



# HoCo JAG

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Testimony in support of House Bill 14 - 2026

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

Dear Chairperson Wilkins and Vice-Chair Feldmark,

HB0014 is essential to helping Maryland schools become the safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment we seek for all students. On behalf of the Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group (HoCoJAG), I am writing to respectfully request a favorable report from your committee.

In 2024 and in 2025, Jewish citizens of Howard County were more likely to experience hate and bias incidents than any other group (per HCPD data). FBI hate crime statistics also show that Jews are the group most likely to experience hate bias crimes in Maryland and that Maryland is the fifth worst state in the nation in this regard.

The US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, under the Biden administration, investigated the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and issued a report (see link below) identifying a wide range of concerns, stating in their summary that:

“Specifically, OCR is concerned that the evidence produced to date suggests that a hostile environment likely existed for Jewish students in the School System but because – as the School System acknowledged in the course of this investigation – the School System did not assess whether any incidents reported to it during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year created or contributed to a hostile environment based on shared Jewish ancestry, the School System likely did not take steps necessary to redress any such hostile environment.”

The failure to recognize and track incidents of antisemitic bullying, harassment, and intimidation has resulted in a hostile environment for Jewish students in many schools and school systems across Maryland. Ensuring that schools recognize, track, and report incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, against Jews as against any group, is essential to compliance with Title VI. HB0014 will help ensure that Maryland school systems comply with civil rights law and that Jewish students as well as students of all backgrounds, have equal access to education free of a hostile environment.

We thank Delegate Foley for sponsoring HB0014 and respectfully request a favorable report from the committee.

Sincerely,

David Albert  
Vice President of the Board of Directors  
Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

ref: <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-letters-and-agreements/03241154-a.pdf>