

Brian Kresge
Congregation Beth Israel
LD 303

Members of the Committee,

My name is Brian Kresge, President of Congregation Beth Israel in Bangor, ME. We are the state's oldest synagogue, and we serve the greatest number of Jews in the Greater Bangor Region.

Our Board of Directors unanimously supported the legislation this Act will attempt to repeal. We are diametrically opposed to its repeal.

Representative White's arguments are disingenuous or outright incorrect. The legislation mirrors laws on the books in 26 other states, and there is no ambiguity. It is also not the responsibility of this legislation to authorize paramilitary training groups.

Speaking as someone who just retired from the Maine Army National Guard after serving from 1994-2024, if someone wants to join a paramilitary training group approved by the state, one may visit a military recruitment office. We have an authorized, organized militia. We have no need for cosplayers.

White is further out of touch with reality when he has said the Nazis in question "numbers in the single digits." As we saw with Tree of Life in Pittsburgh, it only takes one person. If that person receives training lawfully and then attacks a Maine synagogue, I would be inclined to hold Representative White personally responsible.

The law is adequate as it stands. The attempt to repeal it is running cover for white supremacy, and is out of step with all of our regional neighbors. Allowing Maine to become an outpost for violent militias is idiotic, and it puts Jews and other minorities at risk.

Please end this facile and ridiculous repeal attempt in committee.