

Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee  
December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## **Written Testimony in Opposition to Adoption of IHRA Definition of Antisemitism in SB 297**

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

As a rabbi and resident of Shaker Heights, Ohio, I am honored to submit written testimony opposing SB 297. I am the granddaughter of a holocaust survivor, and it is her life that inspires me to fight for justice for Jews and all people. I cannot accept this definition, much as I believe in fighting antisemitism and hatred in all its forms.

While I hope we can continue our bipartisan opposition to antisemitism, I believe that SB 297 will criminalize legitimate use of free speech while undermining efforts to address real and dangerous threats to Jewish people and communities. The definition is too broad, conflates honest criticism of Israel with antisemitism, fails to note the constant threat of far right extremism, which has taken the lives of Jews in the United States.

I would urge you to instead consider another definition of antisemitism, the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism. It is signed by hundreds of scholars in the fields of Holocaust History, Jewish Studies, and Middle East Studies, and was written to “provide clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression.”

I also hope that you will consider instead devoting more resources to increased investigation of white nationalists and other far-right extremist groups, along with education about antisemitism and its links to racism.

Thank you again for considering my testimony and exploring this important issue.

Rabbi Rachel Davidson