



Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 763–
Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention – Membership and Sunset
Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 27, 2024

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports House Bill 763 which alters the membership of the Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention and gives the Attorney General the flexibility to appoint people who he believes are most suitable to serve on the Commission given its mandate to combat hatred. It's unfortunate that this bill is necessary and it's not something the JCRC takes lightly. However, the hateful, dehumanizing statements made by CAIR leadership on numerous occasions have forced us into this role.

It has been a privilege for the JCRC to sit on this Commission and participate in its Community Engagement Subcommittee where we are developing best practices for reporting hate crimes and bias incidents. Our mission is to heal the community, not divide it. CAIR was not up to this task. A group that espouses vitriol and hatred for the Jewish community does not deserve nor belong on a Commission that has been established to respond to and prevent hate. We are expected to work with one another, not against one another. On October 7th, the Jewish people experienced the most brutal attack since the Holocaust. Hamas murdered 1200 people and took 240 hostages. CAIR's response? It praised Hamas and compared Israel to Nazi Germany. Comments so egregious that President Biden rebuked CAIR and removed the organization from the White House's blueprint to address antisemitism.

The JCRC is confident that the Attorney General will appoint 15 people of goodwill and diversity who represent the protected class under the State hate crime laws. We trust his ability to select members who are mainstream, tolerant, and inclusive, and will not espouse vitriol and hatred that undermine the work of the Commission. We must collaborate and engage in constructive dialogue to serve as a role model for all of Maryland to respond to and prevent hate. For these reasons, we support HB 763.

