



Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Jewish Voice for Peace is a national grassroots Jewish organization working towards Palestinian freedom and Judaism beyond Zionism. We have over 3000 supporters in Maryland, and chapters in Baltimore City, the DC Metro area, and at Towson University. **JVP Baltimore is submitting testimony in strong support of HB 1202**, for the State Board of Education to develop **content standards, curriculum guides, and instructional resources regarding the culture and history of Palestine.**

- **Growing numbers of Jews of all ages are joining us in recognizing that uplifting Palestinian identity, culture, and history is no threat to Jewish communities.** Instead, it's a precondition for creating the tolerant, multicultural societies that are the best way to keep Jewish communities along with all minority or marginalized communities safe. **Current authoritarian threats here in the USA have shown us that we are all safer when we all support and recognize each other.**
- As Jewish people in the United States who are for safety, freedom, and dignity of all people everywhere, **we have seen pervasive anti-Palestinian bias in many of our Jewish communities, and in U.S. society as a whole.** Just as Maryland, rightly, has intentional content standards and curriculum on the histories and cultures of many under-represented and stigmatized populations—including on **Holocaust education, antisemitism and Jewish history—we need to include Palestine cultural literacy too.**
- **Long-standing right-wing efforts in the USA to suppress recognition of Palestinian identity and history helped blaze the trail for the escalating attacks on “DEI”, Ethnic Studies, and “Critical Race Theory”,** and anti-Palestinian forces have tried to exploit that wave for further suppression of Palestinians and other Arab-Americans and migrants from school curricula. **Effectively resisting these attacks on “DEI” requires acknowledgement of Palestinian culture and history in our educational systems.**

As Jews working toward a vision of liberation and dignity for all people, **we know that we are all safer in societies that embrace multiculturalism and teach about the identities and histories of everyone.** Repression of Palestinian identity makes us *all* less safe. Respecting everyone means actively addressing pervasive anti-Palestinian biases in our educational system too. For those reasons, we urge a **favorable report on HB 1202.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.