



The DC Metro chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace is adamantly opposed to House Bill 763. We urge members of the Maryland General Assembly's House Judiciary Committee to prevent it from being enacted into law.

Jewish Voice for Peace is a national organization that advocates for social justice, equality, and freedom for all people, with over 700,000 members and supporters nationwide. Like generations of Jewish American progressives before us, we work toward freedom and justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

Jewish Voice for Peace-DC Metro represents over 2000 JVP members and supporters who live in the DC metro area, including those who reside in Montgomery and Prince George Counties, as well as in the District of Columbia and northern Virginia.

If enacted, HB 763 would remove meaningful, trustworthy representation of Maryland's Muslim residents from the state's Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention. We believe that this bill amounts to a vicious smear campaign against the indispensable work conducted by the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

CAIR has a well-established, public record of denouncing terrorism and religious intolerance. CAIR has not only advocated for Muslim Americans, it has repeatedly condemned antisemitism and hate crimes against Jewish Americans. Our JVP-DC Metro chapter has worked for many years with the staff of the Maryland office of CAIR, as well as with many of those who volunteer their time with the office, and we have never experienced any expressions of antisemitism by the organization's staff or volunteers.

We are well aware of the increase in antisemitic hate bias and hate crime incidents in Maryland. We are also aware of the huge increase of hate bias and hate crime incidents affecting the state's Muslim, Palestinian and Arab American residents. CAIR's Maryland office reported 223 complaints, reports of hate bias incidents and requests for advocacy assistance between October 9 - December 2, 2023. It is thus vitally important to include CAIR on the state's Hate Crime Commission.

The bill's stated goal of replacing CAIR on the commission with "two members of the Muslim community to be appointed by the Attorney General" is an insult to Maryland's Muslim community, which overwhelmingly supports CAIR as its representative on the Commission.

We respectfully urge you to help preserve public trust in the work of the state's Hate Crimes Commission by maintaining the Maryland office director of CAIR as the commission's representative for the state's Muslim community by opposing House Bill 763.

Sincerely,

Shelley Cohen Fudge
as a representative of the Steering Committee of Jewish Voice for Peace – DC Metro and resident of Montgomery County