

March 2, 2026

Written Testimony on SB0308

**Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months
Education, Energy and the Environment**

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the MD Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

My name is Julie A. Rosen, and I submit this written testimony as an individual resident of Montgomery County, Maryland (MD District 16), and a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, MD State Project Advocacy Committee. I write urge your support of **SB0308**, *Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months*.

I understand that SB0308 is intended to formally establish identified months to be proclaimed by the Governor in recognition of the contributions made to the state of Maryland by Muslim-Americans (January) and Jewish-Americans (May).

The proclamation goes beyond a simply ‘raising of hands’ for these commemorative months, and urges educational and cultural organizations to witness the contributions of these communities through appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. While I am thankful to live in a state that would formally recognize these communities, I am particularly motivated to support this bill because sharing of their cultures, and artistic, business, academic, and public service contributions is more important now than in decades past.

Specifically, recent hateful words and behaviors intentionally leading to emotional and physical harm are on the rise across our State, including my own home Montgomery County. The reports of such harm take me back to my youth –in 1950s Baltimore—when I was not permitted to visit the ice-skating rink or join the Girl Scouts; not to mention graffiti and epithets screamed at me as I walked down the staircase at my middle school. While I’m not naive enough to believe race- and religious- based hatred would disappear with passage of the Civil Rights laws in the 1960 and early 1970s, I did believe such behavior would diminish to the point when majority of Maryland people would reject such actions. Not to be....moreover, over the past decade, they are increasing in numbers, with a greater degree of violence and scale to the most vulnerable among us.

I firmly believe that such behavior can be alleviated, perhaps rejected from the outset, with increasing exposure to these two peoples and their cultures in a ‘safe’ place to learn; starting in the earliest grades of school. As such, I am hopeful that this proclamation would encourage schools (public and private, K-12 and beyond), as well as community gatherings (business, artistic) and public service agencies (local and state) to help counter ‘hate’ and ‘bias’ against Muslim-Americans and Jewish-Americans across our state, and spread influence beyond our state.

Therefore, I am strongly in favor of SB0308 and respectfully **urge a favorable report on SB0308**. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Rosen, Ph.D.