

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee, Ohio Senate Regarding the Adoption of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Hello, my name is Jacob Powers, a Senior at the University of Cincinnati studying Middle Childhood Education.

With pride and respect to the self-determination of the Jewish people, I hoisted the Israeli flag at my home, a UC fraternity house, after the October 7th massacre. A few days after putting up the flag, my flag was vandalized when someone threw eggs at it, and weeks later, someone broke into my home, and left human feces on our floor.

Reports were made, police were on scene, and no investigation took place. I had to request security footage to accompany my own personal investigation.

This is only one situation I've endured during my UC college experience.

A few weeks ago, on Nov. 15, I hosted an event at the University of Cincinnati, bringing Dalia Zaida, a distinguished Egyptian political analyst, who had to flee her own country for condemning Hamas after the 10/7 massacre.

I arrived at our venue early to set up and was met with students taping intimidating flyers and stickers all over the windows. They were attempting to scare Dalia, myself, and attendees, and refused to engage in any conversation with me because I am a Zionist (their words, not mine).

After meeting Dalia outside on campus, we were followed, harassed, and intimidated by a group of masked individuals. Needing to call 911, the police came to protect us inside an administrative building and for our safety, took us out of the back of the building into a police car, driving us to Cincinnati Hillel.

The other students attending the event were met by the protesters at the original venue. Needing to change the location immediately, students were followed while being escorted by police on foot, all the way to Hillel.

The hate group stood outside, trying to intimidate students walking into Hillel, and stayed while the event took place inside the secure location.

The IHRA definition provides a clear, comprehensive framework for identifying antisemitism in its many forms. It bridges the gap between intention and action, ensuring that hate crimes like the ones described are recognized and addressed with the seriousness they deserve.

Antisemitism is a real, tangible threat in our society. It manifests in acts of violence, vandalism, and intimidation. It strips Jewish people of their sense of security, belonging, and dignity. The events of October 7th did not create this hatred, but they have brought it to the surface in

alarming ways. The anti-defamation league reported a 360% increase in antisemitism since 10/7. They also concluded 73% of Jewish Students have experienced or witnessed some form of antisemitism since the beginning of the 2023 school year, and sadly as a student at the University of Cincinnati, I am one of those students.

By adopting the IHRA definition into law, Ohio has the opportunity to stand against antisemitism unequivocally. This is not just about protecting Jewish people; it is about upholding the values of justice, equality, and decency for all Ohioans.

-Jacob Powers, 12/3/24