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February 16th, 2024

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates

Greetings. I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace (PCAP.) I am co-chair of this national group that advocates for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine, with equal rights for all Palestinians, Jews, and others who are inhabitants of the Holy Land.

We urge against the adoption of HB0763, effectively banning the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) from the Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention. CAIR and its leaders are faithful representatives of the civil rights of Muslim Americans and highly trusted and valued by this community. They have stood against Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslims in the U.S. They have also always stood firm against all forms of racism and bigotry, including antisemitism. In fact, some of their strongest allies are Jewish Americans.

PCAP has proudly collaborated with CAIR on many occasions. The Anti-Defamation League has led the attacks on CAIR, as it has tried to malign all major groups advocating for the rights of the Palestinian people. The attack on CAIR is another bad faith attempt to use legislation to shut down free speech when it comes to the defense of Palestinian rights. A large and growing percentage of all Americans, including Muslims, Christians, Jews, and secular people are supporting the human rights of the Palestinian people. HB0763 constitutes a dangerous step towards limiting the rights of the people of MD to free speech.

Respectfully,

Philip Frah (signed)

Co-Chair

Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace