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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

HB1368: Special Education - Individualized Education Program - Notification of Missed Services (Shifra's Act)
House Ways & Means Committee | March 11, 2026
SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 1368 would require the parents of a child with a disability who has an individualized education program (IEP) to receive a written notice when a certain special education or related service aid specified in the IEP is missed, incomplete, or interrupted as specified; require the notice to explain the missed, incomplete or interrupted service aid and the reason the service aid, or support was missed; and require the notice to provide parents with information on requesting a certain meeting to discuss certain matters.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies. This includes the Macks Center for Jewish Connection, which is dedicated to enriching the connection to Jewish life for individuals of all abilities and backgrounds. From assistance with IEPs and 504 plans to community resources and engaging programming, they offer a range of free advocacy services to help local Jewish families navigate the complex special education system and lay the foundation for a full life. Through the Macks Center's support, families feel empowered to advocate for their children to ensure they receive the necessary assistance for thriving both in school and life.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities are legally entitled to the support written in their IEP. We recognize the value in alerting families to any changes in aid specified in a student's IEP for a number of reasons:

- **Accountability** - Informing families when services are missed or delayed helps ensure the school remains accountable for delivering those services.
- **Prevention of Learning Gaps** - IEP services (such as speech therapy, counseling, or specialized instruction) are designed to help the student access the curriculum. If services are missed and families are notified quickly, the team can arrange make-up sessions or adjustments before the student falls behind.
- **Compliance** - Keeping families informed creates a record that the school is monitoring service delivery and responding to problems. This documentation can be important for compliance with federal and state special education requirements.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB1368.

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.