

JCRC'S 2026 MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION SUMMARY

The 2026 Maryland General Assembly adjourned its 90-day session in Annapolis on April 13th. Once again, lawmakers had to make some tough decisions to close a \$1.5 billion budget deficit. Advocating for new programs or increasing spending on existing programs was a tough sell. Still, the JCRC scored a number of important victories in terms of our legislative agenda and fiscal priorities.

In the State's FY27 **Operating Budget**, we successfully lobbied to increase security funding for our day schools by \$500,000 to \$3.5 million. We also maintained level funding of \$10 million to protect our synagogues and childcare centers, and level funding of \$300,000 for the Maryland Israel Development Center to promote bilateral trade between Maryland and Israel.

Additionally, we were able to restore funding in the Department of Aging that was altered to a competitive grants process after the previous budget passed. As a result, Jewish Social Service Agency and ElderSAFE will continue to receive \$650,000 to serve the most vulnerable community members, including Holocaust survivors and older adults.

Finally, in the State's FY27 **Capital Budget**, we secured \$950,000 for the Charles E. Smith Life Communities to upgrade Ring House's infrastructure.

This independent living residence, which provides essential housing for older adults of all backgrounds and income levels, has not had its plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and life-safety systems updated in decades.

On the legislative front, the JCRC's successes include:

1. **[HB 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection Reporting Requirements](#)**

Changes how schools collect and report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation if motivated by certain characteristics including race, religion or ancestry. This bill will help school systems implement strategies that more effectively target these disturbing hateful incidents, while fostering greater accountability and transparency in Maryland schools.

2. **SB308/HB661 - Commemorative Months – Muslim American Heritage and Jewish American Heritage Months**

Requires the Governor to annually recognize January as Muslim American Heritage month and May as Jewish American Heritage month.

3. **SB177/HB750 - Criminal Law – Interference With Access to or Egress from a Religious Facility – Prohibition**

Prohibits individuals from blocking access to religious facilities and establishes a misdemeanor penalty. This bill will ensure that Jews can engage in prayer and Jewish life, and demonstrators will not be allowed to intimidate, harass or instill fear.

4. **SB 323/HB409 - Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction - Youth Charging Reform Act**

Eliminates the automatic charging of juveniles as adults, specifically raising the age from 14 to 16 for most crimes except for serious violent ones punishable by life imprisonment. Maryland sends more young people to adult courts, per capita, than any other state except Alabama. It took 14 years for this bill to pass.

5. **SB245/HB444 - Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**

Restricts state, county and local government authorities from entering into immigration enforcement agreements. This ban on 287(g) agreements ensures that local police will not engage in federal immigration action but instead focus on community safety to ensure all residents feel secure and receive due process.

Alongside these legislative successes are the bills we opposed that did not win passage. None of these bills received a vote in their respective committees.

1. **HB 1184 – Civil Actions – Nonprofit Organizations – Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not on Our Dime Act)**

This bill would have revoked the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that support Israel. Its overly broad language could have penalized Jewish and pro-Israel nonprofit organizations doing critical humanitarian work in the region.

2. **HB1382 - State Procurement - Prohibited Certifications - Boycotts of Foreign Countries**

This bill sought to revoke a 2017 Maryland executive order prohibiting executive branch agencies from entering contracts or conducting official state business with an entity unless the entity certifies that they will not engage in the boycott of Israel.

3. **HB1455 - State Retirement and Pension System - Divestment from Israel**

This bill would have required the Board of Trustees of the State Retirement and Pension System to review its investment holdings in specified accounts to determine the extent to which those funds are invested in specified Israel-restricted investments and take divestment action with respect to investments in Israel.