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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### Senate Bill 951 – Education – Students Athletes – Uniforms and Modifications for Modesty (Inclusive Athletic Attire Act)

Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee- March 15, 2022

## SUPPORT

### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation  
American Jewish Committee  
Americans for Peace Now  
Baltimore Chapter  
American Israel Public Affairs Committee  
American Red Magen David for Israel  
American Zionist Movement  
Amit Women  
Association of Reform Zionists of America  
Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation  
Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance  
Baltimore Men's ORT  
Baltimore Zionist District  
Beth Am Congregation  
Beth El Congregation  
Beth Israel Congregation  
Beth Shalom Congregation of  
Howard County  
Beth Tfiloh Congregation  
B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region  
B'nai Israel Congregation  
B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation  
Bolton Street Synagogue  
Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.  
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation  
Chizuk Amuno Congregation  
Congregation Beit Tikvah  
Congregation Beth Shalom of  
Carroll County  
Congregation Tiferes Yisroel  
Federation of Jewish Women's  
Organizations of Maryland  
Hadassah  
Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation  
J Street  
Jewish Federation of Howard County  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Jewish War Veterans  
Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary  
Jewish Women International  
Jews For Judaism  
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emenah  
Hebrew Congregation  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Ner Tamid Congregation  
Rabbinical Council of America  
Religious Zionists of America  
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation  
Shomrei Emenah Congregation  
Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society  
Suburban Orthodox Congregation  
Temple Beth Shalom  
Temple Isaiah  
Zionist Organization of America  
Baltimore District

**Background:** Senate Bill 951, (SB951) would require county boards of education, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association, governing bodies of public secondary schools, public institutions of higher education and community colleges to allow student athletes to modify their team uniform so that it may comply with the requirements or preferences of their religion or culture without pre-approval.

**Written Comments:** The state of Maryland was founded as a home for religious freedom. Today student athletes can be denied the right to play the sports they love because of their religion. No student should be denied the right to participate in school athletics because of what they wear or what religion they practice. For many student athletes, sports are the highlight of their high school or collegiate career, and for some it leads to scholarships and opportunities they would never have otherwise. Athletics should be a place of inclusion where anyone is allowed to participate, and the focus is on skill and competition. However, when students must obtain waivers for uniform modifications, or are forced to sit out altogether, they are unfairly disadvantaged. In many cases, girls are the ones that disproportionately face this hardship and embarrassment.

The Baltimore Jewish Council represents the Jewish community of the broader Baltimore area. Many of the religions commonly practiced in Maryland, including Judaism, call on followers to wear certain attire. This can include head coverings, long sleeves and/or skirts. Reasonable accommodations for religious practices already exist in countless other aspects of life and society, student athletics should not be any different.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB951.

*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.*