

The Honorable Chair  
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
House Ways and Means Committee  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: FAVORABLE - SUPPORT of House Bill 1202  
Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies – Culture and  
History of Palestine**

To Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Ian Thompson. I am a resident of Frederick (District 3) and a member of Frederick for Justice in Palestine. I am offering this testimony in strong support of HB 1202, the “Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies – Culture and History of Palestine” bill. This bill requires Maryland public schools to incorporate age-appropriate, fact-based Palestine cultural literacy into existing social studies, world history, civics, or multicultural education curricula beginning in the 2027-2028 school year. By teaching about Palestine’s history, we can help combat harmful stereotypes and encourage a safer, more welcoming learning environment for our state’s diverse student body.

For far too long, the lives, culture, and history of the Palestinian people have either been ignored and systematically erased. Failing to teach who Palestinians are – their history, culture, language, and lived experience – allows Palestinian students to become symbols instead of human beings. Once a group is dehumanized in this way, calls for violence against them become easier to normalize. Sadly, we saw this earlier this year at Walt Whitman High School in Montgomery County, where graffiti stating “f\*\*\* Muslims” and “Nuke Palestine,” accompanied by a Star of David, were painted on the school walls.

The Palestine cultural literacy that this bill would provide will help Maryland take an important step towards safer schools, stronger communities, and an education system that affirms the full humanity of every student in our state.

For these reasons and many more, **I ask the Ways and Means Committee to give HB 1202 a favorable report.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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