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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**SB841: Local School Systems - Student Field Trips - Funding
 House Ways and Means Committee | March 29, 2023
 SUPPORT**

Background: SB841 would require the Governor to include an appropriation in the annual budget bill of \$500,000 for the State Department of Education to provide grants to local school systems for expenses related to student field trips to the Jewish Museum of Maryland (Baltimore), the Reginald F. Lewis Museum (Baltimore), The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (DC), and/or the National Museum of African American History and Culture (DC).

Written Comments: 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. According to the ADL, Maryland saw a 17% increase in the number of antisemitic incidents reported in 2021. 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. Even in the 21st Century, both the Jewish and African American communities are forced to deal with similar hate-driven attacks.

One of the best ways to address this problem is to provide educational opportunities for individuals that they might not otherwise be able to experience. By establishing this \$500k appropriation for school field trips to the Jewish Museum of Maryland (Baltimore), the Reginald F. Lewis Museum (Baltimore), The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (DC), and/or the National Museum of African American History and Culture (DC), we are supporting the education of our students on the atrocities that have faced both communities throughout history.

As amended in the Senate, this legislation would also include a reporting requirement so that the General Assembly can assess how much the fund is used. If in the future adjustments need to be made, you all as a legislative body will be able to make an informed decision.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB841 as amended in the Senate.

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.