



2026 MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Maryland State and Montgomery County Issues:

Prioritize State Operating Funding for the *Protecting Against Hate Crimes (PAHC)* program for houses of worship and faith-based nonprofits targeted for hate crimes, the *Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS)* Hate Crimes Grant for schools and childcare centers at risk for hate crimes, and the *Maryland Israel Development Center (MIDC)* to promote trade between Israel and Maryland.

Increase Montgomery County Security Funding for the *Nonprofit Security Grant Program* for faith-based institutions at risk of hate crimes and bias incidents.

Secure Funding for our Nonprofit Agencies (JSSA, Makom, JCA, CESLC, Bender JCC, JCADA, Sunflower Bakery), which provide vital social services on a non-sectarian basis for aging adults, people with disabilities, victims of intimate partner violence, Holocaust survivors, and individuals with behavioral health challenges, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, or ability to pay.

Counter Antisemitism through education, policy initiatives and law enforcement. Antisemitic incidents threaten our community's sense of safety, security and belonging. We are committed to combating all forms of hatred and bigotry and to correcting misinformation about Jews and Israel.

Protect Democracy by supporting laws, policies and initiatives that strengthen the infrastructure of the democratic process, such as civics education, poll worker recruitment and voter access.

Support Immigrant Rights so newcomers feel safe, welcome and included in our state, especially during this period of instability, hostility and fear.

Strengthen Reproductive Health and Freedom for women to have access to the full spectrum of healthcare services, including contraception and abortion.

Safeguard the Environment by supporting policies to protect our environment through adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

Fight Against Poverty by advocating for programs that help the most vulnerable get access to affordable housing, nutritious food and quality childcare.

Seek Justice for Individuals and Communities by endorsing legislation and initiatives that protect the most vulnerable and promote a just, caring society.

Support Educational Programs and maximize government funding for our vibrant public and independent school systems.

Federal Issues:

Secure the Jewish community from potential threats through FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). This is a critical tool to protect Jewish and other faith-based nonprofits from physical threats through target hardening and other physical security enhancements. The JCRC advocates for \$1 billion for NSGP in FY 2026 to maintain a robust security system for Jewish and non-Jewish houses of worship, community centers and schools as they routinely face harm.

Combat Unprecedented Antisemitism on college campuses. Jewish students are increasingly worried about their safety and security at school. Many are hiding their Jewish identity in the face of constant threats and harassment. The **Antisemitism Awareness Act** will better protect Jewish students by directing the Department of Education to use the widely accepted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism when investigating complaints. This definition outlines a clear, consistent standard to identify and address antisemitic incidents.

Enhance the Safety Net for our nation's most vulnerable citizens, including Holocaust survivors, individuals with disabilities, older adults and those in dire need of support. The JCRC advocates for \$10 million in FY 2026 for the **Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program (HSAP)** to ensure aging Holocaust survivors receive the dignity, care and support they deserve. The JCRC also supports the **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Penalty Eliminations Savings Act**, which helps millions of low-income seniors and people with disabilities pay for their basic needs.

Preserve DC Home Rule in the face of federal government efforts to restrict the District's ability to self-govern. Several bills have been introduced in Congress that would severely limit the ability of DC to determine its own laws, how to spend their local tax revenue, and even eliminate the DC Council and Mayor. We oppose these efforts as they impose constraints that are faced by no other jurisdiction in the United States. Further restriction of DC's self-determination or eliminating it entirely reduces the quality of life for all, including the Jewish community.

Support a mutually beneficial U.S.- Israel relationship with the continued implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, which provides \$3.8 billion in annual aid to Israel. This funding, which includes aid for missile defense systems such as Iron Dome, helps protect civilians from indiscriminate rocket attacks, safeguards Israeli and American interests, and maintains Israel's Qualitative Military Edge in an unstable region. The JCRC also backs legislation that advances shared security priorities, including the **U.S.- Israel Defense Partnership Act of 2025**, which deepens bilateral defense cooperation and accelerates innovation in defense technologies, and the **Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act of 2025**, which increases pressure on Iran to end its nuclear program and targets foreign entities that help Iran illicitly export oil.