

December 8, 2024
Members of Ohio Senate Judiciary
Committee
Via email to manning@ohiosenate.gov

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OPPOSITION TO SB 297

To Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing as a Ohio resident and concerned citizen to express my opposition to SB 297, which would infringe on our first amendment right to free speech by equating criticism and organizing around state violence to discrimination. Using the IHRA definition of antisemitism in state investigations of employment discrimination, accommodation discrimination and criminal investigations would unconstitutionally infringe on free speech by lumping together Jewish identity or religious beliefs with the Israeli government. It would elevate a mere investigative tool into a weapon to censor debate and dissent.

Not only does this bill infringe upon free speech, but it also permits discrimination of other groups of people. This bill would make it easier to censor, penalize, and criminalize members of our community who are advocating against the oppression and violence inflicted by a nation state, in this case Israel. Constitutional right to speak against these atrocities will be taken away by the passing of this legislation.

We can protect members in our community from discrimination without infringing upon free speech. We can continue to protect Jewish members of our community without also passing laws that discriminate against other groups of people, such as those that are critical of Israel and advocating for Palestinians. By passing this legislation, you are only demonstrating support for some members of your constituency, while penalizing others.

Please uphold your oath to uphold the U.S. and Ohio Constitutions by continuing to vote in favor of free speech and protecting ALL of your constituents.

Thank you.
Jessica Ogilvie