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 Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
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 B'nai Israel Congregation
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 Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
 Shomrei Emunah Congregation
 Suburban Orthodox Congregation
 Temple Beth Shalom
 Temple Isaiah
 Zionist Organization of America
 Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**House Bill 1394 Civil Actions - Nonprofit Organizations - Unauthorized
 Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not on Our Dime Act)**

Judiciary Committee

March 5, 2025

OPPOSE

Background: House Bill 1394 (HB1394) seeks to revoke the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that support Israel as defined in the bill. Though the bill's title would suggest that its focus is on "settler violence" in Israel, its overly broad language could arguably sweep up and impose severe penalties on many Jewish and pro-Israel nonprofit organizations (including their directors, officers, and employees) doing critical humanitarian work far removed from the conduct described in the bill. This legislation unjustly targets one specific country (and Jewish nonprofits) when there are already laws in place to prevent not-for-profit organizations from engaging in illegal activity. The legislation would allow anyone to sue an organization for violating the proposed legislation, not just the government or the Maryland Attorney General. This opens the floodgates for lawsuits from anyone with a political agenda, regardless of any merit the lawsuit may have.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, all of its agencies, as well as the organized Jewish Community of Greater Baltimore. We are adamantly opposed to this ill-informed bill which targets the only Jewish State in the world and Jewish nonprofit organizations. There are thousands of nonprofits that the bill sponsor, the BJC, and anyone may not support, but does that mean we should start taking away the 501c3 status of any organization that any legislator finds offensive?

In the United States, you may disagree with the purposes of the The National Right to Life Educational Foundation Inc. (pro-life advocacy), Vdare Foundation (an anti-immigrant and white supremacist hate group), and/or the Alliance Defending Freedom (American conservative Christian legal advocacy group advocating against the LGBTQ+ community and others), but this bill does not target those groups. You may also oppose the business relationships U.S. nonprofits have with foreign authoritarian regimes and dictators, like the U.S.-Russia Business Council and/or U.S. China Business Council, but this bill does not target these nonprofits. Instead, this bill focuses on the only Democracy in the Middle East and the only Jewish state in world, and Jewish nonprofits.

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We are deeply familiar with the complex issues surrounding Israel, and we are fierce advocates for dialogue that advances peace in the Middle East. This bill does not achieve that goal. Instead, it sows greater division among Marylanders and distracts from the important work that our legislators do for our state each day.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on HB1394.

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.