

Hello, My name is Nicole Born-Crow. I am a Jew, a member of Jewish Voice for Peace, and a resident of Cuyahoga County.

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to SB 297, which would seek to define what anti-semitism is in Ohio according to IHRA definitions. As a Jew, I am strongly opposed to the use of this definition and believe it actually makes Jews and all residents of Ohio less safe.

I come from a long line of Jews who fought against oppression. Only my Grandfather survived the concentration camps in his family and came to the United States. Those in support of Israel, those in favor of this bill, those who call themselves Zionists, do not own the definition of anti-semitism and do not get to solely define Jewishness. There are many Jews all across this country and this state that oppose the IHRA definition. Unfortunately, those in favor of this bill with the financial backing to fly witnesses and testimony in all the way from Israel have a political vested interest in persuading you to believe that they are the experts on what is anti-semitism.

Under this new IHRA definition, my very testimony as a Jew would be deemed anti-semitic. Can you imagine the irony of a Holocaust surviving descendant being labeled, fined or jailed for being called anti-semitic under this new bill?

I have spent countless hours, days, weeks, months researching genocide and apartheid, and can say unequivocally that what Israel has been doing in Gaza for the past 429 days constitutes a genocide. In fact, Amnesty International recently filed a report that would agree with that assertion. Why, then, are you looking to create a definition for anti-semitism in Ohio that is funded and backed by a political ideology and national state that has been labeled with war crimes and genocide by both the ICC and Amnesty International?

If you are truly interested in protecting Jewish people and combating anti-semitism, a much better definition would be outlined in the Jerusalem Declaration, which does not focus its definition so heavily on protecting the State of Israel.

I strongly urge you to reject this bill, as it is inherently anti-semitic as it purports to represent the identity of all Jewish peoples. This bill stifles freedom of speech, democracy, and makes Jewish people less safe.

Sincerely,

Nicole Born-Crow