

Dear Senators Carney and Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary committee,

My name is Demetri Blanas and I am a resident of Bath and I am Jewish and I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak before the committee and share my opinion that LD 1351 ought NOT to pass.

I support efforts to combat antisemitism and I also know that free speech is enshrined as a constitutional right for American citizens. For exactly these reasons, I strongly urge you to NOT pass LD 1351.

LD1351 would adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, which equates legitimate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

Israel has implemented an apartheid state and is pursuing a genocidal war in Palestine. The IHRA claims that criticizing Israel in any way is antisemitic. I couldn't disagree more. As a Jew and as an American, I know it is my right and duty to speak out against injustice. Doing anything otherwise makes us all less safe and flies in the face of our values.

Over 100 organizations have denounced the IHRA definition of antisemitism including leading Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, and others such as Breaking the silence, Adalah, ACLU, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Al-Haq.

Other definitions of antisemitism offer a more accurate and legitimate option such as the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism which has been signed by over 200 scholars.

In order to protect free speech and the legitimate right to criticize unjust actions, please vote ought NOT to pass on LD 1351.

I have included links to points I have mentioned at the end of my written testimony:

- The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism: <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>
- <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210121-israel-is-an-apartheid-state-says-btselem-time-to-ditch-the-ihra-definition-of-anti-semitism/>

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak before the committee.

Demetri Blanas