

Testimony for the Record
Submitted to the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Bill 297
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Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony as it relates to my opposition to passing Senate Bill 297.

I don't think there are many people in the world who would refute the horrific things this nation did to the indigenous people of the land we now stand on and call it the United State of America.

As someone who has become more involved in learning about the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank, I have become a student of the history and astutely curious as to what provides the context to shaping such an atrocity in the world.

As I reflect on my own nation's history I see the same happening in Gaza.

Countless massacres of innocent women and children, and more importantly, of people. We ask ourselves how could something as brutal as the Holocaust be happening again? Amnesty international just released a report that concluded Israel is committing a genocide. Politicians in Israel have demanded that Palestinians leave Gaza to make room for illegal Israeli settlements, and they've said as much in plain English for the world to see, hear, and read. This is not a secret. There is no confusion.

We deserve to discuss this without being labeled 'anti-semetic'.

Under the freedom of speech, states deserve to be criticized, especially our own.

Under the freedom of speech we demand the right to organize for the rights of Palestinians, without esoteric laws defined by examples that would make that impossible and deem such acts 'anti-semitic'. This bill would inhibit the people's rights to do just that. I oppose it.

We should be careful in protecting by law what kinds of condemnation and criticizing we can give to nation states and the acts they and their people commit. This bill is unconstitutional on its face and it cloaks the criticism of a country's actions as 'ethnic intimidation'. We have to be more aware.

Without a critical conversation we cannot know the truth and move forward.