

Good morning,

I am 24 years old, I am a public school teacher, and I am a Jew. I am the direct descendent of Holocaust survivors. Despite what it may purport to do, this bill does **not** make me feel safer. At the heart of this bill is a definition of antisemitism that confuses, perhaps intentionally, two things that are very different: anti-zionism and antisemitism. To state it clearly: being Jewish is **not** the same as believing in zionism. Many Jews are highly critical of zionism and of Israel. Thus, it is in no way antisemitic to be critical of zionism. I am very worried that this bill would pave the way to criminalize criticism of Israel or displays of support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Neither of these things is antisemitic, but this bill defines them, wrongly, as such. Especially with authoritarian leaders in charge of the federal government, I am deeply concerned that this bill represents an erosion of the right of Mainers to free speech, free assembly, and protest.

I am not against the codification of punishment for antisemitism. I believe that we need a definition of antisemitism that is authentic to Jewish experience and responsive to the needs of Maine's Jewish population. The definition of antisemitism put forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance does not meet this need. Instead, I recommend drafting a bill based on the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#), which is more accurate to Jewish experiences of antisemitism.

My message to our representatives: Please be brave enough to reject this bill and any other that makes the grave error of conflating antisemitism and anti-zionism. Please be brave enough to support Maine's Jews, and put forth a different bill that uses a more honest, realistic, and accurate definition of antisemitism.

