



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *House Bill 661* –
*General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American
Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months*
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
March 17, 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.

House Bill 661 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 HB 661 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 HB 661. 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 HB 661.

