



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

SENATE BILL 329

**EDUCATION - CERTIFICATION OF SCHOLARSHIP GRANTING
ORGANIZATIONS (OPTING IN ON OPPORTUNITY ACT)**

INFORMATIONAL

Agudath Israel of Maryland, the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America, a renowned national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country, speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland, including our 30-some schools and thousands of students and families across the state. We offer this information regarding SB329.

As part of the federal reconciliation bill passed in July, the federal government established the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC). Agudath Israel of America, our national affiliate, was deeply involved with the passage of this program. Under the rules of the program, federal taxpayers can claim a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for donations of up to \$1,700 dollars to eligible scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). Each state can elect to submit a list of qualifying SGOs within the state, to which donations will qualify for the credit. If the governor of the state elects not to submit a list of qualifying SGOs, taxpayers within the state can claim their credit by donating to an SGO located in another state, instead.

Under the federal guidelines, SGO scholarships can be used for educational expenses for both public and nonpublic students. Acceptable uses include paying for tutoring, for special education expenses, for technology purchases, and several additional educational uses. Polling has found that Marylanders from both sides of the aisle strongly support utilizing this opportunity to direct funding to Maryland students.

However, it should be noted that according to the federal guidelines, the decision to “opt in” and submit an SGO list shall be done by the governor of the state or designee provided by law. No authority or oversight position is granted to other state departments. Thank you.