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Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman
Vice Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan
Members of the Committee

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 435 – Remove Discrimination in Education Act

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Uriel Appel, and I am a third-year student at the University of Maryland. I am testifying today in strong support of Senate Bill 435 because, as a Jewish student, I have personally experienced antisemitism on my campus.

In November of 2023, the administration of UMD hosted a town hall meeting at the Jewish center of our campus, Hillel, following a pro-Palestinian riot chanting for an intifada. The Intifada was a movement in 1987 and in 2000 calling for the murder and eradication of the Jews, resulting in the death of over 1,500 individuals. In response, the university admins held a town hall meeting with 250 Jewish students in the Hillel building, where they told us that the Intifada was a peaceful protest. Another admin stated that our fear was only in our heads.

CAN MAKE THIS UMD SPECIFIC. Unfortunately, when incidents like this occur, universities often lack the resources, expertise, and clear procedures to properly investigate and address them. Many Jewish students feel they have nowhere to turn when they are harassed, intimidated, or discriminated against. SB 435 is essential because it will establish a Title VI Coordinator at every college and university in Maryland, ensuring that students facing antisemitism have a designated expert to report incidents and that institutions are held accountable for responding appropriately.

This bill is not just about Jewish students—it's about ensuring that all students facing racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination have a trusted and transparent process for seeking help. Passing SB 435 will send a clear message that Maryland schools will not tolerate discrimination and that students will have the protections they deserve.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 435 to protect all students from discrimination.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Uriel Appel
University of Maryland, College Park