

Hello, I am a politically active citizen of Lakewood Ohio (a suburb of Cleveland) and I would like to express to you my concerns with S.B. 297. While I am not scholar, I do have an interest in politics and history and that has led me to consider the Israeli/Palestinian conflict a great deal in my life. I've engaged both narratives of the conflict and have come to find the pro-Palestinian side strongly more convincing, particularly through Jewish scholars like Chomsky and Pappe.

This has led me to conclude things about Israel, such as it being an apartheid state, it being an expansionist state with a belligerent stance towards its neighbors, that it has genocidal policies towards Palestinians and that it is dependent on US support. You may have come to a different conclusion but none of it is a statement about the inherent quality of Jews, or in any way bigoted. And advocating for the US stop supporting these things is a first amendment right.

Additionally, in my own anecdotal experience, most Jewish people I know in my age cohort also oppose Israel's actions in Gaza. I've seen several instances of these individuals taking action to oppose Israeli genocide. While I cannot speak for Jews as a Gentile, witnessing this further confirms to me that this isn't about the global Jewish community but about one small country's actions and another non-Jewish country's defense and support of them.

In conclusion, I think it is clear that this law is not about protecting Jewish people from the real threats they face from violent anti-Semites in this country. Rather, it is using that as a bad faith excuse to advance an un-American agenda of suppressing dissent. This law would censor my beliefs that I formed through good faith investigation and put me at risk of losing employment or public vilification for it. I beg you not to go forward with it.