

SB 297 Proponent Testimony
December 4, 2024

Honorable Members of the Ohio State Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ayala Hazan, and I am a senior in high school at Columbus Torah Academy. Growing up in Ohio, I have witnessed the harmful impact of antisemitism firsthand. From denial of the Holocaust posted online to my brother getting mocked in local supermarkets for the yarmulka on his head, these acts are not only deeply painful, but threaten the safety of Jewish individuals in our state. For me these incidents are not just statistics, they are personal. I have seen friends hide from expressing their Jewish identity out of fear.

Senate Bill 297 is a vital step forward. By clearly defining antisemitism, it equips Ohio with the tools needed to identify and address bias effectively. Adopting the definition ensures that incidents motivated by hate can be investigated and prosecuted appropriately, sending a clear message that prejudice has no place in our state.

I urge you to pass this legislation. As someone who is deeply invested in building a safer and more inclusive Ohio, I believe this bill will not only protect Jewish residents but also affirm our collective commitment to equality.

Thank you for your consideration and for taking meaningful action to address this pressing issue.

Sincerely,
Ayala Hazan
Columbus Torah Academy