



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

FAVORABLE

HB661 - General Provisions – Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months

Government, Labor, and Elections

March 17, 2026

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, **strongly supports HB 661 as a 2026 caucus priority**, requiring the Governor to officially recognize January as Muslim-American Heritage Month and May as Jewish-American Heritage Month.

HB 661 aligns strongly with MLJC's mission of promoting and celebrating Jewish culture. In 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed May as Jewish-American Heritage Month in recognition of the first Jews who arrived in New Amsterdam on May 20, 1654; yet, this month remains unrecognized by the State of Maryland. HB 661 formally codifies Jewish-American Heritage Month in Maryland law—celebrating the contributions of over 250,000 Jewish Marylanders and promoting educational programs focused on understanding Jewish history.

Additionally, HB 661 advances MLJC's mission of furthering religious diversity and freedom. In recognition of the death of Yarrow Mamout—a Muslim African slave who purchased his freedom—January has been recognized by Muslim groups as Muslim-American Heritage Month. Pairing both months in the same legislation demonstrates interfaith solidarity and respect between the Jewish and Muslim communities.

For all these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report.