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MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE

**JEWISH
CAUCUS**

WRITTEN STATEMENT

FAVORABLE

HB 324 - County Board Member Anti-bias Training Act

Ways & Means Committee

January 29, 2025

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, strongly supports HB 324, which requires members of local boards of education to complete the same comprehensive anti-bias training currently required for public school employees.

School board members play a crucial role in shaping educational policy and culture and should receive anti-bias training to better understand and address issues of bias and discrimination in our educational system.

HB 324 builds upon legislation passed in 2024 that required the Maryland State Department of Education to develop anti-bias training for school employees. The training is to combat the bias faced by marginalized religious minorities, and will specifically address antisemitism and Islamophobia. Such training efforts directly align with the MLJC's mission to "combat the rising frequency of hate crimes against Jewish communities and all protected populations under the hate crimes statute."

School board members are not considered employees of school districts and were, therefore, not covered by the 2024 legislation. HB 324 extends this required training to school board members, ensuring that our educators and our educational leaders in Maryland have the knowledge and understanding to combat bias at all levels of our school systems.

We urge a favorable report on HB 324.