



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 763–
*Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention – Membership –
Alterations*
Judiciary Committee
February 20, 2024**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports House Bill 763- to remove the representative of CAIR from the Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention -and to add two new members of the Muslim Community to be vetted and appointed by the Attorney General. It's unfortunate that this bill is necessary. It's something we don't take lightly. However, the hateful, dehumanizing statements made by CAIR leadership on numerous occasions have forced us into this role. Also, our ultimate desire is to have more voices at the table and not fewer. In fact, nothing about this Bill diminishes the JCRC's ironclad commitment to combatting all forms of hatred including Islamophobia.

It has been a privilege for the JCRC to sit on this Commission and participate in its Community Engagement Subcommittee where we are developing best practices for reporting hate crimes and bias incidents. Our mission is to heal the community, not divide it. CAIR is not up to this task. A group that espouses vitriol and hatred for the Jewish community does not deserve nor belong on a Commission that has been established to respond to and prevent hate. We are expected to work WITH one another, not AGAINST one another. On October 7th, the Jewish people experienced the most brutal attack since the Holocaust. Hamas murdered 1200 people and took 240 hostages. CAIR's response? It praised Hamas and compared Israel to Nazi Germany. Comments so egregious that President Biden rebuked CAIR and removed the organization from the White House's blueprint to address antisemitism.

CAIR has proven it cannot be a trusted partner. Therefore, it must be replaced with two other representatives of the Muslim Community. The Commission is a wonderfully diverse group charged with promoting tolerance and understanding. We must collaborate and engage in

constructive dialogue to serve as a role model for all of Maryland to respond to and prevent hate. We look forward to having two new Muslim representatives on this Commission who have the same ironclad commitment to combating antisemitism, that we have the same ironclad commitment to combating antisemitism, that we have to combatting Islamophobia and all forms of hatred. For these reasons, we support HB 763.