



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *House Bill 1055* –
Health – Newborn Screening Program – Gaucher Disease
Health Committee
March 4, 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 Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly to advocate for our social service agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish and broader community.

House Bill 1055, which requires the Maryland Department of Health, as part of the newborn screen system, to screen for Gaucher Disease, is critically important to the JCRC and the large Jewish population that we represent in Montgomery County. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Jewish people live in Montgomery County, and the health and well-being of these residents is a top priority of the JCRC.

Gaucher disease is a rare inherited disorder passed down from parents to children. It is the most common genetic disease to affect Jewish people of Ashkenazi descent. While there is no cure for Gaucher, early detection can benefit family planning and help manage the progressive nature of the disease which enlarges the spleen and liver. Newborn blood test screening can also confirm a diagnosis and identify mutations to allow for early treatment and personalized care.

Including Gaucher testing among the diseases for which Maryland newborns are screened is a small step that can make a huge difference in the life of someone born with this disease. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report for House Bill 1055.