



## MARYLAND 2025 BUDGET & LEGISLATIVE WRAP

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly wrapped up on April 7<sup>th</sup> after a grueling 90-day session where lawmakers had to close a daunting \$3 billion budget shortfall.

This year, a huge win for the JCRC in the State's FY26 Operating Budget, was the doubling of security funding to \$10 million for houses of worship and childcare facilities at risk for hate crimes. (Thank Governor Wes Moore). We also lobbied successfully for level funding of \$3 million for security dollars at our day schools. Additionally, our nonprofit agencies, including JSSA and ElderSAFE, received level funding totaling \$650,000, to continue serving the most vulnerable in our community including Holocaust Survivors and older adults. MIDC (Maryland Israel Development Center) also received level funding of \$300,000 to promote bilateral trade between Maryland and Israel.

During this session, the JCRC lobbied intensely with Makom to advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as the Developmental Disability Administration faced \$457 million in cuts. While we were able to reduce those cuts to roughly \$185 million, less funding means that our disability providers and the people they support will suffer the consequences.

Despite the challenging economic climate, in the FY26 Capital Budget, the JCRC secured \$240,000 for the Bender JCC to renovate its ground level and expand its inclusion camp, Pre-K classes, and other programs. We also secured a \$30,000 Legislative Bond Initiative for Sunflower Bakery to purchase a refrigerated van to expand its reach. (Thank Del. Ben Barnes, Sen. Craig Zucker, and Del. Ryan Spiegel for this capital funding).

On the Legislative Front, the JCRC's successes include:

1. **HB 324** requires all members of county boards of education to complete antibias training. Last year, we supported legislation requiring all school employees to undergo antibias training, including antisemitism, but did not include Board of Education members. HB 324 closes that loophole and specifies that this training will be performed separately from that of other school employees. (Del. Korman – D16)
2. **HB 71** establishes a Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the State Department of Education to help fund Holocaust educational materials and training for

teachers. Originally, the bill included an appropriation of \$500,000; however, given constraints in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, that amount was significantly reduced to \$50,000.

3. **HB 1222**, The Maryland Values Act, designates certain places as “sensitive locations”, including public schools, public libraries and state funded healthcare facilities, to protect immigrants from being detained without due process to enforce federal immigration laws. The original version of this legislation prohibited participation in so-called 287(g) agreements which allow Maryland counties to cooperate with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This provision was stripped out of the final bill.
4. **HB 707**, Eric’s ID Law, allows residents with “nonapparent disabilities” to choose to have a special symbol – a butterfly logo – on their driver’s licenses or other state identification cards. The legislation also mandates that the Maryland Vehicle Administration (MVA) conducts public outreach about the program and that police officers are educated about the new designation and trained how to interact with these individuals with nonapparent disabilities. (Del. Wilkins & Sen. Smith – D20)
5. **HB 930** creates a public health grant program to support equitable access to abortion care in Maryland. It will be paid for by unspent premiums for abortion coverage since those funds cannot be returned. The JCRC has a long history of supporting religious freedom and reproductive choice, including the right to an abortion. (Del. Lopez – D39)