

Testimony in Support of North Dakota House Bill 1527
and the amendment to incorporate the International Holocaust Remembrance
Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism

Jake Bennett

Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Israeli-American Coalition for Action

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Good morning Ms. Chairman, members of the committee,

My name is Jake Bennett.

I serve as Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for the Israeli-American Coalition for Action.

I am the grandson of two Holocaust survivors.

I am also the father of two young Jewish children.

On behalf of my family and my community, I want to thank you for hearing this bill on Holocaust Education. **I am here in support of this bill and of the amendment that adds to it the Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism.**

The American Jewish community has been living through a crisis since the Oct. 7th attacks of 2023.

To put it into focus, in the year before Oct. 7th, there were ‘only’ 3 antisemitism-motivated assaults of Jewish students on US campuses. In contrast, the year following, there were 77 antisemitism-motivated assaults, the vast majority of which were linked to anti-Israel protests.

Some of the students who held rallies in support of Hamas and cheered for “intifada” (terror attacks or lynchings of Jews) apparently thought the right thing to do would be to target their Jewish fellow students for harassment, discrimination and even physical assault. After all, Israel is the Jewish State, so Jews anywhere and everywhere should be targets by proxy, right? Sadly, many of these students *still* do not recognize that their targeting of Jews for crime and discrimination is antisemitic and wrong.

Jewish students and teachers were blocked from campuses for much of the past year, and over 550 cases of antisemitic vandalism were recorded within 3 months of Oct. 7th.

Why have 40 states passed Holocaust Education legislation?

The purpose is not a backward-looking study of history, but rather a forward-looking effort to improve society. States want their children to learn right from wrong, to learn to be “up-standers” in the face of injustice rather than “bystanders” or, even worse, accomplices and perpetrators.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism is a critical element to Holocaust education.

It is the consensus gold standard definition of antisemitism. It has been endorsed by 5 successive White House administrations, adopted for use by all Federal agencies, and endorsed by 37 states to date.

The IHRA definition also has a mandate from the American Jewish community with the backing of over 95% of American Jewish organizations, synagogues, schools and community centers.

The definition is critical to Holocaust education for 2 main reasons:

(1) Because in order to be forward-facing, Holocaust education must educate about antisemitism as it exists today, and not just as it existed in the Nazi's Third Reich. The IHRA definition incorporates examples of contemporary, anti-Israel antisemitism, making the material both current and relevant.

(2) The presence of the IHRA definition serves as a safeguard against the potential hijacking of Holocaust education by anti-Israel extremists, who seek out opportunities to invert the memory of the Holocaust by [falsely portraying](#) Jews and Israel as Nazis or oppressors. We have seen this play out in recent years in California's 'Ethnic Studies Curriculum' scandal.

To pass this bill without grounding it in the IHRA Definition risks leaving the primary legislative intent unfulfilled and creates a real possibility of seeing the Holocaust-education effort corrupted in ways that could ironically boost contemporary anti-Semitism, rather than combat it.

I urge you to please pass this bill with the proposed amendment, and I am available for questions if you have any.

Thank you.