

March 10, 2026

Chair Jheanelle Wilkins  
House Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Testimony In Support of HB 1202 Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies – Culture and History of Palestine**

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee:

As a long time Maryland resident I value the diversity of our state. Over the years, through different periods of tension and disinformation, even our diverse state has been pummeled by hateful and violent acts and language. From the Black Lives Matter to Stop Asian Hate campaigns, our community has managed to come together through education and advocacy.

Right now, we are witnessing an increase in anti-Palestinian hate. Members of our community have physically and verbally attacked neighbors who are Palestinian or perceived to be Palestinian. Just a few weeks ago, in my community of Bethesda, a violent and hateful message was spray painted across Walt Whitman High School calling to “Nuke Palestine”. Not only should our schools be a safe space for all students, they should also be spaces where we ensure that our students, who are our future community leaders and members, are taught to humanize and respect all people.

House Bill 1202 addresses the importance of and guidelines to explicitly recognizing anti-Palestinian bias and will provide critical education in our school system where students will be provided a safe space to learn and ask questions. Providing our students with an education about the history and culture and Palestine and Palestinians is not only an education about a West Asian country, it is an education to understand their own Palestinian classmates, teachers, doctors, business owners, and neighbors in Maryland. It is imperative that we meet this moment of hatefulness by giving our students the foundation to become inclusive, discerning, and well-rounded members of society.

For these reasons I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Thank you,  
Laila Sabagh