

**HB763 – UNF**

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As a Montgomery County Jewish resident and daughter of Holocaust survivors, I oppose HB763.

I was privileged several week ago to witness a presentation by a group called “Combatants for Peace” at Adat Shalom Synagogue. The group is made up of former combatants on both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict who have come together through their rejection of their own violence toward one another. Listening to them gave me hope. I suggest everyone go to their website and FB page.

The Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention is a relatively new MD commission which has yet to establish governing mechanisms. There is a bill before this body, HB748, that will establish a code of conduct for that commission. It is therefore inexpedient and egregious to use this esteemed body for the explicit removal of a member organization without the due process a code of conduct would provide.

**The Jewish Community is represented on the Commission by at least three organizations – two of them national. Here in Maryland, no other representative of the Muslim community enjoys the trust and support that CAIR Maryland does.**

CAIR is the country’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization and has thirty years of experience serving the American Muslim community. It has a well-established public record of denouncing terrorism and religious intolerance. CAIR has not only advocated for Muslim Americans, but it has also repeatedly condemned attacks on—and raised money to rebuild—churches, as well as repeatedly condemning antisemitism and hate crimes against Jewish Americans.

As a Jewish activist, I have worked in coalition with CAIR for years and find them to be a solid thoughtful and courageous partner. I have never found them to be antisemitic in any way.

I worry in this moment, about the knee-jerk silencing of voices on the Muslim/Arab/Palestinian and progressive Jewish side of the current tragedy. I worry that the resultant McCarthyistic atmosphere is inappropriately bleeding into local and state policies.

The removal of CAIR from a commission assigned to mitigate hate sets an extremely dangerous precedent. All other groups within the commission are represented by organizations not randomly selected individuals without the gravitas brought by national level organization. It is disrespectful to ask this of the Muslim community. This moment calls for generosity of spirit not knee-jerk reactions. For our unified future, please vote no on HB763.