

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, and grandchild of Holocaust survivors, I strongly oppose this effort to remove CAIR and its Maryland Director, Zainab Chaudry, from the Hate Crimes Commission.

CAIR is the US's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. 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.

Time and time again, CAIR has demonstrated its commitment to safety in solidarity. Most notably, for me, was the unwavering support and bravery that Zainab Chaudry and other members of CAIR demonstrated after the Tree of Life massacre in October 2018. I will never forget the overwhelming grief and fear I felt approaching the doors of my synagogue on the first Shabbat after the atrocities. Nor will I forget the sight of the CAIR community standing outside our building, putting their bodies on the line by volunteering to serve as our security and remaining at their posts for the duration of the service.

CAIR's work is vital in this moment of heightened Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism and anti-Palestinian hate. No one is better suited to represent Maryland's Muslims than the group that has been the strongest local voice against Islamophobia hate crimes.

Each community should be able to decide who represents it, and Zainab Chaudry has the support of her community. Dozens of Islamic faith-based organizations and institutions have written to the

Office of the Attorney General in support of keeping CAIR and Zainab Chaudry on the Commission, along with thousands of community members.

Removing CAIR from this Commission effectively silences the many Muslims in Maryland who have stood up in support of Zainab Chaudry over the past few months. We know that she brings a perspective to the Hate Crimes Commission that will not be present if she were removed.

Part of what Dr. Chaudry brings to the table is a consistent and principled stance in support of Palestinian human rights and freedom. This advocacy has meant she's faced smear attacks, death threats, and seemingly endless hate.

Support for Palestinians is not hateful. Many Jews, including myself and many people in my community, support Palestinians, especially in this moment when Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are under such intense attack. We refuse to equate advocacy for Palestinians with antisemitism.

We know, as Jews, how important it is to stand together with our Muslim family, friends, and neighbors right now, when both of our communities are at heightened risk of hate crimes. We know that Jews and Muslims are safer and stronger when we support one another.

Zainab Chaudry and CAIR have a long history of intersectional work within and beyond Muslim communities, including showing up for our community against antisemitism. We know that she has our community's back. When she is under attack, we have hers.

As a practicing 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,  
Michele Levy  
3140 Remington Ave.  
Baltimore, MD