



Testimony in SUPPORT of *House Bill 109 – Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools – Title VI Coordinators Appropriations*
February 10, 2026

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 House Bill 109, – *Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools – Title VI Coordinators*. This Bill requires all higher education and local schools to appoint a Title VI Coordinator to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prevent discrimination based on race, color or national origin. This Coordinator would be responsible for overseeing equal access to programming on campus, documenting and investigating complaints, and providing training and resources about Title VI law and regulations.

The need for this bill could not be more urgent given the unprecedented and unacceptable rise of antisemitism in the US, especially targeting Jewish students. According to the ADL, Maryland ranked 6th in the nation per capita for the highest number of antisemitic incidents. Maryland’s 2024 Hate Bias Report found that although Jews only represent 4% of the state’s population, they account for more than 28% of hate bias incidents. And for the second year in a row, the majority of those incidents occurred at K-12 schools. Free speech must always be protected, but students should never be discriminated against because of their Jewish identity.

At the JCRC, our top priority is combating antisemitism and protecting the safety and security of the Jewish people, including Jewish students whether at our local schools or college campuses. We have taken the lead and organized community response initiatives such as town halls with superintendents to address increasing antisemitism rates; we have brought Holocaust survivors and descendants to address more than 10,000 students and educators annually; we have expanded our flagship Student to Student program that

trains 120 Jewish teens annually to speak to more than 13,500 fellow students and educators about their Jewish beliefs, customs, and experiences; and, we have trained thousands of educators in Montgomery County Public Schools on Jewish identity and antisemitism and been a critical resource for schools with significant numbers of Jewish students and faculty. Having a Title VI coordinator will provide us with another tool, a proactive tool, to help students navigate the educational system when experiencing antisemitism. It will also serve as a mechanism to help educators understand what antisemitism is and how to respond appropriately.

No one should be targeted because of who they are or what they believe in, especially in the classroom or on campus. With a dedicated Title VI Coordinator, schools can stay in compliance with the law and reinforce the fundamental right to an education free from hate and harm. The bill strengthens protections, ensures accountability and fosters a safer, more inclusive and mutually respectful learning environment for all students. For these reasons, we support House Bill 109 and ask for a favorable report.