

Shayna Solomon, Written testimony against SB 297

As a Jewish resident of Columbus, OH, and an indirect descendent of people who perished in the Holocaust, I strongly believe that adopting the IHRA definition does not improve my safety or the safety of my community. The IHRA divides all of our diverse communities in Ohio and moves us away from a reality where all communities in Ohio can be safer.

There is no question that the temperature is higher and threats against Jews, Muslims, and Arabs have all increased over the since a year, 2 months, and 4 days ago. Personally, for all the occasions where I have felt really unsafe the IHRA definition would have made things worse, not better. One time was when I spoke about my experience changing my views to become pro-Palestinian, as a Jewish person, at a screening of Israelism at the main branch of the Columbus Public Library. The library and organizing organizations received many, many threats from people who were on the side that the IHRA definition protects, not the side it targets. My Muslim co-organizers assured me that this was standard practice for them. Instead of making me safer, calling speech that engages with Israel's right to exist antisemitic, empowers the voices that wished us harm at that educational event and would empower police to enforce (with high penalties) those hateful positions.

So, I urge you to vote against SB 297.