

Advocacy

Maryland Jewish
DAY 2026



A SAMPLING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY'S POLICY PRIORITIES

HB14: County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements (Del. Linda Foley)

House Ways & Means Committee

This bill would alter the contents of a school bullying, harassment, and intimidation forms to require the identification of certain motivators behind the incident – including, but not limited to, an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability. By collecting this information, schools can better assess what hate bias areas are most prominent in their school systems, and can tailor their required antibias staff training that must be completed every two years (2024, HB1386: Education - School Employee Antibias Training – Requirements).

SB316/HB109: Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools - Title VI Coordinators (Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher/Del. Joe Vogel)

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee/Jointly Assigned to House Appropriations and House Ways & Means Committees

This bill would require the governing board of each institution of higher education in the State and local school systems to designate a Title VI Coordinator to ensure compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and allow a student alleging discrimination under the provisions of this law to file a complaint with a Title VI Coordinator of a local school system. It is important that all students feel like they belong. By requiring that each school system and each institution of higher learning designate a Title VI Coordinator, we are ensuring that there is a resource available to students who feel they are being discriminated against, and proper avenues for incidents to be reported.

SB140/HB216: Criminal Law - Benefits Exploitation (Sen. Chris West/Del. Aaron Kaufman)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

This bill would create a criminal offense of “benefits exploitation,” by establishing a felony charge for knowingly recruiting, harboring, transporting or obtaining an individual for the purpose of appropriating the government benefits of said individual for the benefit of another through deception, coercion, exploitation, isolation or any other means. Government benefits include but are not limited to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Disability.

SB177/HBXXX: Criminal Law - Interference With Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility – Prohibition (Sen. Chris West/Del. Sandy Rosenberg)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

Modeled after legislation preventing the blocking of access to medical facilities, this legislation would establish a misdemeanor penalty for those who block access to the entrance of religious facilities. Religious facilities include a place of worship, a cemetery, a religious school, an educational facility, a community center, and the grounds adjacent to them. According to testimony from the Maryland State’s Attorneys’ Association, “this bill establishes protections for religious communities in a way that respects other important, and constitutionally protected, activity, striking an appropriate balance in a way that will survive constitutional scrutiny.”

SB323/HB409: Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction - Youth Charging Reform Act (Sen. Will Smith/Del. Sandy Bartlett)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

For the past 14 years, advocates have been lobbying to change Maryland law, so young people will receive better treatment and stronger protection when arrested. They should not be automatically sent to adult court, but rather to juvenile court, unless they are charged with a heinous crime. Today, there are 33 offenses that automatically send Maryland children to an adult detention center upon arrest. 85% of them ultimately return to juvenile court or have their cases dismissed. In the meantime, many spend up to 180 days housed in adult jail while awaiting trial. In this setting, they are vulnerable to adult criminals and are not eligible to receive educational support or behavioral health services that would be provided in the juvenile system. This bill would alter the jurisdiction of the juvenile court by repealing provisions specifying that the juvenile court does not have jurisdiction over a child alleged to have committed any crime punishable by life imprisonment.