

Advocacy

Maryland Jewish

DAY RECEPTION 2025



A SAMPLING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY'S POLICY PRIORITIES

The Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act (Sen. Shelly Hettleman/Del. Jared Solomon)

Antisemitic and hate incidents have surged on college campuses in recent years. Since the October 7th massacre and resulting Israel-Hamas War, encampments and protests have popped up on many of Maryland's campuses, leaving Jewish students feeling unwelcome and lost. This bill would require our public institutions of higher education and private nonprofit institutions to adopt and enforce a policy regarding racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation at the institution while minding an individual's first amendment rights. This would include training for staff, establishing procedures for investigating complaints, and collaborating with local law enforcement. Each institution of higher education would also be required to create a campus task force on combating antisemitism, Islamophobia, hatred, harassment, bullying, or violence toward others on the basis of their actual religious identity or what is assumed to be their religious identity at the institution. Annual reporting to the Maryland Higher Education Commission of all harassment and intimidation complaints will be required.

SB293/HB324: County Boards of Education – Antibias Training for Members – Requirement County Board Member Antibias Training Act (Sen. Brian Feldman/Del. Marc Korman)

Piggybacking on HB1386 (Education - Employee Training and Holocaust Education Study – Requirements, Del. Vanessa Atterbeary) from the 2024 Legislative Session, which requires each employee in public elementary, middle, and high school classrooms to receive anti-bias training each year, this bill would require the same training to be carried out for school board members once during each term served on the County School Board. This training would be performed separately from that which education staff receive.

HB71: Education – Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program – Established (Del. Mark Edelson)

The Maryland State Department of Education's Standards and Framework for Middle School Social Studies curricula are being updated for Holocaust education and antisemitism. We recognize that it is important to give our teachers the tools they need to both understand and properly teach this difficult material to their students. Without funding for professional development and materials, this can be hard to achieve. This bill would establish the \$500,000 Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program as an annual appropriation in the budget under the Maryland State Department of Education. These grants would be available to all 24 jurisdictions to assist with Holocaust education in public schools. It authorizes a local school system to apply to the Department for a grant of no more than \$50,000 to be used only for certain Holocaust-related training, materials, and activities.

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SB287/HB305: Criminal Law – Interference With Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility – Prohibition (Sen. Chris West/Del. Sandy Rosenberg)

As incidents of protest increase across the country, it is important that religious facility access remains a priority. Modeled after legislation for blocking access to a medical facility, this legislation will establish a misdemeanor penalty for those who block access to the entrance of a religious facility.

SB170/HB187: Criminal Law - Benefits Exploitation (Sen. Chris West/Del. Aaron Kaufman)

This bill would establish a criminal offense of “benefits exploitation,” which would result in a felony charge to anyone who knowingly recruits, harbors, transports, or obtains an individual for the purpose of appropriating the government benefits of an individual for the benefit of the person or another. This is seen mostly as a form of both abuse of elders and those with disabilities– where a caretaker (family, employee, etc.) deprives an individual of their needed care while obtaining their monthly benefits for their own gain.