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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1462 Testimony – Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act March 5, 2025 – House Appropriations Committee

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to present on HB1462 which will help make Maryland campuses safe and welcoming for all students. It requires that institutions of higher education adopt and enforce policies regarding racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and mandate:

- Training on responding to hate-bias incidents
- A clear and accessible complaint tracking system and articulation of adjudication procedures
- A clear and accessible time, place, and manner policy for expressive activities on campus
- Strong collaboration between school administrators and student religious organizations
- A process for reporting all allegations or documented incidents of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, or intimidation reported to the school
- A Campus Community Grant, providing resources to support intergroup and interfaith outreach and cultural partnerships between student groups.
- A workgroup convened by the Maryland Higher Education Commission on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hatred to develop model policies, best practices, and recommendations to share with institutions of higher education.

The bill provides a framework for Maryland's institutions of higher education to continue meaningful and actionable efforts on the prevention of racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation. It provides the essential tools and resources to enhance student safety and create inclusive environments.

The Problem

We continue to witness a frightening trend in antisemitism and Islamophobia throughout our nation and across Maryland with increasing overt acts of violence, hate speech, and discrimination. Over the last decade we have seen a dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents, with the ADL reporting 751 incidents in 2013 and, shockingly, 3,291 in 2023. Last year we saw a

140% increase since 2022 and the highest number on record since the ADL began tracking incidents in 1979.

In a recent audit of [Antisemitic Incidents 2023](#), the ADL found dramatic increases in antisemitic assaults (45%), vandalism (69%), and harassment (184%) since 2022. In Maryland, 339 antisemitic incidents were reported in 2023, a 211% increase since 2022, and a 516% increase since 2021. Maryland registered the 7th highest number of antisemitic incidents for the country in 2023.

The rise in antisemitic incidents comes as anti-Muslim complaints are on the rise. There has been a huge surge in anti-Muslim bias incidents in 2023, the highest number of such incidents recorded in 30 years, according to the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). CAIR received a total of 8,061 in 2023. There was just over 5,000 in 2022.

College campuses have unfortunately been deeply impacted by these rising waves of antisemitism and Islamophobia. Maryland Hillel International's Antisemitism tracker reported a total of 1,854 incidents on college campuses nationwide during the 2023-2024 school year, a 700 percent increase compared to 2022-2023. Incidents of antisemitism have steadily increased since 2019, with 180 reported in 2019-2020. As of January 22, there has been a total of 1,020 reported incidents during the 2024-2025 school year, which is a pace that would put this year on track to exceed last year's tally.¹

A recent [report](#) by the Anti-Defamation League found that 73% of surveyed Jewish college students have experienced or witnesses some form of antisemitism since the start of the 2023-2024 school year, and the number of Jewish students who feel "very" or "extremely" physically safe has dropped by double digits since October 7th.

The Muslim Campus Life's Campus Islamophobia Tracker dating back to 2022 had just 4 reported incidents before October 7th and has had 102 incidents since.² An April 2024 Institute for Social Policy and Understanding report showed 84% of Muslim students in higher education or in trade/vocational programs said they experienced religious discrimination in the last year.³ Unfortunately, as these statistics indicate, all too often Jewish and Muslim students must confront discriminatory incidents and many often feel unsafe on their college campuses.

A recent FBI [report](#) found that hate crimes that occurred in 2022 happened at a school or on a college campus, making centers of learning the third most common location where hate-motivated acts took place. Hate crime statistics released by the FBI showed that reported incidents in 2022 rose to 11,634 incidents, the highest number recorded since the FBI started tracking data in 1991.

What does the bill do?

- 1) Require institutions of higher education to develop a policy to address racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation at the institution. The policy will include *mandatory staff training* and a *complaint and adjudication procedure*.

¹ <https://www.hillel.org/antisemitism-on-college-campuses-incident-tracking/>

² <https://www.muslimcampuslife.com/islamophobia-tracker/>

³ <https://ispu.org/ceasefire-poll-3/>

Training will address:

- a. Appropriate responses to hate incidents, incidents of violence, harassment, or intimidation at the time of the incident; and
- b. Procedures for initiating, filing, investigating, and adjudicating complaints and allegations of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, or intimidation against any student, faculty member, administrator, or employee.

Complaint, adjudication, and disciplinary procedures will include:

- c. A clear system to report complaints and threats – including an option to submit anonymously;
 - d. Clearly stated disciplinary actions that may be taken after an investigation is conducted; and
 - e. Communications that a student can expect to receive at the conclusion of the complaint adjudication process, including educational information on the institution's policy against racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, or intimidation.
- 2) Require institutions to publish on their websites time, place, and manner policy for the expressive activities of students, faculty members, administrators, and employees.
- 3) Require institutions to designate a senior administrator to meet annually with student religious organizations to discuss:
- a. Institutional anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies;
 - b. Incidents of racial, ethnic, or religious violence against any student, faculty member, administrator, or employee on campus; and
 - c. Institutional time, place, and manner policy for expressive activities.
- 4) Require campus offices of diversity to include in both mission and programming, at a minimum, the five demographic groups in the state experiencing the highest percentage of hate-bias incidents as reported annually by the Maryland State Police.
- 5) Require institutions to submit an annual report on all allegations or documented incidents of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, or intimidation reported to the school, by type and location. Reports must include:
- Status of all investigations and whether allegation was substantiated;
 - Any changes to campus policies as a result of the investigations;
 - Data from prior years to identify any trends; and
 - Beginning in 2026, a summary of discussions with students and any changes made to policies resulting from these discussions.
- 6) Establish a \$500,000 Campus Community Grant program in the Chancellor's office to provide grants to support interfaith outreach and cultural collaboration between student groups.

Finally, the Secretary of Higher Education will convene a Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hatred to develop model policies, best practices, and recommendations for training, collaboration on security for students, conduct policies, definitions of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and model procedures for investigating incidents of hate.

This legislation will help ensure that we are helping students of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds thrive at Maryland colleges and universities.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report for HB 1462.