



**Maryland General Assembly
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 18, 2025**

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ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this written testimony in support of HB521, “State Procurement - Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy – Antisemitism.”

As the leading anti-hate organization in the world, founded in 1913, ADL's mission remains to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all. Today, we persist in tackling all forms of antisemitism and bias, leveraging innovation and partnerships to drive effective change.

With a long history and expertise on combatting antisemitism, ADL has tracked an alarming rise in the number of antisemitic incidents in recent years. ADL's most recent Audit of Antisemitic Incidents tracked 8,873 incidents across the country in 2023, representing a 140% increase over the year before. This reflects, by far, the highest number ADL has recorded since we began tracking in 1979. In Maryland specifically, the year 2023 saw 339 antisemitic incidents, marking a 211% increase from 109 incidents in 2022, and a staggering 516% increase from 55 incidents in 2021.

With the crisis of rising antisemitism in Maryland, countering this hatred and protecting our Jewish community through tangible, impactful actions is critically important. With HB521, Maryland has an opportunity to do just this by taking the simple and appropriate step of prohibiting antisemitic discrimination in government procurement and contracting.

Maryland has long-been a leader in its commitment to ensuring discrimination and hatred have no place in government procurement and contracting practices. Maryland law already prohibits discrimination “on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or on the basis of disability” in government procurement and contracting. HB521 simply adds a prohibition against antisemitism to this set of protected identity characteristics and corrects a gap in the protections already in place.

Further, by the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, HB521 provides the necessary guidance to understand what antisemitism means. The IHRA definition is the prevailing, broadly accepted modern definition of antisemitism, which as of November 1, 2024, 1,262 entities worldwide have adopted the definition. Among those, 45 countries have done so -- including the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. In the U.S., 37 state governments have done so, along with 96 city and county governments.

By incorporating the prohibition against antisemitism in governmental contracting and procurement in HB521, Maryland continues and expands its commitment to protecting its citizens and residents. At a time of rising antisemitism in Maryland, this bill sends a strong message that hatred of Jews has no place in the government's dealings.

**We urge the Health and Government Operations Committee to give
House Bill 521 a favorable report.**