



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

HOUSE BILL 1041

CRIMINAL LAW - HATE CRIMES - RELIGION AND DISABILITY

TESTIMONY OF RABBI ARIEL SADWIN

SUPPORT

Agudath Israel of Maryland, the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America – a renowned national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country, speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland. We issue this testimony in **support** of House Bill 1041.

It is with great concern and caution that we embrace the reality that our community faces as a target and victim of hate crimes. Throughout the generations, and with the alarming recent uptick, we are far too familiar with the wide variety of actions and threats of actions displayed by members of society who are simply unwilling to accept those who are different than them.

As the Jewish community, our wounds are always fresh from one tragic occurrence or the next. Whether it was a synagogue in Pittsburgh or Poway, a kosher supermarket in Jersey City, a Chanukah celebration in a Monsey home, or the countless threats that come in to Jewish facilities since the events of October 7th – locally, nationally, or internationally – the Jewish faith community continues to be targeted by violent individuals. Jews who refuse to be cowed, and continue to proudly display symbols of our religious faith, do so knowing that they may, G-d forbid, be targeted for doing so.

It is of the utmost importance that we ensure that the individuals who target people of faith out of hatred for their religious beliefs not be allowed to “get away with it.” We therefore respectfully ask that it be made clear that targeting a person because of their religion will not be tolerated, and that you deliver a favorable report on House Bill 1041.

Thank you.