



Ohio SB. 297 Testimony

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Jason Wuliger, and I serve as the Chair of the Domestic Policy & Government Affairs Council at the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA).

JFNA serves as the umbrella organization for 146 Jewish Federations across the county, including the eight here in Ohio. I am here to testify in support of SB. 297 which incorporates the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. As you are aware, Ohio is home to a vibrant Jewish community, and codifying this definition will help protect Jewish Ohioans from discrimination, hate, and violence. Living just up the road in Northeast Ohio, I have heard too many stories from friends, family and community members who are scared to proudly display their Jewish identity for fear of reprisal given the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents. My own children, the oldest of whom is 16, have faced antisemitism from their peers at school. This bill will send a strong message that Ohio stands united in the fight against anti-Jewish hatred and bigotry.

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is **the** comprehensive and widely accepted definition of antisemitism across the world and provides a clear framework for recognizing antisemitism, not only in traditional forms but also in its modern expressions. In Executive Order 2022-06D, Governor DeWine referred to the IHRA definition as "...the internationally recognized, authoritative definition for use by governments and international organizations." This bill represents a clear opportunity to build upon this work and further protect Ohio's Jewish community from the tidal wave of antisemitism we have seen since the October 7th Hamas terror attacks.

By passing SB 297, the legislature can more clearly define instances of antisemitism, and help our state institutions to more effectively respond, react to and address antisemitic instances in Ohio. This bill will directly address some of the manifestations of antisemitism we have seen far too often over the past year and will send a strong message of solidarity with the Jewish community both here in Ohio and across the country.

The need for action is clear: adopting a robust, universally recognized definition of antisemitism will help ensure that these incidents are addressed consistently and appropriately. Without a clear standard, acts of antisemitic hate may go unrecognized or inadequately addressed, leaving the Jewish community feeling isolated and abandoned. I would like to thank Senator Johnson for leading this crucial effort and the additional cosponsors for their leadership and support.



I urge this committee to advance SB 297 and codify the IHRA definition of antisemitism and its contemporary examples. It is a vital step in the fight against antisemitism and all forms of hate. This clear, consistent, and widely accepted definition will help us protect Jewish individuals, institutions, and communities across Ohio. More importantly, it will reinforce Ohio's commitment to ensuring a future where discrimination and hatred are no longer tolerated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.