

SB308 - Commemorative Months Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FAV



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- Suburban Orthodox Congregation
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- Temple Isaiah
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Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**SB308: General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim
American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 12, 2026
SUPPORT**

Background: Senate Bill 308 would require the Governor annually to proclaim January as Muslim American Heritage Month and May as Jewish American Heritage Month; and require the proclamations to urge certain organizations to observe the months with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

Written Comments: Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) in May and Muslim American Heritage Month (MAHM) in January, both serve to celebrate the rich history, cultural contributions, and experiences of these communities, fostering understanding and inclusion.

May was chosen as the month for JAHM in part due to the 350th anniversary of Jews in America, marking their arrival in New Amsterdam. May was officially designated Federally as Jewish American Heritage Month in 2006 by President George W. Bush.

January was chosen as the month for MAHM to honor the anniversary of the death of Yarrow Mamout, an African American Muslim former slave, who purchased his own freedom and became a financier.

At a time when our communities are plagued with divisive rhetoric and hate speech, it is important that we use these opportunities to celebrate our differences and better understand our neighbors. By requiring the Governor to annually proclaim these respective months, we are ensuring Maryland's commitment to this mission.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB308.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

SB0308 - General Provisions - Commemorative Months

Uploaded by: Anne Pack

Position: FAV

Anne Bocchini Pack
Parkville, MD 21234

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(410) 994-6136

SB0308 - General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months - FAV

My husband, Gordon Pack, and I are 2025-26 Civic and Nonprofit Fellows at the Institute for Islamic, Christian and Jewish Studies (ICJS). He is Muslim and I am Christian and we have an almost 2 year old son who we have chosen to raise in both faiths with respect for all. We are colleagues in parole and reentry, where I note that people from all faiths come together to improve conditions for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. While their beliefs and practices are different, they often cite them as a reason for doing the work. We applied for this fellowship together because both our personal and professional lives demanded it.

Gordon and I met at the ages of 58 and 42, and did not envision the possibility of a family. Our initial approach to our differences in faith was to ignore them. He went to the masjid on Friday, I went to church on Sunday. We practiced around each other, not with each other. We connected on issues of social justice and advocacy instead. It was not until we discovered I was pregnant that we made a meaningful effort to create a truly interfaith space, and once we did, I began to realize how little accurate information I had about Islam. Much of what I knew came from news articles, Hollywood movies and internet memes. Through my ICJS fellowship, I discovered how little I really knew about Judaism as well, with most of what I knew being from the Christian interpretation of the few pieces of the Hebrew texts that made it into the Christian Bible.

Were it not for my son, I would likely have persisted in being confidently incorrect about the faith of many of my friends, colleagues and neighbors, not because I didn't care to learn, but because I didn't realize how little I knew. And that would have been a terrible outcome, because as I have taken the time to learn to see the world through the eyes of others, I have also become a better leader, collaborator and mother. I did not just learn information about other faiths, I learned to engage in an interreligious space where individuals are confident and secure both in their beliefs and their ability to work side by side for the greater good. And that skill is applicable not just to religion, but to any differing belief system.

SB0308 creates an invitation and a platform for the Muslim and Jewish communities that collectively make up about 10% of Maryland's population to share their faith and practices. It is a call to the rest of us to pause in our often overwhelming lives to pay attention and learn something new from our neighbors instead of corporate and social media. In a time when the fabric of our democracy is being tested by division and polarization, and hostility is transmitted with the push of a button, SB0308 asks us to slow down and intentionally build the democratic, pluralistic society we believe in, face to face with other Marylanders. I urge a favorable report.

Testimony for SB308

Uploaded by: Calvin Ball

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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March 11, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0308**: General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

We are in a time of unrest and uncertainty, where the cultural diversity that should be seen as a source of strength in our Maryland communities is more and more often positioned as a source of potential division. Perhaps no one has felt the ravages of this attempted division more than our Jewish and Muslim communities, who have often found themselves viewed through a lens of animosity and conflict which consistently threatens to obscure all else. Rather than appreciation for the rich contributions these communities have made throughout history, or for their values, faith, and traditions, the focus has often narrowed to a single narrative: what separates them.

I want to express my appreciation for Senators Hettleman, Kramer, Love, Waldstreicher, Lewis Young, Zucker and Sydnor for their leadership on Senate Bill 0308 (**SB308**), ensuring that the over 250,000 Jewish Americans and 350,000 Muslim Americans who call our great state home see that, here in Maryland, we recognize the importance of celebrating and honoring the true value that their communities bring to our neighborhoods, communities, and municipalities.

But that does not mean we can pretend ignorance of the potential damage that an environment of mistrust and division can create. Nearly 30,000 residents impacted by this bill have established homes and communities in Howard County, and Howard County Government and my office remain conscious of our role in protecting all members of our community from discrimination, hate, bias, and harm. Through initiatives like our Hate Has No Place series, developed in partnership through our Office of Human Rights & Equity and Human Rights Commission, or our Howard County Police Department's (HCPD) team of full-time community outreach officers focusing on community engagement and reporting of hate crimes and hate bias incidents (HBIs), we make it clear: discrimination and hate bias have no place in Howard County.

We know that fear, othering, misinformation, and bias are deep contributors to environments which may lead our Jewish American and Muslim American neighbors to feel unwelcome in our state. This legislation not only establishes standardized month-long celebrations highlighting these communities, it also, and perhaps more importantly, calls on our educational and cultural organizations to maintain programs and activities which deepen understanding and appreciation of these unique and vital



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communities. It is one thing to say we are a County and State which welcomes all-it is another to take concrete action which shifts belonging from a concept to a reality.

I urge the Committee's support for **SB0308**, ensuring another step forward to safeguarding Maryland as a state where all residents feel seen, understood, and valued.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

SB 308 General Provisions - Commemorative Months

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 308 –
General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American
Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 11, 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 organizations and synagogues throughout the region. The JCRC is committed to cultivating a society based on justice and mutual respect. We advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

Senate Bill 308 requires the Governor to designate May as Jewish American Heritage Month and January as Muslim American Heritage Month in recognition of these two communities' contributions to Maryland with appropriate ceremonies and activities. During May, the JCRC encourages its community to read Jewish books, make Jewish food, watch Jewish movies, and much more. Our Education Division also provides resources for educators to teach the wider community about Judaism, antisemitism, Jewish traditions and history.

May was first recognized Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) by the George W. Bush Administration 20 years ago. The JCRC has been celebrating JAHM in Maryland for many years, and we are thrilled that SB 308 will codify this proclamation. It is not only an opportunity to acknowledge the 350-year history of Jewish contributions to America and the American culture, but also to educate diverse public audiences about Jewish culture and spark crucial conversations about the American Jewish past, present and future.

Intergroup work is critical to the JCRC's mission which is why recognize the importance of celebrating Muslim American Heritage Month as well in SB 308. We are the Jewish community's central voice for relationship building between Jews and other faith, ethnic, and minority groups in Maryland. We work in and assume a leading role in broad coalitions that foster greater mutual respect and strengthen the fabric of our local community. In times of celebration and times of need we work together to build a stronger more vibrant community. Our carefully nurtured relationships allow us to be present for all faith communities when needed. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB 308.

Rosen-TestmonyInSupportOf-SB308-CommemorativeMonth

Uploaded by: Julie Rosen

Position: FAV

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.

FAV_JCRC

Uploaded by: Laura Salganik

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and Environment
Testimony: Senate Bill 308 – Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months
Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD
Submitting: Laura Salganik, Chair
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: March 12, 2026

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County is submitting this testimony in favor of SB 308. It is appropriate that this bill would have the State of Maryland jointly commemorate months recognizing Muslim-American and Jewish-American heritage months. We should always remember that Isaac and Ishmael jointly came together to bury their father, Abraham (Genesis 25).

Both communities have been suffering from increased levels of antisemitism and Islamophobia. It is important that we demonstrate support for all our citizens, which establishing these commemorative months would encourage.

Howard County already commemorates both heritage months. It has been positively received by our citizens. Jewish students reported pride in seeing posters celebrating heritage month in their school. May corresponded with the school's culture night, so they included a poster board with Jewish cultural items that positively engaged students, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Hopefully statewide commemoration will have similar positive benefits.

There is so much positive to celebrate in both Muslim-American and Jewish-American heritage.

We respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 308.

March 10, 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Mona Kishore

Position: FAV

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

SB308 Testimony Muslim and Jewish Heritage Months

Uploaded by: Rabbi Susan Grossman

Position: FAV

Testimony Supporting SB 308, State Senate

General Provisions, Commemorative Months, Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months.

Respectfully Submitted by
Rabbi Dr. Susan Grossman
Rabbi Emerita
Beth Shalom Congregation
8070 Harriet Tubman Lane
Columbia, Maryland 21044

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

My name is Rabbi Susan Grossman. While I am a Commissioner on the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, I testify today as a private citizen and Interfaith Leader in support of SB 308, General Provisions, Commemorative Months, which establishes January as Muslim American Heritage Month and May as Jewish American Heritage Month.

State Ethnic Heritage Months inspire schools, cultural institutions, and community organizations to celebrate and learn more about the different heritages of our citizens. At a time when inclusion and diversity are under siege, Heritage Months encourage and strengthen the social fabric of understanding and mutual responsibility in our communities and schools by improving our citizens' respect for one another and our myriad differences. Indeed, the tapestry of our diverse identities as Marylanders is one of the most precious things uniting us in a nation torn by derision and division.

Maryland already recognizes several Heritage Months by statute: Irish-American, Caribbean, Hispanic, German-American, and American Indian Heritage Months. There are also Black and Women's History Months.ⁱ

The Jewish and Muslim communities are two significant Maryland minorities missing from that list. Over the last few years, hate-bias incidents against both of our communities have been exacerbated by national and international events. In this environment of misinformation and cultural tension, students, in particular, are vulnerable to student-on-student hate bias harassment in our public schools and universities. Such incidents leave a degree of permanent trauma that no child should have to endure.

The most recent annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in Maryland by ADL recorded 356 antisemitic incidents in 2024, up 5% from 2023 and 227% since 2022, a troubling pattern that unfortunately places Maryland among the states with the highest number of reported antisemitic incidents in the nation. An additional 107 antisemitic incidents were recorded in Maryland's K-12 schools. Meanwhile, in 2024, Jewish institutions faced an increase in targeted harassment, with incidents at these locations rising by 67%. Just this past February, a synagogue in Olney was defaced with antisemitic graffiti.

The 2023 State of Maryland's own *Hate Bias Report* found that antisemitic bias incidents had tripled from 2022 to 2023, with Jews representing 28% of victims of bias, even though Jews comprise only 4% of the State's population.

These statistics only reflect what is reported. I know from my students and congregants that they have seen a shift for the worse over the last two years. I can assure you, from personal conversations with students and community members, that many incidents go unreported.

The ACLU reported that hate crimes against Muslims also rose in 2024, exacerbated by anti-immigrant sentiment.ⁱⁱ That anti-immigrant sentiment has only intensified over the last year.

The kind of education encouraged by Muslim and Jewish Heritage Months can help combat such rising hate.

SB 308 has brought together the Jewish and Muslim communities to support its passage at a time when international events have tested the alliance between our two communities. We stand united today to urge the passage of this bill codifying the celebration of our Jewish and Muslim heritages.

This bill gives me hope for a more cooperative future, one strengthened by the opportunities offered by Jewish and Muslim Heritage Months, should this bill become law. Thank you for your attention, and I urge a favorable report.

ⁱ <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/holidays.html>.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aclu.org/anti-muslim-discrimination>.

Testimony in support of SB0308 - Commemorative Mon

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0308_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/12/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0308 – FAVORABLE

General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0308, General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

LiveWorkMaryland states that *MARYLAND LIFE: DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION*¹

All Are Welcome. No matter what your race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality — you're welcome in Maryland. Maryland is the most diverse state on the East Coast. As declared by Arija, Chief of Staff, Cloudforce "There is such rich diversity here – a true mix of people. You can see there's a conscious effort to celebrate differences and foster inclusivity."

Maryland's values are that we leave NO ONE behind – this bill is submitted to recognize and celebrate some of the groups that add to our states diversity.

This bill will require the Governor annually to proclaim the month of January as Muslim American Heritage month and the month of May as Jewish American Heritage month; and require the proclamations to urge certain organizations to observe the months with certain programs and activities.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SB0308.

¹ <https://liveworkmaryland.com/live/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

SB308_FAV_Hettleman.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment

Senate Chair

Joint Audit and Evaluation
Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB308- General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

Maryland is home to a number of diverse communities whose histories and contributions have shaped and continue to shape our state. Many of these communities have specially designated commemorative months, such as Irish-American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and German-American Heritage Month, among many others.

However, certain communities are not formally recognized through statewide commemorative observances, and without these recognitions, Maryland is missing out on unique opportunities for education, awareness, and cultural appreciation. Commemorative months bring public awareness to the beauty of the diversity of our residents by inspiring public institutions like libraries, schools, community organizations, and cultural institutions to celebrate them.

SB 308 requires the Governor to annually proclaim the month of January as Muslim American Heritage month and the month of May as Jewish American Heritage month. Both Muslim Americans and Jewish Americans have significantly contributed to Maryland's history and culture, and have shared in the unfortunate circumstance of experiencing a precipitous rise in discrimination over the past few years. By highlighting the contributions, diversity, and history of Muslim Americans and Jewish Americans through the respective heritage months, we can help eliminate misconceptions, expand educational opportunities, and encourage a more inclusive society. As we know, the recognition and celebration of our communities' diversity has been under attack recently, and efforts like this bill strengthen the threads that knit our communities together. At this time, building and celebrating diversity is more important than ever. I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB308.

new bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Tahira MUSSARAT Hussain

Position: FAV

Dear Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, my name is Tahira Hussain, and I am here today to support SB308 which hopes to establish January and May as Muslim and Jewish heritage months in the state of Maryland.

Besides the several contributions to this state that I am sure everyone on this committee has been touched by or benefitted from, this bill also comes at a time when acknowledgement, education, and understanding of Muslims and Jewish people is very important.

Muslim Heritage bills have passed in several states and counties in this country, and it's time for Maryland to get on board and keep up our reputation as leaders in protective legislation that benefits constituents.

Not only will this bill give deserved gratitude to these communities that have always viewed themselves as part of a whole and have contributed immensely towards a sense of community, but this bill also serves as a form of prevention for growing xenophobia against our fellow Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters. This bill shows our partnership and shared goals. Bills such as these may seem small to some, but the emergence of antisemitism, and Islamophobia on social media platforms that our young children are exposed to every day are incredibly influential, even on a subconscious level. This is a way to fight back and prevent further use of our identities to further a political agenda or breed hate between all of us. We are tired of having to be the ones to say "not in our name". We need everyone in this state to have the exposure, appreciation, and education to say, "not in their name".

Muslims have been part of the American fabric since the 1500s, and an overwhelming majority of us have assimilated and done great work for our American communities, including myself. If it were not for the acceptance of my Howard County community members, I would not have been able to get involved in human trafficking issues and increase awareness among my Muslim community about these issues. Acceptance leads to collaboration, which leads to awareness, which leads to change. Maryland Muslims are doctors who save lives, engineers who build our bridges, staff at our children's schools, our legislators who pass revolutionary bills. My husband is a world-renowned oncologist at the University of Maryland for 39 years, my daughters pursuing higher education in Psychology, Geophysics, and Environmental health. I have taken my law experience from Pakistan to help my beloved Marylanders. We love to work for our community, and we are lucky to live in a county that support that, but not all counties are this fortunate. Our communities need this bill, but the state of Maryland needs this bill in order to maintain and improve the basic

humanity between all of us that is attacked and taken advantage of by our federal representatives every single day.

Tahira Mussarat Hussain

Faith Base community activist.

Tahiram2021@gmail.com

MD SB 308 - JAHM Written Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Tali Cohen

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 12, 2026

Testimony of Tali Cohen
ADL Washington, D.C. Regional Director

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **support of Senate Bill 308, “General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months,”** which would require the Governor annually to proclaim January as Muslim American Heritage Month and May as Jewish American Heritage Month.

As you may know, ADL is a leading anti-hate organization founded in 1913 with a mission to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” ADL is a global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens. We work to ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

At a time of rising antisemitism, hate and extremism across the country, including here in Maryland, this bill sends a clear message that our community is committed to celebrating the enriching vibrancy of both the Jewish and Muslim communities. ADL encourages both educators and legislators to commemorate Jewish American Heritage month in May each year. We offer important resources to help educators engage students in thinking broadly and critically about the Jewish experience in all of its diversity and complexity. In highlighting the significant events, people, culture and stories which have made a substantial contribution to the Jewish American experience, instruction should incorporate history, literature, politics, first-person experience, the arts, and the struggle for fair treatment and equity.

Jewish American Heritage Month is a time to reflect on and celebrate the multifaceted nature of Jewish communities around the world. At the same time, Jewish American Heritage Month should also be a time to uplift and provide learning experiences for students to explore the Jewish experience. This can be done not just in our schools but throughout the entire community and can be an exploration of holidays, traditions, culture, history, notable people, antisemitism faced by the Jewish community and more.

We strongly support uplifting both Jewish American Heritage Month and Muslim American Heritage month.

**We urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to give
Senate Bill 308 a favorable report.**

Testimony for SB308

Uploaded by: Tali Cohen

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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March 11, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0308**: General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

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I want to express my appreciation for Senators Hettleman, Kramer, Love, Waldstreicher, Lewis Young, Zucker and Sydnor for their leadership on Senate Bill 0308 (**SB308**), ensuring that the over 250,000 Jewish Americans and 350,000 Muslim Americans who call our great state home see that, here in Maryland, we recognize the importance of celebrating and honoring the true value that their communities bring to our neighborhoods, communities, and municipalities.

But that does not mean we can pretend ignorance of the potential damage that an environment of mistrust and division can create. Nearly 30,000 residents impacted by this bill have established homes and communities in Howard County, and Howard County Government and my office remain conscious of our role in protecting all members of our community from discrimination, hate, bias, and harm. Through initiatives like our Hate Has No Place series, developed in partnership through our Office of Human Rights & Equity and Human Rights Commission, or our Howard County Police Department's (HCPD) team of full-time community outreach officers focusing on community engagement and reporting of hate crimes and hate bias incidents (HBIs), we make it clear: discrimination and hate bias have no place in Howard County.

We know that fear, othering, misinformation, and bias are deep contributors to environments which may lead our Jewish American and Muslim American neighbors to feel unwelcome in our state. This legislation not only establishes standardized month-long celebrations highlighting these communities, it also, and perhaps more importantly, calls on our educational and cultural organizations to maintain programs and activities which deepen understanding and appreciation of these unique and vital



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communities. It is one thing to say we are a County and State which welcomes all-it is another to take concrete action which shifts belonging from a concept to a reality.

I urge the Committee's support for **SB0308**, ensuring another step forward to safeguarding Maryland as a state where all residents feel seen, understood, and valued.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

SB 308_HB 661_ General Provisions - Commemorative

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

SB 308/HB 661: General Provisions - Commemorative Months - Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee and Government, Labor & Elections Committee:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to MD SB 308/HB 661.

While I appreciate the importance of recognizing diverse cultures and contributions, I believe that designating specific months for these communities could inadvertently lead to division rather than unity. Here are a few reasons for my opposition:

- **Exclusivity:** By singling out specific groups for recognition, this bill risks *excluding other cultural and ethnic communities that also contribute significantly to our society*. A more inclusive approach would celebrate the rich tapestry of all cultures together.
- **Potential for Division:** *Focusing on commemorative months may foster a sense of division among communities rather than promoting understanding and cooperation*. We should aim to bring people together rather than create distinctions.
- **Broader Recognition:** *It is essential to honor the contributions of all communities throughout the year rather than limiting recognition to designated months*. This approach would promote a more comprehensive understanding of our diverse heritage.

I urge you to consider the potential implications and **oppose MD SB 308/HB 661** in favor of a more inclusive approach to celebrating our shared heritage.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this bill.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals