



**Written Testimony of the Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake
House Ways and Means Committee – January 29, 2026
In Support of HB 14 — County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or
Intimidation – Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 14. The Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake stands with students and families in promoting safe, respectful learning environments for all children, regardless of religion, race, disability, or other characteristics.

Why this bill matters

Accurate reporting on bullying, harassment, and bias-motivated incidents is essential for prevention, intervention, and trust. Maryland has seen a troubling rise in antisemitic incidents, including in schools. According to the 2024 ADL Audit, antisemitic incidents in Maryland increased 5% from 2023, with K-12 schools among the epicenters.

Local data from the 2024–25 school year underscores the urgency: total bullying incidents fell from 1,557 to 1,182, yet bias-motivated incidents — including antisemitism — still affected **229 students**, and high schools saw a slight increase in bias-related reports. These numbers represent real students facing harassment that disrupts learning and undermines safety.

HB 14’s requirement to disaggregate bullying reports by motivating characteristic — including religion and disability — will allow schools and communities to:

- Respond quickly to bias before it escalates;
- Provide culturally competent support to affected students;
- Train staff to recognize and address all forms of bias;
- Build trust with families through transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

HB 14 will strengthen school accountability, protect student dignity, and ensure every child can learn free from fear and harassment. The Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake respectfully urges a favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake