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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

**Senate Bill 177- Criminal Law - Interference with Access to or  
Egress From a Religious Facility – Prohibition**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 20, 2026**

**Support**

**Background:** Modeled after legislation preventing the blocking of access to medical facilities, this legislation would establish a misdemeanor penalty for those who block access to the entrance of religious facilities. Religious facilities include a place of worship, cemetery, religious school, educational facility, community center, and the grounds adjacent to them.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, and programs, as well as the organized Jewish Community of Baltimore. As incidents of protest increase across the country, it is important that access to religious facilities remains a priority and that people feel safe entering them.

We have seen students at Hillels on college campuses and community members at their local synagogues feel intimidated and fearful of entering these facilities because protestors have blocked the entrances. Earlier this winter, we saw protestors chanting pro-Hamas slogans seeking to block access to a synagogue in Queens, N.Y., as well as a similar protest to disrupt and block access to a gathering at a synagogue located in Koreatown in Los Angeles.

This behavior is unacceptable, and access to all faith facilities should be safeguarded by the state.

**For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB177.**

*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.*