalition Opposed to Violence & Extremism).

However, the organization that we find most troublesome is the inclusion of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) which has been engaged in silencing social justice activism and supporting racist policing policies. Specific details are listed below:

- **Underwriting Militarized Police Training** – [The ADL](#) has been [underwriting military police trainings](#) across the nation which has included trainings for Maryland and Montgomery County law enforcement. One police officer from Baltimore who participated in a training [noted that](#) what was being learned was “not only illegal in the United States but could be detrimental to the complex threats in America,” referencing civil liberties violations. The ADL has actively advocated [for police to infiltrate progressive organizations](#) and has done so [for decades](#). In 2008, the Maryland Police [did just that](#) and was involved in a scandal by spying on peace activists including Quakers and nuns who were involved in the anti-death penalty movement. Superintendent Hutchins who resigned as a result of the scandal had just returned from one of these militarized trainings<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> His training was with a different entity (sister group of the ADL) but the training curriculums are similar.

- **Conflating Criticism of Israel as being anti-Semitic** – The ADL has pushed to revise the definition of anti-Semitism to incorporate political criticisms of Israel. [Staff at the ADL](#) have even expressed criticism about their organization’s stance on this which they note violates civil rights. Other entities that have pushed back on this campaign include the [ACLU](#), the [American Association of University Professors](#) and the [American Bar Association](#).
- **The CVE Surveillance Program** – Montgomery County was the pilot study of this controversial surveillance program which targeted our Muslim and Arab community members. It was based on junk science and criticized by organizations including the [ACLU](#), the [Brennan Center](#), and other [civil liberty entities](#). The program is [inherently racist](#) and because it used a mental health counseling center for surveillance has created a deep distrust for this community seeking mental health services. While our current County Executive dismantled the program, the “Montgomery County” model is now being used by the [Denver police](#) to target Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ youth.

The ADL’s legacy in Montgomery County has been detrimental and Islamophobic. As an organization that works closely with Arab and Muslim communities, we feel the current composition of the proposed Hate Commission would have a bias of undermining cherished political dissent and that the ADL, in particular, has a well-documented blindspot in terms of respecting the rights of the marginalized Middle Eastern and Arab communities. For the aforementioned reasons, Peace Action Montgomery County urges this committee **to issue an unfavorable report**.

Sincerely,



Susan Kerin  
Chair  
Peace Action Montgomery  
“Lowering the Violent Footprint of Montgomery County”