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Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Chair*

Health Occupations and  
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

*House Chair*

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
Executive, and Legislative Review



**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I Rosenberg

Before the Judiciary Committee

In Support of HB0305

**House Bill 0305**

**Bill Title: Criminal Law – Interference with Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility  
– Prohibition**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee,

Protecting religious institutions in Maryland from criminal acts that disrupt or damage these sacred facilities is costly to both these institutions and the State.

Religious institutions in this country have provided community and support systems to their members since before religious freedom was enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. Every Marylander should feel safe in accessing their own religious facility. HB 305 ensures that Maryland is taking the crucial steps to protect religious exercise.

Patrons of religious facilities feel less safe when accessing those facilities and are spending an enormous amount of money on security, as is the state itself. \$5 million was allocated in FY 2025, and Governor Moore has budgeted \$10 million in the budget now before us.

How could this money be spent if not needed for safety's sake? The safety glass at the entrance to the new community center for the Baltimore Jewish community costs an additional \$500,000.

That money could be spent instead for people with disabilities, personal care for older adults, or mental health for teenagers.

This bill follows the precedent set by House Bill 748 (1989), which prohibits a person from physically preventing others from entering and exiting medical facilities. According to U.S. Department of Justice data, Maryland saw a nearly 20% increase in hate crime incidents in 2023, with religious-based crimes increasing by over 26% and making up 21.5% of 2023's hate incidents.

HB305 provides prosecutors with the needed tools to combat religious discrimination and discourage future incidents. These additional protections will support religious facilities twofold: these communities will gain a newfound sense of relief knowing that their government and law enforcement support them while allowing some of their robust security funding to go to community-enriching programs or whatever that institution believes will benefit their members

We have engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to support HB305 and to ensure it benefits all religious institutions. This bipartisan bill boasts favorable support from organizations such as the Baltimore Jewish Council, the Islamic Society of Baltimore, the Maryland Catholic Conference, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, and the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association. We appreciate the Committee's consideration of HB305, and we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

**Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 11**