



Maryland General Assembly
House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

March 4, 2024

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel

ADL Washington D.C. Regional Director

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **opposition to HJ8, *Condemning Islamophobia, Anti-Palestinian Hate, and Antisemitism***. Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” As a leading anti-hate organization, for decades one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, producing research to inform the public, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices to effectively address and counter these threats. Further, ADL conducts an annual *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents*, which is widely used by law enforcement, educational institutions, elected officials, and the community at large to not only respond to antisemitic incidents, but also to create change.

ADL is a committed champion of fighting all forms of hate, and it is imperative that our society strive to protect vulnerable communities who are experiencing an epidemic of rising hate and the associated fear that comes with it. Countering hate is an issue not only of public safety, but public good and welfare. However, **HJ8** is imbalanced in its goal of condemning “Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian hate, and anti-semitism” [sic]. By failing to acknowledge the spike in anti-Israeli hate that is also present across Maryland communities in the wake of the October 7th terrorist attacks, this resolution fails to acknowledge very real pain being felt by so many across our state.

The October 7th assault on Israel by Hamas, a US-designated terrorist organization, was a barbaric massacre and the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust. Hamas terrorists slaughtered 1,200 people, including small children, women and men. Women were raped, people were beheaded and bodies mutilated. Hamas also kidnapped around 240 women, men, and children, and at least 129, including babies and the elderly, are still being held hostage in Gaza. This horrific war between Hamas and Israel, and the loss and trauma on both sides has gravely impacted both Jewish and Muslim communities in Maryland, across the country, and across the world. at a time

To pass a resolution that contains such a glaring omission, centering only some impacted communities at the expense of others, at a time when all are experiencing incidents of hatred directed at them and those they love, sends absolutely the wrong message. Anti-Palestinian hatred has no place in Maryland, nor does anti-Israeli hatred, and to acknowledge one over the other doesn’t protect the people of Maryland. In fact, it could exacerbate the fear and pain being experienced, and give room for more hatred to flourish.

We urge the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee to give HJ8 an unfavorable report.