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LD 1351

Thank you Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am writing in opposition to LD 1351 An Act to Require Antisemitism to be Considered as a Motivation When Determining a Violation of a Criminal Civil Law.

I am opposed to this bill precisely because anti semitism has been such a destructive force of hatred throughout the world, for millennia. I worry that acts of anti semitism are on the rise Maine. I follow the actions from the Maine Attorney General's office that prosecute acts of anti semitism that are in violation of Maine Civil Rights Act, which prohibits the use of violence that is motivated by threats against a person's religion.

I do not see that LD 1351 will help Maine confront this very real threat. In fact, while on face value, it seems to strengthen the hand against anti semitism, the provisions of LD 1351 define anti semitism in such a way that, if passed, it can be used as a pretext to shut down criticism and free speech. Already in this country the current federal government is using the guise of protecting Jews to shut down discourse, remove people from the country, and de-fund universities. I do not see this change of focus protecting the country from the very real acts of anti semitism. I worry much more that Jews in Maine, the country and the world that will be one of the major casualties of this shift of focus. Please do not let Maine fall into this trap.