

The New York Times

'There Is Still So Much Evil': Growing Anti-Semitism Stuns American Jews



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NATIONAL Synagogue Shooting Follows Historic Rise In Anti-Semitic Incidents And Online Attacks

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Heard on Morning Edition

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THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

— FOCUS —

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TIME

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THE NEW YORKER

HOW ANTI-SEMITISM RISES ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT

Growing Anti-Semitism
California

ANTISEMITISM DEFINE IT TO DEFEAT IT

an·ti·sem·i·tism

/,an(t)ē'semə,tizəm, an,tī'semə,tizəm/

noun: **Antisemitism** is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews...

STATE LEGISLATION TO DEFINE ANTISEMITISM

WHY A CODIFIED DEFINITION IS NEEDED

- Data shows that although Jews make up less than 2% of the American population, they are among the most likely of all minority groups to be victimized by incidents of hate. The frequency and severity of antisemitic incidents are quickly trending upward. A report issued by the Anti-Defamation League detailed a shocking 67% increase in incidents from 2016 to 2017. A 2015 Louis D. Brandeis Center-Trinity College study found that most Jewish American college students had personally experienced or witnessed antisemitism. An AMCHA Initiative survey found a 45% increase in antisemitic activity on college and university campuses between 2015 and 2016.
- State officials and institutions have a responsibility to protect citizens from hateful and bigoted discrimination. State authorities are often the first to investigate potential violations of law. Authorities must be given the definitional tools needed to stem criminal conduct and discriminatory behavior motivated by antisemitism. Valid monitoring and enforcement, informed analysis and investigating, and effective policymaking start with uniform definitions.

WHAT THE LEGISLATION DOES

- Provides state officials with a standard definition of contemporary antisemitism (see IHRA Definition of Antisemitism) needed to ensure proper assessment of criminal and discriminatory incidents motivated by antisemitism.
- Clarifies state policy to ensure that incidents of antisemitic hate and bias are treated equally under the law.
- Provides state officials and institutions with proper definitional tools for ascertaining the intent of persons who engage in unlawful activity.
- Ensures that public institutions remain in compliance with federal civil rights obligations in order to avoid potential litigation and financial liability.
- Protects against the suppression of free speech and academic freedom of Jewish students.

THE CONSENSUS AMONG THE WORLD'S DEMOCRACIES

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an international body whose members are 34 of the world's democracies. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism represents a consensus definition among those democracies. The state legislation codifies the IHRA definition, which serves as the international standard because it can be utilized objectively to assess various ideological forms of antisemitism. The IHRA's definition is now the consensus international standard because it can be utilized to objectively assess all ideological forms of antisemitism. The definition was developed by leading subject matter experts and relevant legal authorities. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is posted on the U.S. State Department website and is used by the U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, and State. It has also been adopted by the European Union and 20 individual governmental bodies. In January 2019, U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed the Combating European Antisemitism Act into law. This act references the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.



WHAT THE BILL DOES NOT DO

- The state legislation does not abridge free speech. It addresses criminal conduct and discrimination, which are not protected by the First Amendment. In fact, the bill protects against the unlawful suppression of speech, including of Jewish persons. It explicitly states that “Nothing contained in this bill is to be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.”
- It does not categorize criticism of Israel as antisemitism. The IHRA definition recognizes that it is not antisemitic to criticize Israel when the same standards are applied to all countries.
- Support for codifying a definition of antisemitism is not partisan. The federal Anti-Semitism Awareness Act passed the Senate by unanimous consent. A similar bill passed in the Florida legislature unanimously as well as in the South Carolina House of Representatives.

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