



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 1, 2023

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ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in **support of SB785**, which would establish an Office of Domestic Terrorism Response within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including from white supremacists and other far-right violent extremists, producing research to inform the public, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices to effectively address and counter these threats.

The intelligence and law enforcement communities are gravely concerned about the threat of Domestic Violent Extremism (DVE).¹ According to Anti-Defamation League (ADL) research, data that shows antisemitism, extremism, and violence committed by extremists are in periods of historical highs. In 2022, domestic extremists killed at least 25 people in the U.S., 15 of whom were killed in incidents of mass casualty violence.² ADL tracked almost 130 counts of white supremacist propaganda in Maryland in 2022.

At the federal level, the Biden Administration released a National Strategy to Counter Domestic Terrorism, increased homeland security resources to address the threat, and established an office at the Department of Justice to deal specifically with domestic terrorism. The State of Maryland should follow suit. In its report this past December, the State of Maryland Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism identified the need for standing entities to address the threat on an ongoing basis. Without a dedicated team, specialized in the threat, it will be difficult to create ongoing, carefully curated efforts to address domestic terrorism.

To pass and enact SB785 would ensure that the Maryland Department of Emergency Management has a standing, specialized office focused on the domestic terrorist threat. It would also ensure that the Task Force would advise the office, mitigating the potential for duplicative

¹ E.g. DHS National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin. 30 November 2022.

<https://www.dhs.gov/ntas/advisory/national-terrorism-advisory-system-bulletin-november-30-2022>; ODNI “Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2021.” 1 March 2021.

<https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/UnclassSummaryofDVEAssessment-17MAR21.pdf>

² Anti-Defamation League. “Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2022.” 22 February 2023.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2022>

efforts and increasing the likelihood of multifaceted advice being provided to the office. With this office in place, the State of Maryland would be safer from the domestic violent extremist threat.

We accordingly urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give SB785 a favorable report.