

Ann Dodd-Collins
Portland
LD 1351

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Ann Dodd-Collins. I live in Portland and I am asking you to OPPOSE LD 1351, "An Act to Require Antisemitism to Be Considered as Motivation When Determining a Violation of a Criminal or Civil Law".

It is not that I think antisemitism is okay. It is not. But I don't believe that anti-Palestinian racism is okay either. Anti-Palestinian racism targets people because of their Palestinian identity or because they support Palestinian rights.

Anti-Palestinian racism focuses specifically on Palestinians' culture, heritage, and their movements for liberation, often manifesting through suppressing speech and activism related to the Palestinian cause. We hear a lot about antisemitism. We hear very little about the Palestinian students, teachers, and allies whose voices are being silenced.

Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition by governments and institutions has been framed as a way to combat antisemitism.

Unfortunately, the IHRA definition has often been used to wrongly label criticism of the state of Israel as antisemitic. Contrary to combating genuine antisemitism, it has the effect of suppressing, non-violent protest, activism and speech that's critical of Israel and/or Zionism. The definition has historically been used to target professors, students, grassroots organizations, human rights groups, and even members of the US Congress, who either document or criticize Israeli policies or human rights violations.

This bill supports one group of people who are being targeted while totally ignoring other groups. It is biased and, I think, immoral. ALL Mainers deserve to have their rights to free speech protected. This bill does not do that.

Please OPPOSE LD 1351.

Thank you.