



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

FAVORABLE

SB495 - Health – Newborn Screening Program – Gaucher Disease

Finance Committee
February 18, 2026

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, **strongly supports SB 495 as a 2026 caucus priority**. This legislation would require the Maryland Department of Health, as part of the newborn screening (NBS) program, to screen for Gaucher disease, a rare and sometimes deadly genetic disorder disproportionately affecting the Jewish community. Gaucher disease is the most prevalent inherited Jewish genetic disease.

Given that Maryland is estimated to have the ninth largest Jewish population in the United States, this program is critical. SB 495 provides a simple and effective option for newborn screening which is essential for early diagnosis and timely access to life-saving treatments. This legislation clearly aligns with MLJC's mission to serve as a liaison for the Jewish community of Maryland.

Adoption of SB 495 would allow Maryland to join several other states including Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon and Tennessee, that have already effectively integrated Gaucher testing into their statewide NBS programs. Evidence shows that integration into existing NBS infrastructure is feasible with hardly any financial cost and earlier diagnosis of Gaucher generates cost savings for both families and the healthcare system.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 495.