

Here For You

Annual Report
2022 | 5782



**Unify.
Mobilize.
Advocate.**



Dear Friends,

The past year has seen our world continue to struggle with the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, but the rapid development, delivery and deployment of vaccines signaled a light at the end of the tunnel. In addition to grappling with the enduring pandemic, the Greater Washington Jewish community was deeply affected by persistent political tensions, an alarming uptick in antisemitic and racially-charged incidents, and major global events like the Afghan refugee crisis and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Through it all, the JCRC remained focused on the work that has made us the region's top Jewish advocacy organization, a chief Israel booster and a leader in confronting antisemitism wherever it occurs. We continued to foster interfaith and intergroup partnerships that demonstrate our commitment to pursuing justice and equality and eradicating all forms of hatred. We held our annual Holocaust commemoration, paying tribute to our region's survivors and liberators and remembering the legacies of the six million who were murdered – a stark reminder of the historical cost of unchecked prejudice. In the spirit of *tikkun olam*, we rallied community members to help underserved and underrepresented populations. We received grant funding to resettle Afghan refugees who fled their native country and worked alongside local institutions to help them adjust to their new home. We advocated for legislation and secured government funds at the local and state levels to improve the lives of all citizens. We successfully pushed for an equitable school calendar in Fairfax County that includes days off for important minority-faith holidays. We weighed in on hot-button issues, condemning the

Supreme Court's ruling to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. We produced voter's guides to better inform Marylanders, Virginians and District of Columbia residents ahead of their elections. We brought government officials to your living room with our virtual "Legislatively Speaking" series in Maryland and Virginia advocacy webinars in the Commonwealth. We ramped up our education initiatives to reach more young people who will stand up to hatred and intolerance. We partnered with school systems to ensure curricula accurately reflects the history of the Jewish people. And, as always, we championed Israel and supported her citizens through ongoing terrorist attacks and internal government upheaval. Despite the pandemic-era challenges, the JCRC of Greater Washington has grown stronger in the last 12 months. This report outlines the progress we have made under extraordinary circumstances to further cement our status as a prominent, respected and influential organization that gets results for the Jewish community and beyond. We are deeply grateful to everyone who played a role in this current success and is helping to build a bright future.

B'Shalom,



RON HALBER
Executive Director



RON PAUL, MD
President



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Be it at the federal, state, or local level, election season is a pivotal time for a community's future – and the team at the JCRC knows the power of an informed and engaged electorate.

That's why the JCRC teamed up with the Washington Jewish Week to publish extensive Jewish Voter's Guides for the 2022 primary races in DC and Maryland. We asked candidates why they were running, what they hoped to accomplish if elected, and what their positions were on affordable housing, reproductive freedom, climate change, and security funding for Jewish schools and synagogues. More than 75% of the nearly 100 candidates in contested state and county races in Maryland filled out our survey about issues that are critical to the Jewish community for the Maryland 2022 Jewish Voter's Guide; and the DC 2022 Jewish Voter's Guide featured all candidates in contested primary races: mayoral, attorney general, and DC Council.

Meanwhile, two years into the coronavirus pandemic, in-person programming began returning in earnest to the Greater Washington area, yet virtual events continued to serve as a powerful tool for bringing people together to exchange ideas and explore important subjects. For instance, the JCRC continued to cosponsor the Lawyer's Brown Bag Lunch series on Zoom: Participants examined the Ben & Jerry's BDS settlement, the building of a legal curriculum about antisemitism, Supreme Court decisions of the past term, reproductive rights, environmental law, and more.

Read on to learn more about the JCRC's efforts to support legislation, programming, and collaboration that reflect the needs and values of the Greater Washington Jewish community.



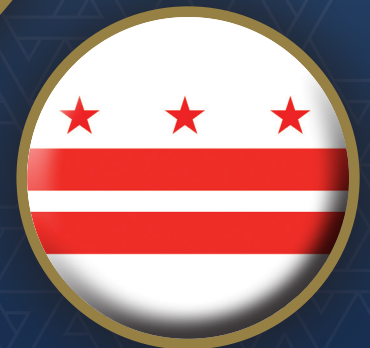
Former Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and JCRC Executive Director Ron Halber formed a strong partnership to advance the JCRC's legislative priorities.



District of Columbia

Meaningful change is rarely accomplished alone. For example, the JCRC, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), American Jewish Committee (AJC) supported DC Councilmember Brianne Nadeau's resolution on combating antisemitism – one that used the UN International Human Rights Council definition of antisemitism and included the recognition of anti-Zionism as a form of antisemitism. We are also proud to have helped launch the information-sharing network HACCEN (Hate Crimes Community Engagement Working Group), the product of a coalition between law enforcement agencies and a diverse array of faith groups, ethnic groups, and other identity groups that are the target of hate crimes.

The JCRC does not focus solely on long-term solutions to challenges facing our community – current events often demand immediate responses as well. That is why, for instance, we jumped into action along with DC Councilmember Charles Allen, Rev. Thomas Bowan of the Mayor's Office, and local rabbis like Rabbi Hannah Spiro to ensure proper system-wide response to a librarian at Walker Elementary School leading Holocaust "reenactments" with third graders.





Maryland

At the state level, the JCRC successfully advocated on a range of critically important public policy issues, from banning ghost guns to expanding abortion access to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. At the local level, we successfully lobbied the Montgomery County Council to increase security funding from \$700,00 to \$800,000 for all faith-based institutions at risk for hate crimes. We also successfully lobbied the Council to oppose a bill that would have cut Kemp Mill's Orthodox community off from the rest of the Jewish community in District 6.

Our legislative advocacy webinar series, "Legislatively Speaking," gave constituents the chance to connect with their elected officials at the federal, state and county level to discuss the issues they care about. Nearly 200 participants joined us online over the course of December 2021 and January 2022 along with Montgomery County Council Vice President Gabe Albornoz; Maryland State Delegate Eric Luedtke; U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen; and U.S. Representatives Jamie Raskin, John Sarbanes, and David Trone.

Next, nearly two dozen candidate forums between March and July gave constituents the opportunity to hear from candidates running for governor, comptroller, attorney general, Montgomery county executive and US Congressional District 4. The forums, held via Zoom, drew a total of roughly 500 participants.



IN ANNAPOLIS, THE JCRC SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED FOR:

\$10 MILLION

for the BOOST program

\$7 MILLION
security dollars
for synagogues,
schools and
childcare centers


Nearly
\$1 MILLION
in funding for our
non-sectarian social
service agencies to
meet the needs of
our most vulnerable
residents



\$600,000
for the inclusive
sports complex for
the Bender Jewish
Community Center's
special needs camp

\$600,000
for the Hebrew
Home's Revitz House
infrastructure upgrade

Candidate Forum
JCRC'S MEET & GREET SERIES

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 8:30 AM

Featuring  Wes Moore
Governatorial Candidate

Montgomery County Executive Candidates Forum

Thursday, May 5, 8:30 AM

Featuring  Marc Elrich
Democrat




JCRC Presents: Maryland's 4th Congressional District

Thursday, June 9 8:30 AM  Glenn Ivey
Democrat

Thursday, June 30 8:30 AM  Donna Edwards
Democrat

Tuesday, July 5 8:30 AM  Angela Angel
Democrat






Virginia

The JCRC secured funding for three community priorities in the Commonwealth's budget: Virginia's Combating Hate Crimes Security Grant (\$1.5 million per year for the next two years); the Jewish Social Service Association (JSSA) program caring for Holocaust survivors and other elderly people who have experienced trauma (\$200,000 per year for the next two years); and the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes (JFGH) MOST program in Loudoun County (\$89,000 per year for the next two years).

In addition to securing funding necessary to support critical programs serving the Jewish community, we advocated for policies that impact not only Jewish constituents but the Commonwealth as a whole. For instance, we teamed up with the Northern Virginia Housing Coalition to advocate for increased funding for affordable housing in the Fairfax County Budget. After many years of advocacy by the JCRC and other partners, the General Assembly also took up a bill limiting the use of solitary confinement in Virginia's prison system. The bill was turned into a study, through which the General Assembly is seeking more information about the use of solitary confinement in Virginia for when it takes up the issue again in the next session. Finally, the JCRC also blocked numerous efforts to roll back gun safety measures and protections for access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare.



SECURITY GRANTS AWARDED INCLUDED:

\$81,000

Sha'are Shalom

\$74,078

Gesher Jewish Day School

\$70,746

Pozetz JCC of Northern Virginia

\$65,000

Beth Chaverim Reform Congregation

\$14,799

Olam Tikvah



2022 was the first year of implementation of Virginia's Combating Hate Crimes Security Grant. We connected six different Jewish agencies within three jurisdictions to bring over \$350,000 to the region for improved security infrastructure and training.



Meaningful Opportunities for Successful Transitions (MOST) is a one-year, individualized program of JFGH designed to help individuals with disabilities successfully transition into the adult community.

It focuses on training in three domains:

- **Self-sufficiency**
(self-help, independent living, and safety skills)
- **Community**
(social skills, transportation, and recreation)
- **Vocation**
(employment, education, vocational training and day habilitation)

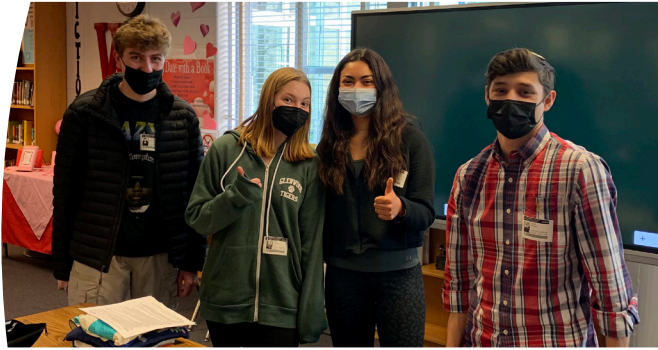


"Thank you so much to JCRC for all of your support. When I think of all the issues that are so important to us . . . about your priorities and your advocacy, it just reminded me how important your advocacy is and you always have been consistent advocates for all of our shared values. We're just really appreciative of your partnership and appreciative of all that you are able to do to help us continue the fight to continue all our progress."

– Rep. Eileen Filler-Corn (D – Virginia), former Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates



COMBATING ANTISEMITISM



Elliot Bramson, Annie Goldman, Amelia Diaz and Daniel Hutman are among the teens trained and supported by the JCRC who have served as ambassadors of the Jewish American experience at school trainings and peer education programs.



JCRC Director of Education Programs and Services Sara Winkelman (back row center) with participants in a JCRC interfaith event held at a Sikh temple.

The documented rise in antisemitism and antisemitic incidents in America received a lot of press in 2022. Combating antisemitism through education and engagement has long been a strategic priority of the JCRC, and we intensified our efforts this year in multiple ways.

The JCRC worked closely with ADL regional education staff to craft training materials that explore who Jewish students are today, what antisemitism is, and ways to make our schools more inclusive for all. We did trainings in the Fairfax County and Loudoun County Public School systems in Virginia and the DC Public School system as well; and we already expanded to Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland for the 2023 calendar year and have a training scheduled for Arlington Public Schools in Virginia as well.

In tandem with this, in an effort to ensure Judaism, antisemitism, and Israel are appropriately discussed in social studies classes, the JCRC worked with the Institute for Curriculum Studies (ICS) to submit comments to the several jurisdictions in our area that are currently revising social studies curricula. In DC, 32 of our requested 34 edits were accepted, while in Virginia they were still being processed by the end of 2022.

“Three things I learned from this training are: defining Jewish as a multiracial ethno-religion; the three largest Jewish communities; [and that] 80% of Jews consider Israel part of their Jewish identity.”

[The] student session was fantastic; students provided us with rich experience and data and I look forward to connecting with the students again.”

– Feedback from equity staff after ADL/JCRC training

“Very insightful presentation. I love that students our age are brought to speak and share their own experiences – it makes me feel like I can relate to them a lot more given that they are in my age range. Having students who practice different branches also helps a lot in being able to see that there are many ways to practice Judaism.”

– Audience feedback from student

“I think the conversation about the specific acts of antisemitism visited upon the students talking to us left an impression on all of my students (and me, as well) since they have been brought up in a world where that kind of hate doesn’t exist . . . They learned about the Holocaust in Social Studies and Language Arts classes but that’s history to them, not something that still exists. Those stories are important for our students to hear because someday they are going to be part of the solution!”

I was actually surprised to hear that young people today are still experiencing antisemitism. It’s appalling and I applaud your organization for trying to raise awareness of it!”

– Audience feedback from teacher



Program Spotlight: Student to Student

Student to Student (STS) is a high school peer education program that strives to reduce prejudice and bigotry and fosters understanding among peers. It brings together Jewish students from different backgrounds and trains them to talk in public and independent schools about their lives as Jewish teens, facilitating peer-to-peer discussions that put a human face on Judaism in an effort to dismantle antisemitism. Since this is a presentation by students for students, it is not perceived as “just another lecture.” It resonates with the students and creates more of an informal discussion where questions are encouraged.

STS IN 2022:
84
Presenters

55
Presentations,
of which
8 were online:

Reform, Orthodox,
Conservative,
Reconstructionist,
Chabad and Humanist

Jewish teens from
39 high schools
in DC, Maryland and
Virginia participated

1800
Students, teachers and/
or community members
among this year’s
audiences



ISRAEL ACTION CENTER



In 2022, the JCRC's Dr. Stuart Lessans Israel Action Center (IAC) hosted more briefings and conversation opportunities than ever before, reaching roughly 2,000 community members and featuring exclusive meetings with figures such as Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Idan Roll and Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs Dr. Nachman Shai. IAC events offered analysis on topics including but not limited to:

- Iran
- Regional cooperation
- Political developments within Israel
- Women and minority groups in Israel
- Israel's judicial system
- The multiple implications of Russia's war in Ukraine for Israel.

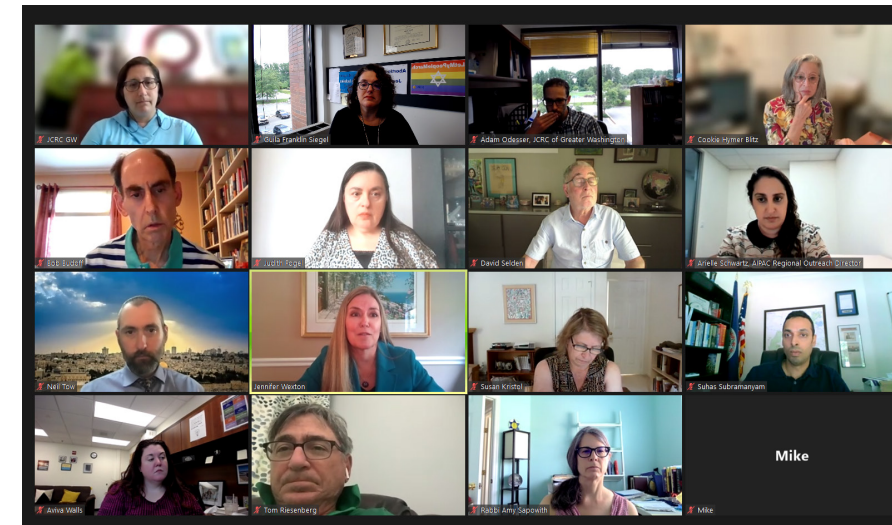
Celebrating its ninth year, the IAC's Israel Engagement Fellowship Program expanded to include meetings with active Jewish college students as well as Israeli and Palestinian teens, and acquiring a broader understanding of antisemitism.

In April and May, the IAC helped organize and host hundreds of community members at Zikaron Basalon events as part of the JCRC's Yom Hashoah commemorations. Started in Israel, Zikaron Basalon—Hebrew for "Memories in the Living Room"—is a social initiative of informal gatherings in private homes: participants listen to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors, share songs, perform readings, and hold open discussions around the subject of the Shoah. The IAC partnered with the Israeli Scouts, the Israeli American Council (IAC), and synagogues throughout the region, gathering hundreds of community members to hear survivors and second-generation survivors share their stories.



IAC webinars, aiming to advocate, engage, and educate the community on current events in Israel, featured an array of experts in different fields, including:

Sam Sokol Orna Mizrahi
AMIR TIBON **David Makovsky**
Sarah Evron DR. ANNA BORSCHESKAYA
Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs Dr. Nachman Shai
 ISRAELI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER IDAN ROLL **Dennis Ross**
 Professor Mohammed Wattad **Gadeer Kamal Mreeh**
Oshra Yosef Friedman Helit Barel



"I learned how to talk to others about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conflict is much more complex than just Israelis vs Palestinians."
 – Lauren Boyett, Israel Engagement Fellowship Participant

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

School calendar advocacy in the fall of 2021 bore fruit early in the new year: At the end of January, the school board for Fairfax County in Virginia voted to adopt a 2022–2023 academic calendar that included a school closure on Yom Kippur and a professional day on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Fairfax County Public Schools now joins the other school districts in Northern Virginia as well as Montgomery County, Maryland, in providing time off for these major Jewish holidays.

The JCRC is not only an advocate for members of the Jewish community, however, but also for the values of the Jewish community – things like education, justice, coexistence, and showing kindness to the Other in our midst. This is reflected in several perennial JCRC programs as well as our responses to current events in 2022.

In February, Adas Israel Congregation and the JCRC hosted a panel discussion titled “What Does ‘Never Again’ Mean in the Face of the Uyghur Genocide?” to raise awareness of how China treats its Uyghur population. Broadcast online, the webinar featured Mihrigul Tursun, Uyghur Refugee and Concentration Camp Survivor; Andrea Gittleman, Senior Program Manager, The Simon–Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Louisa Coan Greve, Director of Global Advocacy, Uyghur Human Rights Project; and Amber Maze, Holocaust Educator and Human Rights Associate, Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council.

Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky, the JCRC Rabbi in Residence and Director of Intergroup Relations, sat on the steering committee overseeing the Montgomery County Public Schools Antiracism Audit. This the first time MCPS has

addressed this issue in a systemic way that seeks to understand and address racial gaps – including reading levels, participation in advanced classes, graduation rates, discipline procedures and staff. The JCRC worked to help Jewish students, families, and staff be visible and heard in this audit. The JCRC also hosted a webinar to discuss the audit and address questions and concerns regarding this initiative and its impact on the Jewish community.

In April and May, JCRC leadership and staff and an STS interfaith group went on tours of the DC Temple for the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter–Day Saints in Kensington, Maryland. This was a major interfaith opportunity featuring rare access to another faith community’s important site. It opened pathways for discussion about the LDS community and the relationship between it and the Jewish community.

In May, JCRC Board Member Marla Schulman hosted an Interfaith Zikaron Basalon in her Maryland home featuring Tobi Bassin, a participant in the first Maggid cohort, as the speaker. The event aimed to engage community leaders of different faiths in learning about the Holocaust and exploring the importance of sharing stories of generational trauma. Leaders from the Hindu community, Methodist community, and other religious groups were among the attendees. The JCRC hopes to expand Interfaith Zikaron Basalon events to Northern Virginia and DC in the future.

In August and September, the JCRC’s “Beyond the Headlines” webinar series provided an in–depth look at current curriculum and learning models in K–12 schools. The first webinar explored the history of and questions surrounding culturally–responsive instruction; and the second webinar featured JCRC leadership from California and Texas talking about recent legislation and initiatives related to curriculum and instruction.

As it has for several years now, the JCRC continued to connect synagogues with relief agencies to sponsor, adopt, and otherwise assist hundreds of refugee families from Afghanistan looking to resettle in the Greater Washington area.

Jewish community member Zander Kuebler shows Sikh children at a JCRC interfaith event the mark of kosher supervision on packages of cookies.

From a Torah book to a Hebrew edition of Harry Potter, an assortment of props help Daniel Hutman, Ari Perlstein and Gabrielle Selmonsky give educators at a JCRC seminar in Virginia insight into their identities as Jewish teens.



HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AND EDUCATION

On May 2, 2022, the JCRC's held its annual Yom Hashoah Commemoration event, in memory of the six million Jews killed during the Holocaust and in honor of the survivors and liberators among us.

Still, as the years pass and our community's survivors age, the events of the Holocaust become ever more distant and abstract. With ignorance and denial of the horrors of the Holocaust on the rise and increased antisemitism documented in the United States, the JCRC's year-round Holocaust education efforts are more important than ever.

Our Dor L'Dor program, which brings survivors and their descendants (known as second-generation and third-generation survivors) to speak with students and adults, has expanded dramatically over the last several years. The program presently has 12 local survivors, one second-generation survivor, and one third-generation survivor, and in 2022 they reached 5,000 people – the JCRC held five separate events around Yom HaShoah alone. At one

public high school that found itself grappling with antisemitism, a survivor with Dor L'Dor and a Jewish school board member addressed 200 students at a special assembly and the remaining 2,300 students through their SEL (social emotional learning) classes.



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Photo by Thomas Hawk

"Thank you so much for this opportunity to be a part of this group and craft my presentation. It's been a tremendously moving and rewarding experience. I feel honored to have been able to hear the stories of my fellow participants, to craft and share my dad's story and to get everyone's helpful feedback and support. This work of creating empathy feels so incredibly important right now. Public speaking in general, and this kind of public speaking in particular, is way outside my comfort zone, but I know I need to find a way to do it because it's urgently and so unfortunately necessary."

– Second-generation survivor who participated in Maggid: Generations of the Shoah



Program Spotlight: Maggid

In 2022, the JCRC also launched a new program called Maggid: Generations of the Shoah to provide training and support to the children of survivors who wish to serve as volunteer speakers in classrooms and other settings. A small team of lay leaders and staff developed a six-week training for adult children of survivors to tell their parents stories. By early 2023, 11 out of 15 members of the first cohort of Maggid had already publicly shared their stories, while the rest of the group was scheduled for the coming months – and the second cohort's training was underway.

JCRC
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL OF GREATER WASHINGTON

Holocaust Speakers Program

Calling all Students and Educators

The JCRC of Greater Washington's Holocaust Speakers Program provides year-round opportunities for teen and adult groups to meet a local Holocaust survivor and/or their descendants to put a human face on the lessons of the Holocaust.

For more information contact Sara Winkelman, Director of Education and Services
swinkelman@jccouncil.org

JCRC IN THE NEWS



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

- **Leaders urge people to report incidents after antisemitic flyers found in Fairfax County**
WTOP News, February 2022
- **Is D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser in trouble at the polls?**
Jewish Insider, June 2022
- **Antisemitic, white supremacist fliers raise alarms in Montgomery County**
Washington Jewish Week, June 2022
- **After Shabbat, we will act': American Jews gear up for wave of post-Roe activism**
Jewish Telegraphic Agency, June 2022
- **Abortion access is a Jewish value': Reaction to Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade**
Forward, June 2022
- **Coach Kennedy being allowed to pray at the 50-yard line is not good for Jews**
Forward, July 2022
- **Jewish community leaders will fight attempts to restrict abortion in Virginia**
radio IQ WVTF, July 2022
- **Council's Antisemitism Resolution Delayed Until September**
Montgomery Community Media, July 2022
- **Facing pressure from activists, Maryland's Montgomery County Council postpones antisemitism vote**
Jewish Insider, August 2022
- **MD's Montgomery County Council to consider antisemitism resolutions**
Jewish Insider, November 2022
- **Montgomery County Council unanimously passes antisemitism resolution**
Washington Jewish Week, November 2022

- **Montgomery County Council passes antisemitism resolution amid pushback**
The Washington Post, November 2022
- **Letter to the Editor: Montgomery resolution against antisemitism excluded true debate**
The Washington Post, November 2022
- **Dozens of Md. pols decry anti-Semitism, embrace Jewish group's policy agenda**
Maryland Matters, December 2022
- **Wes Moore eyes visit to Israel**
Washington Jewish Week, December 2022

COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

- **JCRC's Student to Student program going national**
St. Louis Jewish Light, January 2022
- **New Loudoun County schools data shows significant increase in racial slurs, hate speech**
ABC 7 News, May 2022
- **Swastika Posted at Bus Stop by Silver Spring Synagogue**
Montgomery Community Media, June 2022
- **Opinion: It's dangerous to misconstrue the meaning of a widely accepted definition of antisemitism**
Bethesda Magazine, October 2022
- **Jewish groups blast DC councilmember for praising Farrakhan: sought to 'honor' an 'out-and-out bigot**
Fox News, October 2022.
- **Antisemitic graffiti found at two locations in Montgomery County**
DC News Now, November 2022
- **No mercy for Jews' graffiti found in Maryland**
The Jerusalem Post, November 2022



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