

February 16, 2024
Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony to **OPPOSE HB 0763** Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention
Membership - Alterations

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee Members:

I am **testifying in strong opposition to House Bill 763**, which aims to remove CAIR and its representative from the Maryland Attorney General Hate Crimes Commission and instate two other Muslim appointees.

As a Jewish Marylander, I strongly oppose this effort to remove CAIR and its Maryland Director, Zainab Chaudry, from the Hate Crimes Commission.

This effort to remove Dr. Chaudry appears to be in response to social media posts she made in her personal capacity about Israel's military operations in Gaza. From what I have seen, these posts condemned horrific crimes being perpetrated by Israel upon the Palestinian people and addressed the hypocrisy of those who assign greater value to the lives of certain groups of people over others. While these expressions may be unpleasant to those who feel an affinity for Israel, they are clearly directed at the Israeli state and political actors. I have not seen any indication that Dr. Chaudry has animus towards Jews.

As a Jew, I am disturbed by attempts to conflate political speech condemnatory of Israel with antisemitism. The attempts to remove Dr. Chaudry and CAIR from the Hate Crimes Commission appear to be based upon just such a conflation. CAIR is the main Muslim organization in Maryland that tracks hate bias incidents and provides advocacy and legal assistance to the state's Muslim communities. It would be extremely troubling to see this organization removed from the Hate Crimes Commission under what looks like efforts to shield Israel from criticism. It is hard to understand how such an action would serve to reduce hate crime against Jews or Muslims.

As a Jew, I stand by CAIR and Zainab Chaudry and their continued presence on the Maryland Hate Crimes Commission. I respectfully urge this committee to return an **unfavorable report on HB 0763**.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Eric Hiller

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