

March 10, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing today as the Chair of the Middle Eastern American Affairs Commission within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, and as a proud Maryland resident, to express my strong support for **SB 0308 – General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months**. I respectfully request a favorable report on this bill.

As a third culture kid and someone in an interfaith marriage, I chose to make Maryland my home because of its deep history of embracing diverse communities. Maryland has fostered a sense of belonging that transcends religious and cultural differences. Though I am the only Muslim in my Jewish neighborhood, I have always felt welcomed and part of the community.

This bill represents a meaningful step in recognizing the contributions of both Muslim and Jewish Americans and reinforcing Maryland's long-standing commitment to inclusion. By establishing **January as Muslim American Heritage Month and May as Jewish American Heritage Month**, the State affirms the importance of celebrating the history, culture, and civic contributions of both communities and encourages educational and cultural programming that strengthens understanding across faiths.

At a time when fostering connection across communities is more important than ever, SB 0308 sends a powerful message about the values Maryland stands for: unity, respect, and shared civic pride.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 0308.

Sincerely,

Mona Abdel-Halim Kishore  
7314 University Avenue  
Glen Echo, MD 20812