

SB847 - CAMPUS Act - Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

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Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
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Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

Written Testimony
Senate Bill 847 - Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect
University Students Act
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – March 5, 2025
Support

Background: Senate Bill 847 would require both public and nonpublic institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce a policy regarding racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation at the institution while minding an individual's first amendment rights. This would include training for staff, establishing procedures for investigating complaints, and collaborating with local law enforcement. Annual reporting to the Maryland Higher Education Commission of all harassment and intimidation complaints will be required.

Additionally, each institution of higher education would be required to create a campus task force on combating antisemitism, Islamophobia, hatred, harassment, bullying, or violence toward others on the basis of their actual religious identity or what is assumed to be their religious identity at the institution.

Written Comments: It is impossible to turn a blind eye to the rising levels of hate across our country. Data from the recent release of the American Jewish Committee's 2024 Antisemitism Report details the following of [Young American Jews' experience with antisemitism](#):

- **Four in 10 (41%) young American Jews**, ages 18-29, said they have been the target of antisemitism at least once in the past 12 months.
- **35% of American Jewish college students** report experiencing antisemitism at least once during their time on campus.
- **Over one in four (32%) American Jewish college students** say they have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at a campus event because of their Jewish identity.

Additionally, nearly one-third of American Jewish College Students feel that [faculty members have promoted antisemitism or learning environments hostile to Jews](#). This data is unacceptable.

The incidents of antisemitism on our Maryland college campuses have been occurring going for years, well before the surge that began after the October 7th massacre in Israel. Jewish students living in dorms at Johns Hopkins University have found the mezuzahs ripped off the door frames of their dorm rooms. "Kill the Jews" signs have been posted around the campus at UMBC. Jewish students at Towson University have been followed and harassed on their way to class. Jewish students at the University of Maryland's downtown professional campuses have reported being harassed when walking back and forth to synagogue for Shabbat. Jewish fraternity students at Towson University were assaulted on a Saturday night at the conclusion of Shabbat observance, while their attackers shouted antisemitic slurs. Just this past fall, students walking back to their dorms from Friday night Shabbat services at the UMBC Chabad were harassed and threatened by unidentified individuals in an SUV. This last incident occurred not once, but twice — prompting UMBC's president to send a campus-wide message condemning and antisemitism.

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 Jews For Judaism
 Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah
 Hebrew Congregation
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 Rabbinical Council of America
 Religious Zionists of America
 Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
 Shomrei Emunah Congregation
 Suburban Orthodox Congregation
 Temple Beth Shalom
 Temple Isaiah
 Zionist Organization of America
 Baltimore District

It is important that Jewish students feel safe as they seek higher education. By establishing proper policies and procedures to address harassment on college campuses in collaboration with local law enforcement, there will be a sense of safety and security for those attending Maryland's institutions. Requiring reporting of all harassment incidents to MHEC will aid in tracking where these issues are most prominent, also aiding in the work of the task forces that will be required on campuses for combatting antisemitism, Islamophobia, hatred, harassment, bullying, or violence. This model is based on the CAMPUS Act passed in the State of Ohio, proving there is great value in this legislation.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB847.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

SB0847_Maryland_Campus_Accountability_and_Moderniz

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0847
Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization
to Protect University Students Act

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0847 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The prevalence of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation in academic environments is appalling. The safety and inclusivity of these institutions is compromised as a result. SB0847 aims to combat these issues by mandating comprehensive antihate and antidiscrimination policies, ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff can thrive in a secure and respectful environment.

SB0847 requires institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce antihate and antidiscrimination policies, including training for faculty and staff on responding to hate incidents. It establishes a Campus Community Grant Program to fund intergroup and interfaith outreach initiatives and creates a Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of violence and harassment. Additionally, the bill mandates annual meetings between senior administrators and approved student organizations to discuss these policies and requires institutions to submit detailed reports on incidents of violence and harassment.

For Marylanders, SB0847 offers significant benefits by fostering safer and more inclusive higher education environments. It promotes equity and respect across campuses, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and protected. By addressing hate and discrimination proactively, the bill strengthens Maryland's commitment to diversity and inclusion, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and equitable society.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition wholeheartedly supports this bill and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.

SB 847 JCRC Maryland Campus Accountability and Mod

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 847 – Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 5, 2025**

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 social service agencies, synagogues and schools throughout Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on mutual respect, justice, equity and safety. We work throughout the region to advocate for our nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports Senate Bill 847, the Maryland Campus Act, which requires institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce policies regarding racial, religious and ethnic violence, harassment and intimidation. These policies include mandatory staff training on responding to hate-bias incidents and a clear and accessible complaint tracking system and adjudication procedure. The Bill also includes establishing a Campus Community Grant program of \$500,000 to provide support for interfaith outreach and cultural collaboration between student groups.

This Bill is of paramount importance to the JCRC whose top priority is combating antisemitism and protecting the safety and security of the Jewish people, including Jewish students on college campuses. At Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) last spring, our agency took the lead in addressing several high-profile antisemitic incidents. We worked closely with the college's president and administrators to call out professors who were spewing hateful, antisemitic rhetoric, and to condemn a planned screening of the virulently antisemitic film, *The Occupation of the American Mind*. After our efforts, the school decided not to show the film. Since then, we have continued to collaborate with the administration to ensure policies regarding antisemitism are updated. We have led trainings about understanding antisemitism and have worked to build up both Jewish life and interfaith programming on the campus.

The Maryland Campus Act would have been a huge asset had it been in place. It would have provided a roadmap for the school and established both mechanisms and accountability needed to address the vitriol and hate. We made tremendous progress at MCCC, and with this legislation, our success can be replicated at other schools. College campuses must be places of learning, not hotbeds of hate. For these reasons, we support Senate Bill 847 and ask for a favorable report.

Einav Tsach Testimony - Senate Bill 847.pdf

Uploaded by: Einav Tsach

Position: FAV

Einav Tsach

etsach@terpmail.umd.edu
University of Maryland, College Park
3/2/2025

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 847 – The CAMPUS Act

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

My name is Einav Tsach and I'm a proud Terp at the University of Maryland, College Park. I'm honored to be testifying in strong support of Senate Bill 847.

I write to you as an Israeli immigrant to the United States, a grandson of Holocaust survivors, representing my nearly 6,000-strong Jewish and Israeli campus community - a community that continues to grapple with the explosion of campus antisemitism on Oct. 7, 2023.

Here are some examples:

Last school year, someone chalked the phrase "Holocaust 2.0" on the ground of a main plaza on campus – on the anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom. A few weeks ago, the words "Smash Zionism" were chalked on that same plaza (it was International Holocaust Remembrance Day). Posters advertising our Hillel's Birthright trips have been vandalized and stolen. And I can't count how many times I've been stared at or received jeers of "Free Palestine" simply because I'm visibly Jewish and Israeli.

This is not normal. Jewish students should not have to deal with constant attacks on who they are. No student, no matter their identity, should either.

Times like this demand action, and this bill would make a fundamental difference in combating hate on campus. This legislation would help students better understand what resources they have if they are victims of hate. It would raise awareness through trainings across campus communities, creating an environment of mutual support between peers. By mandating a strong institutional response to incidents, this bill would demand accountability from perpetrators of hate.

These changes can help stop the cycle of hate that my community and others have faced. I urge you to take a strong stand against hate of any kind and vote YES on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Einav Tsach
University of Maryland, College Park

Testimony in Support of SB 0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Eli Berne

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0847

Date: 3/3/2025

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Submitted by: Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)

Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Eli Berne, and I am the State Director at the Jewish Federations of North America. Jewish Federations represents 146 Jewish Federations across North America, including three here in Maryland. On behalf of the Jewish Federations of North America, I am pleased to offer our strong support for Senate Bill 0847, the *Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act*. This bill provides a critical framework for combating antisemitism and other forms of hate, harassment, and discrimination on Maryland's college and university campuses. We are deeply committed to ensuring the safety, dignity, and security of Jewish students on campuses, where they must be free from fear of violence or intimidation due to their identity. Passage of this bill, which is being supported by Jewish Federations both locally and nationally, will solidify Maryland's status as a model state and a leader in the fight against antisemitism on college campuses.

Antisemitism, along with other forms of racial, ethnic, and religious hatred, has regrettably been on the rise, particularly in academic settings. This bill's comprehensive approach addresses these troubling trends in a meaningful and actionable way. We believe the measures contained in HB 1462 will provide the tools needed to protect all students, and especially Jewish students, who unfortunately have had to deal with the acute rise in antisemitism firsthand.

One of the most vital aspects of this bill is the requirement for higher education institutions to adopt, enforce, and submit policies to combat racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation. These policies are essential to protect Jewish students from antisemitic acts and ensure that institutions take a proactive stance against hate. The bill also calls for training for faculty, administrators, and staff on appropriate responses to hate incidents, which is crucial for creating a safe environment. This training will help ensure that members of the campus community are well-equipped to respond to antisemitism when it arises, making it clear that such behavior will not be tolerated.

In addition to these policies, the bill's inclusion of time, place, and manner policies will help balance the protection of free speech with the need to prevent disruptions driven by hate. By



establishing clear guidelines for expressive activities on campuses, it will help ensure that Jewish students are not subjected to harm or intimidation during protests, events, or other expressions of political and social beliefs. This balance is important to protecting both the right to free speech and the right to a safe and inclusive learning environment.

We also strongly support the creation of a specialized workgroup to combat antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of racial and religious hate. As recent incidents have demonstrated, antisemitism is a growing concern that must be addressed with a focused and strategic approach. The workgroup will bring together experts, university administrators, and student organizations to develop best practices and policies for combating hate on campuses. This collaboration will be instrumental in ensuring that universities are well-equipped to confront antisemitism and other forms of discrimination when they arise.

Furthermore, we strongly support the provision requiring annual reports from higher education institutions on incidents of harassment, or intimidation specifically in regards to antisemitism. These reports will provide transparency, allowing the state to monitor trends and identify areas in need of intervention. The data will be instrumental in understanding the scope and nature of antisemitism on campuses, helping to ensure that proactive measures are put in place to address these issues before they escalate.

Finally, we are particularly encouraged by the establishment of the Campus Community Grant Program. This program will support initiatives aimed at fostering intergroup and interfaith dialogue, which is essential for building mutual respect and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. The Jewish Federations of North America have long advocated for efforts that promote cooperation and understanding between Jewish students and their peers, and we are confident that this program will help reduce division and create a more inclusive campus culture.

Senate Bill 0847 represents a vital opportunity to combat antisemitism, discrimination, and violence on Maryland's college campuses. We are encouraged by the comprehensive and thoughtful approach taken in this legislation, which not only addresses immediate concerns but also fosters a culture of respect and safety for the future. The Jewish Federations of North America strongly urge the committee to support this bill, as it will undoubtedly contribute to creating a safer environment for Jewish students and all members of the campus community.

Sincerely,

Eli Berne

State Director, Government Relations

Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)

Eli.Berne@JewishFederations.org

SB_0847_HadassahGB_FAV_2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Harriet Rubinson

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB0847

Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup The Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS)

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 5, 2025

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FAVORABLE

TO: Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair, Sen. Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
FROM: Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch, Co-Presidents
Hadassah Greater Baltimore

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Region of Hadassah, representing over 4,100 Marylanders, we are writing to urge you to **vote FOR Senate Bill 0847 - The Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act.**

College campuses have become hotbeds of hateful rhetoric, where antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories are voiced in student and classroom interactions. Jewish students, faculty and staff are being targeted and shut out of campus activities.

It is critical that institutions of higher education in Maryland are required to adopt and enforce anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies. This bill defines requirements for time, place, and manner for how student express themselves; requires institutions of higher education to conduct certain meetings with certain approved student organizations; and establishes the Campus Community Grant Program and the Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation.

As seen in Hadassah's recently released report, *From Fear to Resilience: Women Facing Antisemitism*, the recent upsurge in antisemitism in our country deeply affects our daily sense of security and safety, and heightens the need to counter this scourge. Two-thirds of the Jewish women we surveyed said antisemitism is affecting their lives, relationships and work, and prompting some to drop out of school.

Hadassah is committed to fighting antisemitism on college campuses, online, in our communities and around the world through empowerment and education and we urge the committee for a favorable report on SB0847.

Thank you,
Nancy Braverman and Barbara Deitch
Co-Presidents, Hadassah Greater Baltimore
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SB47 Testimony pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Lesley Frost

Position: FAV

SB 847 - The Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act

Position - Favorable

March 3, 2025

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee.

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Co Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MD SPA) and I am writing to express strong support for SB 847.

The incidents of antisemitism and student harassment in Maryland have significantly increased since the October 7 Massacre, and our institutions of higher education have either been slow, or have failed to implement policies and procedures to protect their Jewish students. This bill, SB847, modeled on the Ohio Campus Act of 2024, would require institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce a policy regarding racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation at the institution. This would include training for staff, procedures for investigating complaints, and collaborating with local law enforcement. In addition institutions of higher education would be required to create a campus task force to combat antisemitism, Islamophobia, hatred, harassment, bullying, or violence toward others on the basis of their actual religious identity.

It is imperative that Jewish students are able to continue their higher education in a safe environment., and passage of this legislation would assure parents and the Jewish community at large that their concerns have been heard and remedies to prevent and address future incidents are in place.

The NCJW MD SPA's support for SB847 is based on our resolutions III.1 "The elimination of antisemitism" and resolution IV.1, "The enactment, enforcement, and preservation of laws and regulations that protect civil rights and individual liberties for all."

On behalf of the more than 700 advocates of the National Council of Jewish Women in Maryland, I strongly urge the committee to support SB 847, The Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act.

Lesley Frost
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Bethesda MD 20814
lesleyfrost0@gmail.com

Co Chair NCJW MD SPA
ncjw.mdacts@gmail.com

ADL SB847 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Meredith Weisel

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 5, 2025

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel
ADL Vice President, State and Local Advocacy

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **support of Senate Bill 847, Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)**, which will help counter the rising tide of antisemitism on our college and university campuses.

As you may know, ADL is a leading anti-hate organization founded in 1913 with a mission to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

We are facing a troubling rise in antisemitism, particularly on college and university campuses. During the 2023-2024 academic year, ADL recorded over 1,400 antisemitic incidents on campuses across the nation. On numerous occasions, disturbing rhetoric escalated into aggressive actions, as protests morphed into encampments that included calls for universities to cut ties with Jewish institutions and were frequently sites of harassment against Jewish people on campus. These activities created an environment of fear and hostility for Jewish students and faculty.

Further, ADL in partnership with Hillel International and College Pulse fielded a survey of college students at 135 universities across the United States. According to the survey, 83% of Jewish college students have experienced or witnessed antisemitism firsthand since the October 7 attack. 41% of Jewish students felt the need to hide their Jewish identity and one-in-four felt compelled to take security precautions. The most alarming statistic is that two-thirds of Jewish students lack confidence in their university’s ability to prevent antisemitic incidents. That is why bills like **SB847** are so crucial in this current environment.

There have been a number of concerning antisemitic incidents on Maryland’s campuses, particularly in the wake of the October 7 terrorist attack. In April 2024, at an anti-Israel encampment at the University of Maryland, College Park, protesters displayed the logo of the U.S.-designated terror group Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In September 2024, four visibly Jewish students were harassed while walking to the campus Hillel by an individual who said, "F*** you Jews" and "Christ is king, f*** you Jews, you killed Jesus." That

same month, a car parked in front of a Jewish sorority house displayed the message " Hamas responding to never-ending crime against Palestinians."

In May 2024, at Towson University, a student asked a fellow classmate wearing a Star of David necklace if they were Jewish, and after the student said yes, they stated, "Go f*** yourself" and "Israel shouldn't exist." Also in May 2024, during a lecture at Towson University, a professor made several antisemitic statements, including, "Jews are too defensive about the Holocaust and antisemitism."

The alarming and extreme proliferation of antisemitism on college campuses in Maryland and across the country has contributed to an explosive rise of antisemitic and anti-Jewish hatred that ADL has been tracking across society. Campus administrators have proven ill-equipped in many cases to effectively put mechanisms and strategies in place to counter the environments of hostility and intimidation targeting their Jewish students. It is clear administrators need help and structures put in place to protect their Jewish students and address the epidemic of antisemitism on their college campuses. HB 1462 does just this.

Additionally, ADL understands and tracks the dangerous proximity between the normalization of antisemitism (or any kind of hate) and acts of physical violence. As antisemitism becomes more emboldened because of the current inability by campuses to effectively push back, there is less and less distance between that hatred and a physical or violent manifestation of it. We need to put checks in place so that campuses can respond effectively, and interrupt the cycle of rising antisemitism before it leads to even worse tragedy.

Campuses should be places where all students feel welcome and are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment. Through SB847, the Maryland legislature is demonstrating the leadership and guidance campuses so desperately need in this moment where Jewish students, faculty and administrators feel targeted and unsafe to openly express their Jewish identity. ADL strongly supports SB847.

**We urge the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee to give
Senate Bill 847 a favorable report.**

Testimony in support of SB0847 - Higher Ed-Antihat

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0847_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/05/2025
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0847 – FAVORABLE

Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0847, Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

The FBI has tracked hate crimes and noted a significant increase in reports on these crimes. ¹

On September 23, 2024, the [FBI released](#) the hate crimes data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program as reported by law enforcement agencies across the country. Those agencies reported 11,862 hate crime incidents involving 13,829 offenses. More detail is available below and on the [FBI Crime Data Explorer](#).

Civilrights.org Leadership Conference Education Fund has noted this alarming increase every year and documented that increase. ²

The Leadership Conference Education Fund report — “[Cause for Concern 2024: The State of Hate \(Updated May 2024\)](#)“ — outlines the serious threat of an alarming rise in hate crimes since 2014. Each of the last four presidential election periods have shown an unmistakable pattern: Hate crimes increase during elections. The report, the most recent publication in The Leadership Conference Education Fund’s “Cause for Concern” series first published in 1997, covers this trend. And while not all hate crimes and hate incidents are committed by white supremacists, white supremacists have been particularly active during the last four national elections. From the mainstreaming of hate and the failure of social media platforms to adequately address disinformation, the current climate is rife with opportunities for the trend of increased hate to continue into the 2024 election — unless action is taken.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>

² <https://civilrights.org/edfund/resource/2024-the-state-of-hate-updated/>

SB0847_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

The policies now being pushed and implemented at the Federal level are accelerating this problem; it is up to Maryland now to counter that hate and discrimination.

We can accomplish this by passing this bill requiring institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce policies regarding antihate and antidiscrimination and time, place, and manner requirements for expressive conduct. We can provide enforcement for antihate and antidiscrimination through requiring institutions of higher education to conduct certain meetings with certain approved student organizations. We can assist them by establishing the Campus Community Grant Program. We can obtain data and learn about best practices to combat this scourge when this bill establishes the Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0847.

SB847_Hettleman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Chair, Rules Committee
Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees
Capital Budget
Health and Human Services
Chair, Pensions

Joint Committees
Senate Chair, Audit and Evaluation
Senate Chair, Pensions



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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB 847 – HIGHER EDUCATION – ANTIHATE AND ANTIDISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND WORKGROUP (MARYLAND CAMPUS ACCOUNTABILITY AND MODERNIZATION TO PROTECT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ACT)

SB 847, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act, takes a proactive and necessary approach to combating hate, discrimination, and violence in Maryland’s institutions of higher education by ensuring that our colleges and universities adopt clear, enforceable policies to protect students, faculty, and staff from racial, ethnic, and religious harassment and intimidation.

The urgency of this legislation is clear. Hate crimes and bias incidents have risen sharply in recent years on college campuses and across Maryland, threatening the safety and well-being of students from Jewish, Muslim, Black, Asian, LGBTQ+, and other historically marginalized communities. According to statistics from the Justice Department, our state continues to see an alarming number of hate-based incidents, many of which occur in educational settings <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/state-data/maryland>. No student should have to fear for their safety and well-being while pursuing an education.

SB 847 increases education institutional accountability by requiring colleges and universities to:

- Adopt comprehensive antihate and antidiscrimination policies to address racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting, investigating, and addressing complaints to ensure transparency and fairness.
- Provide faculty and administrators with training on how to respond in real-time to hate incidents in classrooms and on campus.

Beyond enforcement, SB 847 promotes education and prevention. The bill mandates annual collaborative campus meetings with student organizations, ensuring that students have a voice

in addressing concerns and shaping policies. This encourages a culture of open communication, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Hate-driven threats and violence create a climate of fear and exclusion, making it harder for students to focus on learning. SB847 strengthens campus security measures by requiring institutions to work closely with law enforcement to develop response protocols and ensure campus security collaborates with students and community groups to protect organizations and individuals targeted by hate crimes or threats.

Additionally, the bill establishes the Campus Community Grant Program, allocating \$500,000 in funding for intergroup and interfaith initiatives. These grants will support student-led efforts to build understanding, foster unity, and create a more inclusive campus environment.

At its core, SB 847 is about protecting all students. It instructs the convening of the Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Hate to develop model policies and security recommendations to ensure Maryland remains a leader in combating campus hate and discrimination. This legislation is measured, proactive, and essential to the safety, inclusion, and success of every student in our state. No student, even those who do not belong to a historically discriminated group, stand to benefit when the threat of discrimination and hate can run unimpeded through our higher education institutions.

With this bill, Maryland has the opportunity to set a national standard for campus safety, free expression, and inclusion, not just for any one group, but for all students who have been historically targeted by hate and discrimination. This is why I urge a favorable report on SB 847 to ensure that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion, can pursue their education free from fear, discrimination, and violence.

Testimony SB 847.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Faust

Position: FAV

Taylor Faust

Tfaust13@terpmail.umd.edu

University of Maryland

02/27/2025

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 847 – The CAMPUS Act

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

My name is Taylor Faust, and I am a junior at the University of Maryland. I never imagined that, in 2025, I would be standing here, pleading with lawmakers to protect me from hate on a college campus. I am testifying today in strong support of Senate Bill 847 because, as a Jewish student, I have experienced antisemitism firsthand and have watched my university struggle to address the growing hate.

Every day I walk onto my campus and see flyers or chalked messages, some of which call Jews “settlers” who need to “go home,” and demand an “intifada revolution.” I have sat in a classroom where my peers, directed at me, claimed that “Jews always play the victim.” During SGA elections, a list was posted at UMD with every Jewish applicant’s name highlighted because the Jewish students “do not align with the same human rights beliefs.” Without any confirmation of my political beliefs, I was yelled at by several UMD students for being a “shame.” The University of Maryland has failed to effectively condemn or address these incidences. To this day, hateful flyers are still being distributed, protests continue, and Jewish students remain targets of harassment. **No one should feel unsafe at their own school.**

No meaningful action has been taken. Jewish students, including myself, feel unheard and unsafe. This is why Senate Bill 847 is **critical** because it requires universities to adopt and enforce real anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies, ensure transparency in reporting hate incidents, and strengthen coordination with law enforcement when students feel threatened.

Everyone deserves to feel safe on their campus. Everyone deserves to feel supported by their university. Every student should know that the institution they attend will stand up against hate.

SB 847 will ensure colleges are required to take action.

Vote **in favor** of SB 847 to protect all students on Maryland’s campuses who have been told their identity makes them a target.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Faust

University of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB0847 - Uriel Appel.pdf

Uploaded by: Uriel Appel

Position: FAV

Uriel Appel

uriel.appel@gmail.com
University of Maryland, College Park
March 3rd, 2025

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 847 – The CAMPUS 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 847 because, as a Jewish student, I have personally experienced antisemitism on my campus and have seen firsthand how universities struggle to address hate incidents effectively.

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.

When antisemitic incidents happen, universities often fail to take meaningful action, leaving Jewish students feeling unsafe and unheard. SB 847 is crucial because it will require all colleges and universities in Maryland to adopt and enforce strong anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies, improve transparency in reporting hate incidents, and strengthen coordination with law enforcement when students are threatened.

My peers and I deserve to feel safe and supported on their campuses. I urge you to vote in favor of SB 847 to ensure Maryland's colleges and universities take real action against hate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Uriel Appel
University of Maryland, College Park

SB0847_MACC_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FWA

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 5, 2025

**SB 847 – Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup
(Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)**

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland’s 16 community colleges, supports **SB 847** with amendments. This bill takes important steps to enhance campus safety, strengthen antihate and antidiscrimination policies, and ensure institutions have clear guidelines for responding to incidents of harassment, violence, and intimidation. Community colleges serve one of the most diverse student populations in Maryland, enrolling students from a wide range of racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Ensuring that all students can pursue their education in a safe and inclusive environment is a shared priority, and SB 847 provides a structured approach to handling discrimination and hate-based incidents while fostering campus-wide engagement and accountability.

While MACC fully supports the intent of this legislation, we recommend two amendments to ensure its implementation is practical and equitable for community colleges. First, we request clarification that MACC’s Executive Director shall designate the community college representative on the specified Workgroup, rather than having the representative appointed by the Secretary of Higher Education. This ensures that community colleges retain direct control over their own representation in policy discussions that directly impact their institutions and students. Second, while we recognize the State’s budget constraints, community colleges and county budgets are also strained. Implementing SB 847 will require training, reporting, and administrative resources, and a funding mechanism would help institutions meet these requirements. MACC is committed to working with bill sponsors and policymakers to support successful implementation without creating undue financial burdens.

MACC appreciates the commitment to enhancing campus safety, promoting inclusivity, and addressing discrimination in higher education. With these targeted amendments, SB 847 will more effectively support all Maryland institutions, including community colleges, in achieving these shared goals. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 847** with **AMENDMENTS**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.

2025-03-05-SB0847-MD Campus Act (MCCR FWA).pdf

Uploaded by: Spencer Dove

Position: FWA



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

March 5, 2025

**Senate Bill 847 - Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination
Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability
and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)
Position: Support with Amendments**

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status. Additionally, under Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety Art. § 2-307, the Department of State Police submits quarterly reports to the Commission on incidents apparently directed against an individual or group because of race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, national origin, or homelessness.

Senate Bill 847 requires the governing bodies of each institution of higher education to adopt and enforce policies to address racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation that are on the rise at our college and university campuses. These policies must include provisions to inform the campus community about their rights; create complaint, adjudication, and disciplinary procedures; and facilitate dialogues with the campus community about incidents occurring on campus. The bill further establishes the Workgroup on Combatting Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation to develop model policies, guidance, best practices, and recommendations for member institutions, as well as to fulfill the bill’s reporting requirement.

According to the State of Maryland 2023 Hate Bias Report¹ published by the Department of State Police in partnership with the Maryland Coordination & Analysis Center, between 2017 and 2022 the number of hate bias incidents reported across Maryland ranged from 375 to 467 – record numbers when compared to the preceding reported years. During this same time frame, the number of verified reports ranged from 85 (2020) to 183 (2018), again outpacing comparable numbers from the preceding reported years.

¹ <https://mcac.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2023-Hate-Bias-Report.pdf>

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

Governor
Wes Moore

Lt. Governor
Aruna Miller

Commission Chair
Stephanie Suerth, MPA,
CCEP

Commission Vice Chair
Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq.

Commissioners
Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR,
SHRM-SCP
Angela Scott, Esq.
Magdalena S. Navarro,
MSc
Jeff Rosen
Gina McKnight-Smith,
PharmD, MBA
Noah Thomas Metheny,
Esq., MPH

Officers
Executive Director
Cleveland L. Horton II

Deputy Director
Yolanda F. Sonnier

Assistant Director
Nicolette S. Young

General Counsel
Glendora C. Hughes

**Education and
Outreach Director**
Candice Crenshaw

However, calendar year 2023, according to the Hate Bias Report, was incredibly troubling. Maryland law enforcement agencies received 951 reports of hate bias incidents across Maryland, 121 of which were verified. The top three identified bias motivation codes within these reports were:

- Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry – 528 incidents, with 363 of those incidents being Anti-Black or African American and 44 being Anti-Hispanic or Latino incidents.
- Religion – 316 incidents, with 284 of those being Anti-Jewish and 26 being Anti-Islamic (Muslim) incidents.
- Sexual Orientation – 134 incidents, with 82 of those being Anti-Gay (Male) and 43 being Anti-LGBT (Mixed Group) incidents.

Meanwhile, among these 951 reports, 326 occurred at elementary/secondary schools and 11 occurred on college/university campuses. All of these record setting numbers coincide with national trends as reported by the FBI.²

As the data shows us since 2017, Maryland should expect these numbers to become the status quo. An increase in acts of hate and bias is being met with increased visibility in the news and on social media. Meanwhile, advocacy organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders and leaders throughout Maryland are doubling down on both improving reporting and addressing the dramatic increase in incidents. SB847 is one important component in Maryland's overall efforts that seeks to build a stronger, more accountable campus community in order to effectively combat acts of hate and bias that are becoming increasingly more common on college and university campuses.

By way of amendments, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights respectfully suggests the following:

1. Maryland's hate crimes statute includes protections based on an individual's race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, or national origin, or because another person or group is homeless.³ However, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, and homeless status are excluded from the bases identified within SB847. MCCR respectfully recommends including these protected bases, where appropriate, so that SB847 harmonizes with the existing hate crimes statute.
2. SB847 creates the Workgroup on Combatting Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation. However, if amendments are adopted to include the additional protected classes within the hate crimes statute, this Workgroup's name will not be inclusive of those classes. MCCR respectfully recommends the adoption of a more inclusive Workgroup name that effectively communicates the Workgroup's important scope of work.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable with amendment vote on SB847. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this

² <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>

³ Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law Art., Title 10

letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve fair housing and civil rights in Maryland.

SB 847_Maryland Campus Accountability_JVPA Marylan

Uploaded by: Alexandra Lazerow

Position: UNF



LEGISLATIVE POSITION: SB 847 (Hettleman) / HB 1462 (Solomon, Boaf, Cardin, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Spiegel, and Vogel) - Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Jewish Voice for Peace Action (JVPA) is a national grassroots Jewish organization in support of Palestinian rights. We have over 10,000 supporters in Maryland, and chapters in Baltimore City, the DC Metro area, and University of Maryland College Park.

JVPA Local Leaders in Maryland **strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462**. This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus.

- This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.
- College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.
- The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress **speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities.
- Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.
- Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) "significant disruption" is the wrong



direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.

- The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.
- In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.
- The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.
- The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.
- These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Alison Cannon

Position: UNF

Dear Committee Members,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 43A. I am testifying in strong opposition to SB0847 / HB1462, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act.

If passed, SB0847 would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus. This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas on campuses in Maryland. Laws such as these have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine.

This legislation is clearly in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restriction of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing clearly link it to the repressive policies that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.

Time/place/manner restrictions such as those included in this bill create an onerous and confusing process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights. It creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.

Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes self-defined "significant disruption" are the wrong direction for Maryland. The requirement to involve police or campus security is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.

In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies. The Hate-Bias report central to this bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, this discomfort is not a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. Instead, this discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own, and learning to tolerate and protect it is crucial to maintaining a democratic society in which freedom of speech and peaceful assembly are sacred.

Finally, the University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that the FY2026 budget cannot afford this \$500,000 allocation. Passing and funding this bill would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress students' freedom of speech.

It is for all these reasons that I am encouraging you to strongly oppose to SB0847 / HB1462, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison Cannon
District 43A - Baltimore City

SB847_UNFAV_ACLUMD.pdf

Uploaded by: Dara Johnson

Position: UNF



**Testimony for the Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee**

March 5, 2025

**SB 847 – Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination
Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and
Modernization to Protect Students Act)**

DARA JOHNSON
INTERIM POLICY
COUNSEL

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GENERAL COUNSEL

UNFAVORABLE

The ACLU of Maryland opposes SB 847, which provides certain requirements for policies this bill mandates institutions of higher education to adopt in relation to racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation. This includes policies governing an institution's response to related complaints and incidents; the required regulation and monitoring of expressive activity; the mandated tracking and reporting of related incidents, complaints, and responses; and the development of related missions and programming. This bill also establishes grant funding to promote intergroup and interfaith outreach, and creates the Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation to develop and recommend related guidance.

Although we recognize and share in the goal of protecting students from discrimination, bigotry, and bias-driven harm, we are critically concerned that certain provisions could work against this intent by opening the door to overbroad restrictions on expressive activity, and by allowing enforcement to be potentially skewed by differing viewpoints on the undefined categories of "Islamophobia" and "antisemitism" singled out as the primary focuses of the workgroup convened under this bill.

Many of the institutions of higher education subject to this bill already maintain and enforce similar provisions under their own policies, such as the University of Maryland's (UMD's) currently posted "Guidelines

on Demonstrations and Leafletting.”¹ While the security and procedural reasons for such policies can certainly be important, their language and application must still not infringe on the right to freely engage in the exchange of ideas that undergirds higher learning and campus life, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 40 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights.

Both history and recent events have shown that serious harm can result where such provisions are improper, misapplied or used to unjustly censor speech and other expressive activity, as demonstrated by the preliminary injunction recently ordered against UMD-College Park in a pending case by Students for Justice in Palestine challenging the university’s revocation of the group’s approval to host an interfaith vigil on October 7th mourning ongoing genocide in Gaza, and its ultimate ban of all student-organized events on campus that day.²

By generally requiring higher education institutions to regulate the time, place, and manner of seemingly all expressive activities, including the required adoption of provisions related to safety and disruptions, SB 847 provides an overbroad foundation for resulting policies that could risk depriving students, faculty members, administrators, and employees of the basic freedoms to associate and express their beliefs. The severe harm of this risk is embedded in the direct and prior restraints on any expressive conduct that could very likely result and constrain robust community interactions, discourse, and other forms of expression essential to maintaining an inclusive and well-informed academic environment.

The likelihood of this risk manifesting is compounded by the bill’s lack of safeguards against unconstitutional content or viewpoint-based restrictions, as well as the chilling impact of the imposed pathway for law enforcement escalations and required designation of a monitoring administrator. Within the broader context of this bill’s enforcement per recommendations prescribed by the established “Workgroup on Combatting Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation,” there is a concern that resulting speech restrictions and the bill’s other disciplinary, reporting, security, and grant related measures could be

¹ University of Maryland, Guidelines for Demonstrations & Leafletting, Univ. of Md. Policies, <https://policies.umd.edu/guidelines-demonstrations-leafletting> (last visited Mar. 3, 2025).

²*University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine v. Board of Regents*, No. 8:24-cv-02683-TDC (D. Md. S. Div. Oct. 1, 2024).

susceptible to inequitable or unwarranted enforcement against or in favor of certain groups whose legitimate perspectives diverge on the politically-wrought issues of Islamophobia and antisemitism.

While Islamophobia and antisemitism are both extremely critical issue areas to address, highlighting these particular concerns as the workgroup's presumptive focus above other racial, ethnic, or religious concerns in higher education may entangle the state in a worrisome precedent. Without any provisions defining this politically-loaded terminology, the enforcement of this bill per recommendations flowing from the workgroup's subjective understanding of what constitutes "Islamophobic" or "antisemitic" conduct would likely result in a virtual minefield of free speech headaches and dilemmas.

However, the process of resolving this concern by applying a uniform definition would be complex to say the least, as elevating particular definitions above others could just open to the door to even further unconstitutional constraints against expressing unpopular, but not unlawful, ideas. If the overall intent of this bill is to ensure higher education communities are safe from the harm of discriminatory, bigoted, and bias-driven conduct, protection from the danger of selective enforcement and censorship must be equally prioritized. Providing strong and well-balanced safeguards against the unjustly targeted or mis-application of restrictions on expression is essential to advancing this goal, but is unfortunately not achieved by SB 847 as currently drafted.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges an unfavorable report on SB 847.

SB847 MCJC Unfavorable Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: David Wolfe

Position: UNF

March 3, 2025

Testimony on SB0847—Position: Unfavorable
Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland
Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: David Wolfe, Silver Spring, MD 20902, on behalf of the Montgomery County Jewish Collective

My name is David Wolfe and I am a resident of Maryland District 18. I am writing as a representative of the Montgomery County Jewish Collective. The Montgomery County Jewish Collective (MCJC) is a new Jewish communal and advocacy organization committed to collective liberation as the cornerstone of a vibrant, safe, and supportive Jewish community and a safe and equitable county and state for all. We came together in response to the genocide in Gaza, sharing sadness and anger at the failure of our Jewish community institutions to recognize the value of Palestinian lives. We strongly believe that both criticism of Israel and pro-Palestinian speech must be protected. Given this, and given the clear suppression of such speech on college campuses last year, we have serious concerns about SB847.

I am also writing as a student at University of Maryland Baltimore studying for a Masters of Social Work and as a proud Jew. I wear a Star of David every day, I have Hebrew writing on my backpack, and I wear a yarmulke on shabbat and on holidays. I am not fearful of expressing my Jewish identity on campus and have never been discriminated against or harassed for it. I am fearful, however, of being discriminated against for my belief in the rights of the Palestinian people. I am fearful today, of testifying against this bill, knowing that around that country college students have been wrongly punished for expressing support for Palestinian rights. I am fearful that this bill will make it easier for students like me to be retaliated against for using our protected speech rights. I express my beliefs on my campus, in my classes, and in this testimony despite this fear because I know the cause is moral.

The Montgomery County Jewish Collective appreciates the stated intentions of this bill. All college students in the state should feel safe and protected from discriminatory speech and actions. At the same time, we believe that the problem of hate on college campuses has been greatly exaggerated for expressly political purposes, and we do not believe that this legislation is

necessary to make safety a reality. Most if not all of our universities already have anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies and procedures concerning protected classes, including religious identity. Any threats to the safety of students—emotional or physical— can be addressed by the policies and procedures currently in place. It is fundamentally unnecessary to introduce legislation unless the intent is in fact to push universities to crack down further on protest.

Last year, college students across the United States organized in support of Palestine. In Maryland, although we do not find the response of our universities to have been perfect, we did not see anything like the worst examples of suppression that occurred elsewhere. But we fear that the provisions of the bill will provide legislative sanction for exactly the kind of suppression of speech that we saw elsewhere in the United States. On the face of it, this bill appears neutral. But in our political context, there is no way that it can be. Since October 7, 2023, universities across the country, in concert with local law enforcement bodies, have used anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies and time, place, and manner rules to shut down *one* kind of student protest. In some glaring cases, they *failed* to apply the same policy to protesters on the other side.

At the best of times, “hate” and “harassment” are slippery and subjective terms. But in this moment, we are facing and must name a fundamental disagreement over what constitutes hate. Criticism of the policies and actions of the state of Israel, a political entity, are not in and of themselves antisemitic; indeed, countless Jewish Americans and Marylanders are themselves deeply critical. But many powerful institutions and individuals have declared that they are in fact the same thing. These institutions have been deeply involved in trying to direct university responses to pro-Palestinian protest. They have insisted that Jewish students feel inherently threatened by protest critical of Israel and supportive of Palestinians, despite the fact that many Jewish students are *themselves involved in such protest*. And the result has been suppression, often violent, justified in large part by the very kinds of seemingly neutral policies that this bill codifies, despite the fact that suppression has been disproportionately aimed at Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian students. Right now, the Trump administration is trying to deport pro-Palestinian international students—and urging universities to participate in identifying them. We fear that this legislation will embolden those who would support such clearly discriminatory actions.

We respectfully urge the committee to return an unfavorable report on SB847.

SB847 testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Eli Emley

Position: UNF

My name is Eli Emley and I am writing to oppose the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act, SB847. I grew up in and am a resident of district 3, and am a UMD student. This bill threatens free speech by imposing restrictive time, place and manner requirements that make it more difficult to protest to oppose facism, racism and human rights violations. Rather than address these problems, this bill aims to repress opposition to it.

Testimony - SB0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Eric Hiller

Position: UNF

March 3, 2025

Chair Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony OPPOSING SB0847 CAMPUS ACT

I am a Jewish Marylander writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 0847, the Maryland (CAMPUS) Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act.

While I appreciate the bill's intention to combat discrimination and hate-based violence on college campuses, I am deeply concerned that certain provisions within this legislation threaten the fundamental right to free speech and could be used to suppress student activism, particularly around issues of social justice and human rights.

One of the most troubling aspects of SB0847 is the mandated adoption of time, place, and manner policies for expressive conduct. Though such policies may appear neutral on their face, they often serve to disproportionately restrict marginalized voices — especially students advocating for human rights, racial justice, and other movements critical of government policies or institutional practices. Time, place, and manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.

By empowering institutions to involve campus security or law enforcement in response to what is vaguely defined as "significant disruptions," this bill could create a chilling effect on student activism, deterring participation in peaceful protests out of fear of punishment or surveillance.

Additionally, the requirement for institutions to hold meetings exclusively with "approved student organizations" risks creating an exclusionary dynamic that silences independent student groups or those critical of administrative decisions. This approach threatens to institutionalize favoritism, giving disproportionate influence to organizations deemed acceptable by administrators while sidelining grassroots movements.

Mandates on university administrators like those included in this bill incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms due to administrators being justifiably concerned about penalties their

university may face if there is any question of their adherence to the mandates.

Efforts to combat hate, harassment, and intimidation are essential, but they must not come at the cost of infringing on students' constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. Instead of advancing campus safety, SB0847 has the troubling potential to foster an environment of censorship and repression.

I urge the committee to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eric Hiller
Towson, Maryland

SB847_HERSHEL_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Hershel Barnstein

Position: UNF

Good afternoon members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

I am a Jewish student at the University of Maryland. I am speaking today for the unfavorable position of the bill. This bill allocates \$500,000 to the University System of Maryland for the purposes of enforcement. As a state, we are experiencing a \$3 billion deficit. Governor Moore has cut \$200 million from the Developmental Disabilities Administration. Given these cuts, it is unfair to expect Maryland taxpayers to foot the bill for legislation that does more to harm student speech than protect it.

Moreover, this bill is being debated after the Trump administration just signed an executive order deporting students who support Palestine. Instead of codifying punitive measures that inadvertently pave the way for fascism in our state, we should be discussing how to respond to this administration's unacceptable attacks on students. We should not be giving ammunition to the side that is calling for peaceful protesters to be arrested.

A "significant disruption" can mean a lot of things. At my campus, we are forbidden from using amplified sound at protests because it is allegedly disrupting our classmates. Yet the University of Maryland prides itself for having the largest quad in America. We also claim to be representing a diversity of backgrounds and opinions. Just as the school cannot reconcile its self-claimed "openness" with its blatant restrictions, this bill cannot reconcile its desire to protect students with the fact that it makes it harder for them to speak out. Due to this unsolvable problem, I urge you to vote for the unfavorable position on the bill.

Opposition to SB0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Epstein

Position: UNF



Chairs Feldman and Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of **Prince George's 4 Palestine**, a grassroots community organizing group based in Prince George's County, Maryland. We are a 500-member strong organization committed to advocating for Palestinian liberation and justice. Many of us, like myself, are Jewish.

I write in strong opposition to SB0847, which purports to protect students from discrimination and hate. It is far more likely to do precisely the opposite.

On campuses across America, students protesting America's sponsorship of a genocide in Palestine have been targeted with claims of hate speech. Thousands of student protesters have been arrested, threatened with expulsion, and/or had their student organizations deauthorized. Many of those students accused of antisemitism have been –as I am–Jewish. We have seen similar behavior in our own county's higher education institutions. Just last year at the University of Maryland, a pro-Palestine student group had to [fight in the courts](#) for permission to hold a vigil for the dead in Gaza. Meanwhile, Israel Fest, held annually at UMD, is typically celebrated with minimal disruption or scrutiny, despite that country's consistent and flagrant violation of international human rights law.

While antisemitism does exist on college campuses, a vanishingly small proportion of the protests and protesters being targeted have actually engaged in hate speech. As a Jew, it breaks my heart to watch the very real problem of antisemitism be weaponized to silence any mention of Palestinian life, the value of Palestinian life, or the goal of peace.

Because this is a moment of such intense repression targeted at a single social movement, the timing of this bill is worrisome. While it purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, it seems far more likely that the bill will enable stepped-up repression against pro-Palestine protesters, not broad protections for all vulnerable groups. It is especially concerning that the Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus, which has a track record of conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism and [working legislatively to silence pro-Palestinian voices](#), has supported this bill.

We note several features of SB0847 that are especially troubling.

- 1) The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress disfavored speech, particularly speech that is likely to attract media attention, and risks that **campus administrators will chill speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities.
- 2) The requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints creates an **opportunity for individuals to abuse anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict**. Even in cases where the wrongfully accused are ultimately cleared, the investigation process will be onerous and traumatizing, and may have lasting reputational repercussions.
- 3) **Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous, confusing, and labyrinthine process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- 4) Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong direction for Maryland during this time when we have so many threats to liberty to resist.
- 5) The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor’s budget. **The FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which will effectively force additional defunding of core (educational) functions.
- 6) The Hate-Bias report central to the bill’s reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland, because discrimination against and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

We recognize the good intentions behind this bill– a desire for safety and inclusion for all students. But this bill will not make students safer. Given the history of campus enforcement, we cannot trust that policies like this will be deployed fairly, and in service of targeting genuine hate speech. It is far more likely to become a weapon in the arsenal of those who wish to silence free speech and stifle a peaceful social movement unpopular with some in power.

We urge you to reject SB0847 and stand with your constituents against targeted repression of free speech.

Sincerely,

Jess Epstein

Prince George’s 4 Palestine

SB 847 (Campus Supression) - JVPA Maryland Leaders

Uploaded by: Jonathan Rochkind

Position: UNF



LEGISLATIVE POSITION: SB 847 (Hettleman) / HB 1462 (Solomon, Boaf, Cardin, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Spiegel, and Vogel) - Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Jewish Voice for Peace Action (JVPA) is a national grassroots Jewish organization in support of Palestinian rights. We have over 10,000 supporters in Maryland, and chapters in Baltimore City, the DC Metro area, and University of Maryland College Park.

JVPA Local Leaders in Maryland **strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462**. This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus.

- This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.
- College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.
- The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress **speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities.
- Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.
- Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong



direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.

- The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.
- In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.
- The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.
- The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.
- These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

Testimony in Opposition to SB 0847_Blaha_JVP.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Blaha

Position: UNF

Monday, March 3, 2025



Dear Committee Members,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Baltimore, is a national grassroots Jewish organization in support of Palestinian rights with over 10,000 supporters in Maryland, as well as chapters in Baltimore, the DC Metro area, and at University of Maryland College Park. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying in **strong opposition to SB0847, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act.**

If passed, SB0847 would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus. This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas on campuses in Maryland. Laws such as these have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine.

This legislation is clearly in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only **further the restriction of free speech and political dissent.** Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing clearly link it to the repressive policies that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.

Time/place/manner restrictions such as those included in this bill create an onerous and confusing process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights. It creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations. It hopefully goes without saying that creating tightly controlled "free speech zones" in which students are permitted to exercise their

constitutional rights is a horrendous hypocrisy and not remotely consistent with actual freedoms of speech and assembly.

Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes self-defined “significant disruption” are the wrong direction for Maryland. The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective. It also brings to mind horrific past events in America’s history, such as the killings of students at Kent State. Involving law enforcement officers in peaceful student protests has already led to the terrorization and detention of student activists in the past year. This should by no means be encouraged, let alone enshrined in law.

In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies. The Hate-Bias report central to this bill’s reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, this discomfort is not a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. Instead, this discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own, and learning to tolerate and protect it is crucial to maintaining a democratic society in which freedom of speech and peaceful assembly are sacred.

Finally, the University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor’s budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland’s flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget cannot afford this \$500,000 allocation**. Passing and funding this bill would mean **taking money from academic programs to suppress students’ freedom of speech**.

It is for all these reasons that I am encouraging you to **strongly oppose to SB0847, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
5706 Cross Country Blvd
Baltimore, MD 21209
Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Baltimore

HB 1462 SB 847 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Kretler

Position: UNF

My name is Katie Kretler and I am on the faculty of a small liberal arts college right next door to the House of Delegates – St. John’s College. As someone strongly committed to liberal education, **I am strongly opposed to SB 847 / HB 1462**. This bill seeks to nail into place restrictions on free speech akin to those already freezing public discourse throughout the US, Canada and Europe. It would make mandatory many technocratic procedures that run contrary to the educational mission. Rather than allow colleges the freedom to set their own policies in accordance with their own needs and educational frameworks, this bill sweeps up all of Maryland higher education into a rigid net of censorship. It sets a tone of distrust and even fear just when we need to free ourselves from our hyper-partisan cocoons to meet each one another “in real life” and with mutual respect.

First, to talk dollars and cents, it is no secret that higher education in the US is in financial trouble, especially now. This bill puts an undue burden on already strained budgets. Increased security is not what we need or what we can afford. Nor do we have any extra administrators with time on their hands.

More importantly: this bill presupposes or fosters an antagonistic relationship between students and other students and the students vis-à-vis the administration. It creates a disharmony that will be displayed right on the website as policy. It mandates that university administrators set themselves in a defensive stance toward students, faculty and staff who wish to express their political views. This runs contrary to the educational mission. We need to trust our students and not have the institution manage the conversations they are having amongst themselves and in the larger community.

At St. John’s, a college with about 400 students, it is not only contrary to the spirit of liberal education to preempt public “expressive activities” (what a phrase!), it is impractical. The grey zone between a large conversation on the quad and a protest is impossible to maintain, and preemptively burdening students with forms to fill out lest they be run afoul of technicalities would further chill the free speech atmosphere which, at our college as throughout the US, is in less than robust health. We cannot risk shutting down healthy dialogue by constructing onerous rules for assembly. If individuals are singled out for intimidation, there are already laws in place for that. Anticipating what will happen at an assembly smacks of pre-crime.

If colleges are encouraged – nay, required – to accept anonymous complaints about “expressive activity,” this moves us further along the line toward East Germany or other highly surveilled societies. Anyone who has lived in Eastern Europe of a certain era knows that anonymous complaints are not designed to protect individuals, but the power of the state. If we make anonymous complaints a normal response to political expression, are we not discouraging students from having a civil discourse about the issues? This bill is a way of saying to university students – adults -- “You don’t have to talk to people about your issues, you can complain to mommy or daddy about it and put your opponent in a time out.”

Should universities and colleges, even private colleges, become extensions of the State, becoming places where the state can extend its legal power to control free expression – legal speech? Or should colleges and universities be as they once were,

places for the unfettered exchange of speech and thought, free from worry about ideological purity, and free to criticize the society around them?

I am already worried about the effect of social media and artificial intelligence on my students' ability to think for themselves. I worry that with this bill, automated processes, modeled behaviors and modeled responses will step in for the live, in the moment thinking and spontaneous, face-to-face conversation that is what I cherish about my college.

Students, like everyone else these days, are afraid to say the wrong thing in and out of class. But this is just what liberal education is: freely exposing our own opinions for examination. The St. John's college mission states: "the college seeks to free human beings from prejudice and unexamined opinion, and to help students make thoughtful choices in public and private life." The freedom of assembly and of "expressive activity" of all kinds is a vital part of public life, at least in a democracy. Let us preserve the robustness of our First Amendment, most of all at our colleges and universities, where students are often first exposed to views other than their own. That is what my own mother cherished most about her University education, and it is what I hope to uphold at my own institution.

SB847.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Syuardi

Position: UNF



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

6120 Baltimore National Pike, Suite 2D

Baltimore, MD 21228

E-mail: mdoutreach@cair.com URL www.cair.com

Tele 410-971-6062 Fax 202-488-0833

March 5, 2025

Honorable Chair Brian Feldman
Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony Unfavorable for SB847 CAMPUS Act

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the EEE Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, I submit this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 847, the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act.

CAIR Maryland encourages and fully supports efforts to combat hate crimes, discrimination, and violence targeting marginalized communities, especially in our institutions of learning. However, we are deeply concerned that this bill, despite its stated intentions, poses a significant threat to constitutionally protected speech, particularly for students and advocates critical of the policies of foreign governments under investigation by reputable bodies for war crimes and atrocities against humanity.

While the bill includes provisions addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of bias, its mandate for institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce policies regulating the "time, place, and manner" of expressive activities introduces broad and vague standards that risk being weaponized to suppress free speech. Such policies have historically been misused to silence student groups advocating particularly for Palestinian human rights—an issue of heightened importance amid Israel's ongoing daily violence and oppression in Gaza and the West Bank. Such accounts are documented by renowned international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Israeli organization B'Tselem, as well as in films like 'No Other Land' which won an Oscar Sunday evening despite being blocked by U.S. distributors seeking to suppress these narratives from the mainstream American discourse. The 2024 film, directed by a Palestinian-Israeli collective, tells the story of the Israeli military's forced displacement of Palestinians from their land as Israeli soldiers evict inhabitants and tear down their homes. The Palestinian protagonist befriends a Jewish Israeli journalist who helps him in his struggle. They unexpectedly form a bond, but their friendship is challenged by disparities in their daily circumstances.

Additionally, the bill's requirement for institutions to involve campus security or law enforcement in response to "significant disruptions" raises significant concerns over the vague language and the potential criminalization of student-led advocacy. These provisions potentially stand to disproportionately target marginalized communities, including Jewish, Arab, Black and Muslim students whose voices are increasingly being suppressed and under attack across our country. The chilling effect on student expression and political advocacy could further erode trust between educational institutions and the diverse communities they serve.

Furthermore, SB 847 proposes the creation of a Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence, Harassment, and Intimidation. While this initiative appears inclusive, it fails to safeguard against the conflation of legitimate criticisms of Israeli government policies with

[Washington D.C.](#)

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antisemitism—a conflation that has been widely condemned by human rights organizations as a tool to silence dissent.

As an organization dedicated to defending the civil rights of all Marylanders, CAIR Maryland urges the committee to reject SB 847 and explore other more well-defined and equitable avenues to combat hatred and intolerance.

We encourage lawmakers to pursue alternative, less alarming legislation that protects all communities from hate and discrimination without suppressing student voices or undermining the fundamental right to free speech.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
Director, CAIR Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
zchaudry@cair.com

Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania
Texas Washington

SB 847 (Campus Supression) - JVPA Maryland Leaders

Uploaded by: Lauren Leffer

Position: UNF



LEGISLATIVE POSITION: SB 847 (Hettleman) / HB 1462 (Solomon, Boaf, Cardin, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Spiegel, and Vogel) - Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Jewish Voice for Peace Action (JVPA) is a national grassroots Jewish organization in support of Palestinian rights. We have over 10,000 supporters in Maryland, and chapters in Baltimore City, the DC Metro area, and University of Maryland College Park.

JVPA Local Leaders in Maryland **strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462**. This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus.

- This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.
- College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.
- The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress **speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities.
- Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.
- Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong



direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.

- The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.
- In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.
- The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.
- The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.
- These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

Testimony on SB 847 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Green

Position: UNF

**Testimony for Senate Bill 847 – Unfavorable
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

March 3, 2025

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

I am writing to oppose the Maryland Campus. Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act” SB 847. I am a long time resident of District 47. Members of my family have attended the University of Maryland and I have contributed to the education of students in medical training.

This bill is another example of proposed legislation this year that appears to be helping protect against antisemitism and racism but instead increases limits on student protests and comes at a time when the majority of student protests have been against Israeli genocide in Gaza and displacement in the West Bank. These justifiable protests against United States support for Israeli attacks on Palestinians have been met with violence and suppression of speech on campuses. Similar suppression of support for the people of Gaza has been carried out against high school teachers in Montgomery County and medical students and doctors in multiple locations around the country. Enough is enough.

Problematic aspects of SB 847 include the submission of anonymous complaints, repression of “controversial” speech, and the time/place/manner restrictions. Today it appears that any support for Palestinians is “controversial”; protests against the Viet Nam war would today fall under similar constraints. The rulers of our country are getting more and more determined to control opposition. Maryland does not need to jump on this bandwagon. Last year the University of Maryland designated peaceful protest to be away from the student center and pathways where students could have more easily been reached and placed on a large grassy area behind a library. The University does not need more encouragement to hide dissenting views.

Finally I am disturbed by the requirement that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes “significant disruption”. Arresting students and putting them in the hands of the state is too far a reach. Derailing student debate and political expression is antithetical to the role of the university.

I urge you to reject SB 847 and issue an UNFAVORABLE report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda D. Green



Mount Rainier, Maryland

SB 847 - OPPOSE - Liz Cabrera Holtz.pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Cabrera Holtz

Position: UNF

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Unfavorable on SB 847/HB 1462
March 5, 2025

My name is Liz Cabrera Holtz, and I'm a District 15 constituent living in Potomac. I am writing to urge the committee to oppose SB 847/HB 1462, a dangerous bill that would restrict free speech on campus and chill discourse.

In a time when the Trump administration is repressing social justice movements across the board, I am so disappointed that Maryland legislators are working to further restrict political dissent. Though the bill claims to address a variety of discriminatory speech acts, its true intention is to shut down anti-war activists, specifically students concerned about the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people, on college campuses.

Liz Cabrera Holtz
District 15, 20854
lizholtz@gmail.com

Opposition to SB 847.pdf

Uploaded by: Maxwell Greenberg

Position: UNF

To the MD delegates-

I write to you as a Maryland resident and voter, as well as a Baltimore-based, college professor of Jewish American Studies to **strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462**. This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus.

- This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.
- College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.
- The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress **speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities. ● Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.
- Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.
- The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.
- In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies. ● The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor’s

budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech. ● The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

- These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

With great urgency, I demand a swift and clear **opposition to SB 847/HB 1462** from the MD legislator.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maxwell Greenberg

Rosenblum_et_al_SB_847_oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Rosenblum

Position: UNF

March 3, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to express strong opposition to **SB 847** (Solomon, Boafo, Cardin, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Spiegel, and Vogel) / SB 847 (Hettleman).

Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

We strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462.

This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out about the devastation caused by sustained military attacks on Palestinians.

The following are reasons for our opposition to this bill:¹

1. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been introduced at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine activism.
2. The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress disfavored speech, particularly speech that is likely to attract media attention, and risks that **campus administrators will chill speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as activities expressing anti-war sentiment.
3. Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights**.
4. Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) "significant disruption" is the wrong direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties just as we face more and more threats to liberty.
5. The requirement to involve police or campus security could be escalatory and prohibits the use of de-escalatory methods like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office
6. In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.

¹ Some of our testimony is excerpted from or based on parts of the Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP) Action statement about this bill.

7. Given the proposed budget cuts to public schools and The University of Maryland, the **\$500,000 allocation in this bill could instead be used to meet some urgent needs of our state's public schools and universities.**
8. Even though the bill seems to be content-neutral and therefore within the bounds permitted by the First Amendment, the restrictions on expressive activities are so sweeping that it would silence many expressive activities on Maryland campuses.
9. These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.
10. There is no evidence given that the policies mandated by this bill would lead to reductions in hate or discrimination.

Signatures:

Michael Rosenblum, Professor of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins University

Elizabeth L. Ogburn, Professor of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins University

Zack Berger, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of The Johns Hopkins University.

SB 0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Nadia Carrell

Position: UNF

Honorable Brian Feldman and members of the Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup

My name is Nadia Carrell and I have been a District 18 constituent, homeowner and taxpayer for over 32 years.

I strongly oppose bill 847

This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities and social justice movements and would only further the restriction of free speech and political dissent on campuses.

The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress speech that is **perceived** to be controversial, such as anti-war expressive activities.

Furthermore, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously and falsely accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.

The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.

SB0847.pdf

Uploaded by: Nadia Carrell

Position: UNF

Senator Feldman and members of the Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup

My name is Nadia Carrell and I have been a District 18 constituent, homeowner and taxpayer for over 32 years.

I strongly oppose bill 1462

This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities and social justice movements and would only further the restriction of free speech and political dissent on campuses.

The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress speech that is **perceived** to be controversial, such as anti-war expressive activities.

Furthermore, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously and falsely accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.

The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.

SB847_NicoleMorse_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: NICOLE MORSE

Position: UNF



LEGISLATIVE POSITION: SB 847 (Hettleman) / HB 1462 (Solomon, Boaf, Cardin, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Lewis, Spiegel, and Vogel) - Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Jewish Voice for Peace Action (JVPA) is a national grassroots Jewish organization in support of Palestinian rights. We have over 10,000 supporters in Maryland, and chapters in Baltimore City, the DC Metro area, and University of Maryland College Park.

JVPA Local Leaders in Maryland **strongly oppose SB 847/HB 1462**. This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus.

- This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the **repressive policies** that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.
- College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.
- The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress **speech that is perceived to be controversial**, such as anti-war expressive activities.
- Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career.
- Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that **discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights** and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.
- Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong



direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.

- The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.
- In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.
- The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that **the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation**, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.
- The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.
- These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

SB0847 Ateto Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Philip Ateto

Position: UNF

Hello,

I am writing to urge you to vote unfavorably on SB0847 Higher Education - Anti-hate and Anti-discrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

This legislation would codify into law policies restricting First Amendment free speech on campuses that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas on campus.

This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the repressive policies that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.

College is the place where, perhaps for the first time, students encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting and wrestling with views other than our own, and mentally working out challenges to our belief systems.

The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress speech that is perceived to be controversial, such as anti-war expressive activities.

Though seemingly benign, the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic. Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting their family or career.

Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.

Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) "significant disruption" is the wrong

direction for Maryland during this time, because it increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.

The requirement to involve police or campus is escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.

In recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies on campuses here in Maryland.

The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor's budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland's flagship academic institution shows that the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation, which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.

The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized.

These kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

Additionally, college campuses have historically been the place where the status quo is challenged and a mirror is held up to our government's policies to highlight when they are out of line with people's values and the espoused values of our country.

For these reasons I strongly urge you to vote unfavorably on this bill and protect our First Amendment rights that are in a more precarious position than ever.

Respectfully,

Philip Ateto
District 30
Annapolis, MD

Opposing SB 847.pdf

Uploaded by: Samuel Kane

Position: UNF

Samuel Kane

9246 Spring Valley Rd
Ellicott City, MD 21043
(301) 807-6531
kanesl2023@gmail.com

3rd March 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Jewish Marylander with grave concerns about SB 847. In a time when our institutions and rights, including the right to free speech, are under direct attack from a rogue executive branch, this legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out in solidarity with Palestine. This type of corrosive legislation is exactly what Americans across the country are speaking out against en masse. This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas on campus.

This legislation is in line with the Trump-led repression of civil society, universities, and social justice movements and would only further the restricting of free speech and political dissent. Although the bill purports to address a range of discriminatory speech acts, **its structure, tactics, and timing link it to the repressive policies that have been pushed at universities and colleges across the US in the last year** in response to pro-Palestine and anti-war activism.

College is the place where - perhaps for the first time - we encounter people who disagree with us in fundamental ways. Although this can be uncomfortable, we should not encourage students to see this discomfort as a threat that needs to be addressed through government repression. The discomfort is part of the education process of confronting views other than our own.

The reporting requirement incentivises campus administrators to repress speech that is perceived to be controversial, such as anti-war expressive activities. Such speech is vital to our society at all times, but especially in times of such unrest. The Hate-Bias report central to the bill's reporting requirements and enforcement is not a comprehensive picture of the experiences of marginalized people in Maryland since discrimination and attacks on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are under-reported and under-recognized. Notably, in recent years, pro-Palestine speech has been repressed at unprecedented rates through biased applications of hate speech and anti-discrimination laws and policies.

Though seemingly benign, **the requirement to allow the submission of anonymous complaints is deeply problematic.** Individuals might easily abuse such anonymity to lodge baseless complaints against those with whom they have a personal or ideological conflict, without fear of repercussion. Behind the shield of anonymity, it may be impossible to know if the accuser is acting in good faith, or at the behest of an outside group with a strong political agenda. Even if ultimately cleared, those anonymously accused may still face suspicion or negative repercussions impacting family or career. One needs to look no further than a randomly-selected online “comments” section to know what kind of degradation this complete anonymity can cause in discourse.

Time/place/manner restrictions create an onerous and confusing process that discourages student activists from exercising their free speech rights and creates opportunities for students engaging in disfavored speech to be punished for minor technical violations.

Requirements that all institutions commit to involving security or law enforcement for political expression that causes (self-defined) “significant disruption” is the wrong direction for Maryland during this time, because it **increases restrictions on civil liberties right as we face more and more threats to liberty.** The requirement is also blatantly escalatory and prohibits using de-escalatory methods, like liaisons from the dean of students / student life office, who are often much more effective.

The University of Maryland has announced large budget cuts based on the Governor’s budget. Cuts to the budget of Maryland’s flagship academic institution shows that the FY2026 budget can not afford this \$500,000 allocation, **which would mean taking money from academic programs to suppress student speech.**

Broadly speaking, these kinds of mandates on university administrators incentivize overreach, pre-emptive censorship, and other harms because administrators are justifiably concerned about penalties.

In conclusion, this bill would shut down free speech in the very places in our society where ideas should be the most freely shared. It is highly damaging to our educational institutions and the societal benefits such institutions make possible. Thank you for taking the time to hear these concerns. Please do not allow this bill to pass.

Sincerely,

Samuel Kane

ICHRP DMV Statement_Testimony on HB1462_SB847.pdf

Uploaded by: Vivian Flanagan

Position: UNF

Mar 3, 2025

International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) - DMV Chapter

Statement on Maryland HB1462/SB847: Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act

To the Senators and Delegates of the Maryland General Assembly,

The District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia chapter of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, otherwise known as ICHRP-DMV, calls on the Maryland State Government's General Assembly to vote in opposition of HB1462/SB847, termed the Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act. We ask for you to vote against this bill given our concerns on how the proposed bill will selectively apply Time, Place, and Manner restrictions and harsher consequences based on an individual or organization's political beliefs. We expect, if passed, that this bill will have a chilling effect and infringe on essential student free speech on university and college campuses within the State of Maryland.

Within the past year, we have observed vibrant, inspiring expressions of free speech across the country in the form of student protest, ranging from encampments to marches. Recently within the State of Maryland, students at Towson University and the University of Maryland College Park engaged in marches and rallies decrying the presence of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on campus. The work of student organizations to amplify the will of students against the endangerment of migrant students and staff resulted, in the case of Towson and College Park, in the departure of ICE from student career fairs. These wins speak to the strength and necessity of student organizing and the freedom of expression.

As ICHRP DMV, we demand that students are free to express their support for struggles of self-determination waged by the oppressed peoples of the Philippines, Palestine, and other nations subjugated to foreign plunder, domination, and occupation. With the rise of protests among college students in the name of the Palestinian people, who have endured collective punishment at the hands of the Israeli military, we observe the weaponization of the term "hate crime" to silence informed, humanitarian support against oppression. This parallels the repressive tactic of "red-tagging" which prevails in the Philippines to designate human rights defenders, students, clergy people, and peasant activists as terrorists, simply because they challenge the status quo in their demands for justice and genuine peace.

In the current political landscape of the United States, xenophobia, racism, transphobia, sexism, and other forms of hatred have regrettably become normalized aspects of mainstream communication. We applaud lawmakers in their effort to increase protection for marginalized groups on campus. However, we feel this bill has high potential to be wielded to do the exact opposite, and to protect only certain political viewpoints and designate others as "hateful," similar to the application of red-tagging in the Philippines. We recognize this bill as curtailing the rights of students to exercise their right to free speech in the full extent, and ask that members

of the General Assembly in observance of the achievements and necessity of student organizing in the State of Maryland vote against this bill.

Signed,
ICHRP DMV

SB 847 Maryland Campus Accountability and Moderniz

Uploaded by: Zackary Berger

Position: UNF

Date of Hearing: March 5

Zackary Berger, MD, PhD

Baltimore, Maryland, 21218

Testimony on SB 847

Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act

Position: Unfavorable

SB 847 (Hettleman) Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Education, Energy and the Environment

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

Below I offer testimony in opposition to SB 847, the **Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act**. I do so as a Jewish Marylander and a professor at a leading medical school who worries that his students' speech will be restricted to bring the state into line with Trumpian suppression of civil society.

This legislation would codify into law policies restricting free speech on campus that have been applied in biased ways across the United States in retaliation against nonviolent student activists speaking out to oppose mass killing in Gaza and in solidarity with Palestinians. **This bill will chill the vital exchange of ideas** on campus. Universities are meant to be outposts where students feel free to speak their mind and are supported in their expression.

Maryland should continue to be a place of opposition to the repression of civil society including social justice movements. This bill is of a piece with the repressive policies that have been advanced in US colleges and universities in response to pro-Palestinian activism. Such bills purport to oppose antisemitism and defend Jews. As a Jewish Marylander, I testify that they do nothing of the sort. Rather, they cause Jewish students like those I mentor at the school of

medicine I teach at, and Jewish college students I mentor, to worry about the consequences of their free speech.

College is the site of encounter with others' opinions. Such encounter is the very subject of academic inquiry and should be deliberately structured and supported on the part of universities, not through top-down government control. The reporting requirement incentivizes campus administrators to repress speech deemed controversial, such as anti-war protests – exactly what we want to avoid in the encouragement of free expression. Encouraging anonymous complaints makes it easy for this route to be abused without consequences. Further, time/place/manner restrictions discourage students from exercising their right to free speech. Students can be easily tripped up by technical violations, and such micromanaging protects no one.

Quite concerning is the requirement that institutions commit to involve security or law enforcement that causes what the institution defines as significant disruption. As we face threats to liberty, restricting civil liberties is the wrong answer. Similarly, involving police on campus is an unneeded escalation. Student- and faculty-centered routes have been shown to be more effective.

Tendentious applications of hate speech and laws and policies purporting to fight discrimination have repressed pro-Palestine speech, and, among other things, shut down speech by Jewish activists on campus. Requiring state universities to allocate precious funds on unsupported speech-silencing boondoggles is not what we need to be doing during Trump 2.

I thus ask you to return an unfavorable report on this misguided bill.

Zackary Berger, MD, PhD

SB847_USM_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: INFO



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 847
Higher Education - Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup
(Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students
Act)
March 5, 2025
Letter of Information

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on Senate Bill 847. The University System of Maryland (USM) is committed to protecting free speech, the freedom of assembly, and the right to lawful expression. The USM is also committed to ensuring that every student feels supported and experiences an environment conducive to learning. That does not mean that there might not be difficult moments, but it does mean that all students should feel safe.

Senate Bill 847 has the potential to emerge as a productive response to campus hate and discrimination. The USM **supports** the establishment of a ***“Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence”*** in Senate Bill 847 to “...develop model policies, guidance, and best practices...”. Such a workgroup can leverage the collective experience and expertise of the many parties represented, and this statewide group could identify best practices identified across different segments and sectors of the state.

In 2005, the USM worked side-by-side with sponsors to pass [Senate Bill 440](#) – a bill establishing ***“The Task Force to Implement Holocaust, Genocide, Human Rights and Tolerance Education.”*** The Task Force was organized to create a Center, but participants focused instead on areas where existing campus programs were already hard at work and engaged in social justice advocacy and anti-discrimination work, first and foremost. The Task Force examined issues including, but not limited to, current course offerings on the subjects of the Holocaust, genocide, human rights, and tolerance at USM institutions; academic approaches taken in other states; and national best practices regarding training activities. A workgroup now might be similarly innovative and provide guidance on what best practices in policy, procedures, training, and communication might be. The workgroup’s recommendations could also identify what reporting might be most valuable to continuous improvement, as well as accountability.

Today, the USM Board of Regents (BOR) [Policy on Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity](#) requires that USM not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of protected characteristics or any other basis prohibited by federal law, the State of Maryland, or other applicable laws. This Board policy, like all the related policies at each USM institution, covers all programs, services, policies, activities, and procedures of the universities, including participation

in education programs and employment. Additionally, discrimination on the basis of sex or gender-related conduct is covered by the [USM's Policy on Sex Discrimination](#), which was updated as recently as July 2024.

The current bill does not include all protected classes, which is potentially confusing. Institutions noted that antidiscrimination policies, hate-bias procedures, and the law go beyond race, ethnicity, and religion. They question why (and believe it's problematic that) other protected groups are not being considered and are not clear whether that is the intent of the bill.

Again, the USM **supports** the intent of Senate Bill 847, but several provisions present potentially costly alternatives to rights and protections that are already established in a System policy, campus policies, as well as Federal, State, and other applicable laws. Awareness is key to creating a campus community based upon mutual respect. USM institutions work to increase awareness in a number of ways – many that are not part of an official policy. Institutions would have the flexibility needed if the provisions of this bill could be encompassed in university policies **or** procedures.

USM institutions cited significant challenges in relation to the **practical** implementation of Senate Bill 847. First, hate, unless it's a hate crime, is protected. So, including “antihate” in the title of the required policy can be practically and legally problematic. Next, having one policy for staff, faculty, and students also presents a challenge. Although training for all groups might be based on the same principles, the manifestations might express themselves differently for different stakeholder groups if the university determines that is best. It may be best to allow institutions to determine if this should be a single policy or not.

If Senate Bill 847 were to become law, USM institutions noted that the acceptance of anonymous complaints will affect the degree to which allegations can be investigated, adjudicated, and reported per this bill. Subsequently, Page 5 Line 1, which reads, “**ALL ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS OF RACIAL, ETHNIC...**” may pose a problem. Also, USM institutions have scores, if not hundreds, of student organizations. Language in Senate Bill 847 related to yearly “meetings” with student groups and organizations should recognize current work in this space and positively encourage communication but perhaps not meetings.

The timelines in Senate Bill 847 are challenging because of the reporting structures being created. An implementation date might be pushed out to at least September 1, 2026 or, preferably, until the time that the workgroup has had an opportunity to identify best practices, including for reporting. Many aspects of the mandated reporting requirements are related to federal Clery reporting, and USM institutions will need time to fashion tailored, and duplicative, information.

Lastly, as you know, USM's proposed budget reduction for FY26 is \$111 million. This cut is in addition to last year's cut and another mid-year cut to the FY25 budget, which collectively leave the USM down \$180 million. The proposed allocation of \$500,000 will not cover the costs of the additional reporting and training proposed. More generally, adding additional policies at this time creates additional challenges for our campuses at an already difficult time due to budget reductions and the uncertainty of changes being imposed or threatened by the federal government.

If this legislation is the vehicle to expand antidiscrimination policies and stand up a workgroup on best practices, then USM remains eager to help foster these conversations.



SB 847 LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: INFO



Letter of Information

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Bill 847 (Hettleman) Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
March 5, 2025

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 55,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support regarding [*Senate Bill 847 \(Hettleman\) Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup \(Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act\)*](#). MICUA appreciates the sponsor's commitment to ensuring that Maryland's higher education institutions remain safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all students.

MICUA strongly supports the intent of Senate Bill 847, which seeks to address the critical issues of discrimination, harassment, and campus safety. At a time when students from diverse backgrounds face increasing challenges, it is essential that colleges and universities establish clear policies and training to protect them. Providing resources for faculty and staff to respond to incidents of hate and discrimination is not just a legal responsibility—it is a moral imperative.

However, MICUA is concerned about several aspects of the bill that could create unintended consequences for smaller institutions. These include regulatory burdens, funding disparities, and the complex challenge of balancing free speech protections with speech that some may find offensive or hateful.

Many of the bill's provisions—such as expanded training requirements, annual administrative meetings with student groups, and new expressive conduct policies—will require additional personnel, compliance measures, and funding. While large institutions may have the infrastructure to absorb these requirements, smaller institutions may struggle to meet them without diverting resources from critical academic and student support services.

Additionally, compliance costs—including administrative oversight, reporting mechanisms, and enforcement—could disproportionately impact institutions with fewer administrative staff. Some small colleges already face financial challenges, and while the goals of SB 847 are commendable, it is important to balance accountability with feasibility to avoid unintended consequences such as increased tuition or reductions in student services.

One of the most difficult challenges facing higher education institutions is the need to protect free speech while also ensuring that campuses remain safe and inclusive environments. Colleges and universities are often required to make difficult determinations about the difference between constitutionally protected expression and speech that crosses into harassment or discrimination.

The subjective nature of what constitutes hateful speech can create confusion for students, faculty, and administrators alike. Many institutions have struggled to enforce policies fairly while avoiding potential legal challenges under the First Amendment. SB 847 requires institutions to develop and enforce expressive conduct policies, which, while well-intended, could result in inconsistent interpretations or unintended restrictions on free expression. MICUA urges lawmakers to provide clear guidance on how institutions should implement these policies in a way that upholds both constitutional rights and campus safety.

MICUA also wants to highlight a critical concern regarding funding eligibility for the Campus Community Grant Program created by SB 847. As currently written, the bill limits access to these grant funds to public institutions, excluding private, nonprofit colleges and universities from receiving financial assistance to implement the new requirements. However, private institutions are still subject to the bill's regulatory mandates. This creates a serious imbalance where private institutions—many of which serve diverse and underrepresented student populations—must comply without the same financial support provided to public institutions.

MICUA respectfully urges the Committee to consider expanding eligibility for the Campus Community Grant Program to include private, nonprofit colleges and universities, ensuring that they have access to financial assistance to implement the required policies and training. It would also be helpful if clear guidance was provided on how institutions can balance free speech protections with campus safety measures in a legally sound and equitable manner. Having compliance measures with some scalability would be helpful to ensure that smaller institutions are not held to the same administrative standards as large universities with dedicated compliance departments. Lastly, a delayed implementation date with phased implementation to allow institutions time to adjust and develop effective policies would be extremely helpful.

MICUA supports the overarching goals of SB 847 and commends the sponsor's commitment to fostering inclusive learning environments. However, MICUA urges lawmakers to consider targeted support for smaller colleges, funding parity for private institutions, and clearer guidance on free speech protections to ensure that compliance does not come at the expense of student access, academic excellence, or constitutional rights.