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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**HB638: Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program – Established
 Ways and Means Committee | February 22, 2023
 SUPPORT**

Background: HB638 would establish the \$1.2 million Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program as an annual appropriation in the budget under the Maryland State Department of Education. These grants would be available to all 24 jurisdictions to assist with Holocaust education in public schools. It authorizes a local school system to apply to the Department for a grant of no more than \$50,000 to be used only for certain Holocaust-related training, materials, and activities.

Written Comments: The rise in antisemitic acts across the country over the past few years is not lost on the Jewish Community. According to the ADL, Maryland saw a 17% increase in the number of antisemitic incidents reported in 2021. Additionally, according to 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. Just last week, the American Jewish Committee released its fourth [State of Antisemitism in America](#) report, where key takeaways included that 41% of American Jews say they feel less secure than a year ago, and almost 6 in 10 Jewish young adults say antisemitism is taken less seriously than other forms of hate.

One of the best ways to prevent history from repeating itself is through education. As we endeavor to implement better Holocaust education across Maryland, we recognize that it is important to give our teachers the tools they need to both understand and properly teach the material to their students. Without funding for professional development and materials, this can be hard to achieve.

By establishing the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program, Maryland's local boards of education will be able to hire the proper entities to train their teachers on Holocaust curriculum; provide needed materials to both teachers and students for effective lessons; and allow funding to go to activities directly related to Holocaust education, which could allow for field trips, guest speakers, and more.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB638.

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.