

Antisemitism in Ohio



A Report of the
Ohio Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

April 2026

Advisory Committees to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

By law, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has established an advisory committee in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The committees are composed of state citizens who serve without compensation. The committees advise the Commission of civil rights issues in their states that are within the Commission's jurisdiction. They are authorized to advise the Commission in writing of any knowledge or information they have of any alleged deprivation of voting rights and alleged discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, or in the administration of justice; advise the Commission on matters of their state's concern in the preparation of Commission reports to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public officials, and representatives of public and private organizations to committee inquiries; forward advice and recommendations to the Commission, as requested; and observe any open hearing or conference conducted by the Commission in their states.

Acknowledgments

The Ohio Advisory Committee (Committee) would like to acknowledge the panelists, stakeholders, community members, and others involved in the study.

**Ohio Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

The Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights submits this report regarding antisemitism in Ohio. The Committee submits this report as part of its responsibility to study and report on civil rights issues in the state. The contents of this report are based primarily on testimony the Committee heard during public meetings held via videoconference on July 9, 2025; July 16, 2025, and August 19, 2025. The Committee also includes related testimony submitted in writing during the relevant period of public comment.

This report begins with a brief background of the issues to be considered by the Committee. It then presents primary findings as they emerged from this testimony, as well as recommendations for addressing areas of civil rights concerns. This report is intended to focus on civil-rights concerns about antisemitism in Ohio. Specifically, the Committee sought to examine the incidence and impact of antisemitic activity, and the methods of effective response, in Ohio across all sectors of civil society. The Committee also sought to evaluate policies and practices intended to address these activities to ensure that all Ohioans are free from religious and ethnic-based violence and intimidation in the state. While additional important topics may have surfaced throughout the Committee’s inquiry, those matters that are outside the scope of this specific civil rights mandate are left for another discussion.

**Ohio Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

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* Concurring or dissenting statements are available in the appendix

Overview

On April 11, 2025, the Ohio Advisory Committee (Committee) to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Commission) adopted a proposal to study antisemitism in Ohio. The focus of the Committee’s inquiry was the existence, impact, and response to antisemitism in Ohio.

As part of this inquiry the Committee heard testimony via videoconferences held on July 9, 2025; July 16, 2025, and August 19, 2025.¹ The following report results from a review of testimony provided at these meetings, combined with written testimony submitted during this timeframe. It begins with a brief background of the issues to be considered by the Committee. It then identifies primary findings as they emerged from this testimony. Finally, it makes recommendations for addressing related civil-rights concerns. This report focuses on antisemitism in Ohio. This report and the recommendations included within it were adopted by a majority of the Committee on April 7, 2026.²

Background

Starting in the 1830s, Ohio saw an influx of German Jewish immigrants, mostly settling in central Ohio. In the later 1800s and early 1900s, more Eastern European Jewish immigrants developed communities in the Cleveland and Cincinnati areas. By 1904, the estimated number of Jews in Ohio made the Jewish community of Ohio one of the largest in the country. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fleeing economic deprivation and religious persecution in Europe, thousands more Jews arrived in Ohio. Over the years, Ohio’s robust Jewish communities created complex organizational structures and nationally known businesses. Today, there are more than 100 synagogues in the state, 14 day-schools, and multiple Anglo-Jewish newspapers.

Antisemitism has a long and troubling history in the United States, including Ohio. The Jewish community in Ohio has experienced waves of discrimination, prejudice, and violence that mirror national trends. Historically, antisemitism in the state has been manifested in various forms, including social and economic exclusion, vandalism, and direct threats of violence.³ Nationally, antisemitic sentiment surged during the early 20th century, particularly with the rise of hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the dissemination of antisemitic propaganda.⁴ In Ohio, Jewish

¹ Meeting records and transcripts are available in the Appendix.

Briefing before the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, July 9, 2025, (web-based), Transcript (hereinafter cited as “Transcript I”).

Briefing before the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, July 16, 2025, (web-based), Transcript (hereinafter cited as “Transcript II”).

Briefing before the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, August 19, 2025, (web-based), Transcript (hereinafter cited as “Transcript III”).

² See Appendix for Committee Member Statements.

³ Gale Research. *History of Anti-Semitism*. Accessed 2025. <https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/political-extremism-and-radicalism/collections/history-of-anti-semitism>.

⁴ Anti-Defamation League. *History*. Accessed 2025. <https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/history>.

communities faced restrictive housing covenants, barriers to higher education, and employment discrimination.⁵ The post-World War II era brought progress in civil-rights protections, but antisemitism persisted in more subtle forms.⁶

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in antisemitic incidents both nationally and in Ohio. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and assaults increased 140% from 2022 to 2023, marking the highest number of incidents ever recorded in the United States.⁷ Notably, the ADL reported a 360% increase in antisemitic incidents following the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, reflecting a surge in antisemitic activity tied to international events.⁸ Data from the FBI Crime Data Explorer also show a significant rise in anti-Jewish hate crimes nationally during this time. Between September and November of 2023, reports of anti-Jewish hate crimes rose more than 300%.⁹ These increases highlight a serious rise in antisemitic incidents, reinforcing concerns about growing threats to Jewish communities in Ohio and beyond.

Our nation, from its founding, has recognized the significant contributions of Jewish people. Jews bore arms in the fight for independence, and men like Haym Salomon were critical in financing the patriot cause. Jewish history in America was part of American history: Jews served on both sides of the Civil War; were part of the great wave of Eastern and Southern European immigration at the turn of the 20th century; served in vast numbers in World War II; and succeeded in business, law, medicine, the academy, and in the entertainment industries.

Jews experienced antisemitic reactions to their presence during the last two centuries, were an object of hatred of the Ku Klux Klan, faced limitations on their immigration even during the dark days of World War II, and were the victims of quotas in academia and the professions in the mid-20th century. But in the main, the United States had been the most welcoming haven for Jews, beyond Israel, in their history.

⁵ Jewish Virtual Library. *Ohio Jewish History*. Accessed 2025. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ohio-jewish-history>.

⁶ Anti-Defamation League. *History*. Accessed 2025. <https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/history>.

⁷ Anti-Defamation League. *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2023*. Accessed 2025.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2023>. “In 2023, ADL tabulated 8,873 antisemitic incidents across the United States. This represents a 140% increase from the 3,698 incidents recorded in 2022 and is the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. In fact, ADL tracked more incidents in 2023 than in the previous three years combined.”

⁸ Anti-Defamation League. *U.S. Antisemitic Incidents Skyrocketed 360% in Aftermath of Attack in Israel, According to Latest ADL Data*. January 10, 2024. <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/us-antisemitic-incidents-skyrocketed-360-aftermath-attack-israel-according>.

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Hate Crime Statistics – Crime Data Explorer*. Accessed March 14, 2025. <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>. Nationally, anti-Jewish hate crime reports rose from 109 reports in September of 2022 to a peak of 448 in November of 2023. In Ohio, reports rose from just 1 in September of 2022 to 10 reports in September 2023.

That has changed. The first quarter of the 21st century has seen the greatest level of antisemitic animus in our history.

Against such a growing wave of antisemitism, community and religious leaders, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims need to join in an affirmation of dignity of the Jewish individual, the Jewish religion, and Jewish organizations and entities. Political leaders of all persuasions must step up and fight the evil of antisemitism.

In response to these trends, in December 2024 the Ohio Senate passed Senate Bill 297 to strengthen protections against antisemitism and expand the state’s definition of “ethnic intimidation,”¹⁰ but it did not pass the House. In this legislation, the state considered formally adopting the working definition of antisemitism employed by the IHRA, including its “contemporary examples of antisemitism.”¹¹ Contemporary examples listed by the IHRA in its working definition of antisemitism include “claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavor” and “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.”¹²

As the Ohio legislature seeks to address the serious level of antisemitism in Ohio, some have expressed concern that the definition of antisemitism in Senate Bill 297 will stifle the free expression of speech in the state, “particularly on criticism of Israel amid and outside of the strife of the Israel-Gaza conflict.”¹³ Although S.B. 297 expressly states that its definition of antisemitism “shall not be construed to diminish or infringe on any right protected by the first amendment to the United States Constitution or the Ohio Constitution,” opponents have cautioned that the bill will silence dissent and legitimate criticisms of Israeli government policies.¹⁴ In the current 136th session of the General Assembly, S.B. 87, which includes the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples, has passed the Ohio Senate but is pending in the House.¹⁵

Violence and civil-rights violations of any kind are unacceptable, and it is imperative to ensure that civil-rights protections are enforced equitably for all communities. The Committee notes that antisemitic beliefs can begin at a very young age and will impact every area of society. In this study, the Committee sought to examine the impact of antisemitism as it may emerge in the following areas: social media, misinformation (exacerbated by AI); elementary-school bullying; higher education; workplace issues; religious buildings and institutions; public vandalism and

¹⁰ S.B. 297, 135th Gen. Assemb. (Ohio 2024), <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/sb297>.

¹¹ S.B. 297 Sec. 4112.01 (26), https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_135/legislation/sb297/00_IN/pdf/.

¹² International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. *Working Definition of Antisemitism*. <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

¹³ Ohio Capital Journal. *Ohio Senate Moves Antisemitism Definition on Same Day It’s Criticized for Infringing on Free Speech*. Accessed 2025. <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/12/12/ohio-senate-moves-antisemitism-definition-on-same-day-its-criticized-for-infringing-on-free-speech>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ S.B. 87, 136th Gen. Assemb. (Ohio 2025), <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb87>.

desecration of sensitive spaces such as cemeteries; hate crimes and the rise of hate groups; and other areas.

Of equal importance, the Committee sought to explore creative and effective responses to antisemitism, including inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, community and individual efforts to increase respect and understanding among ethnic groups, local and broad-based educational efforts directed particularly at younger people, and affirmation of the contributions of Ohio's Jewish citizens to the cultural, educational, moral, economic, and political flourishing of the people and the State of Ohio.

The scope of this project was limited to an examination of *Antisemitism in Ohio*. The Committee sought to examine the incidence and impact of antisemitic activity, and the methods of effective response, in Ohio across all sectors of civil society. The Committee also sought to evaluate policies and practices intended to address these activities and to seek to ensure that all Ohioans are free from religious and ethnic-based violence and intimidation in the state.

As the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, we condemn all forms of harassment and invidious discrimination. We acknowledge that there are many instances of discrimination that may impact various and larger populations of individuals. For this study, we chose to focus on the reported rise in antisemitism affecting our fellow Ohioans who are Jewish, to understand how to try to quell the rise in this one specific form of hate, but recognize that hate towards any person should be prevented, addressed, and eradicated.

Methodology

As a matter of historical precedent, and to achieve transparency, Committee studies involve a collection of public, testimonial evidence and written comments from individuals directly impacted by the civil-rights topic at hand; researchers and experts who have rigorously studied and reported on the topic; community organizations and advocates representing a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives related to the topic; and government officials tasked with related policy decisions and the administration of those policies.

Committee studies require Committee members to use their expertise in selecting a sample of panelists that is both most useful to the study's purposes and will result in a broad and diverse understanding of the issue. This method of (non-probability) judgment sampling requires Committee members to draw from their own experiences, knowledge, opinions, and views to gain understanding of the issue and possible policy solutions. Committees are composed of volunteer professionals who are familiar with civil-rights issues in their state or territory. Members represent a variety of political viewpoints, occupations, races, ages, and gender identities, as well as a variety of background, skills, and experiences. The intentional diversity of each Committee promotes vigorous debate and full exploration of the issues. It also assists in offsetting biases that can result in oversight of nuances in the testimony.

In fulfilling the Committees' responsibility to advise the Commission of civil-rights matters in their locales, Committees conduct an in-depth review and thematic analysis of the testimony received and other data gathered throughout the course of their inquiry. Committee members use this publicly collected information, often from those directly impacted by the civil-rights topic of study, or others with direct expert knowledge of such matters, to identify findings and recommendations to report to the Commission. Drafts of the Committee's report are publicly available and shared with panelists and other contributors to ensure that their testimony is accurately captured. Reports are also shared with affected agencies to request for clarification regarding allegations noted in testimony.

For this study, **Findings** are defined as what the testimony and other data *suggested, revealed, or indicated based on the* data collected by the Committee. Findings refer to a synthesis of observations confirmed by majority vote of members, rather than conclusions drawn by any one member. **Recommendations** are specific actions or proposed policy interventions intended to address or alleviate the civil-rights concerns raised in the related finding(s). Where findings indicate a lack of sufficient knowledge or available data to fully understand the civil-rights issues at hand, recommendations may also target specific directed areas in need of further, more rigorous study. Recommendations are directed to the Commission; they request that the Commission itself take a specific action, or that the Commission forward recommendations to other federal or state agencies, policy makers, or stakeholders.

Findings

In line with their duty to inform the Commission of (1) matters related to discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws; and (2) matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress,¹⁶ the Ohio Advisory Committee submits the following findings to the Commission regarding *Antisemitism in Ohio*. This report seeks to highlight the most salient civil-rights themes as they emerged from the Committee's inquiry. The complete meeting transcripts and written testimony received are included in the Appendix for further reference.

Finding I: Significant disagreement exists about whether there should be a definition of antisemitism, and what that definition should be.

As the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, we acknowledge the debate about codifying a definition of antisemitism in Ohio state law. We are not going to resolve this controversy in this report. Rather than attempting to resolve this controversy, we believe there can and should be a consensus formed around certain types of incidents that do not fall within the realm of questioning people's ability to comment on international affairs, which may include hateful comments or comments based on religion, ethnicity, national origin, and the different ways in which antisemitism has been defined in the law. That said, given how much

¹⁶ 45 C.F.R. § 703.2 (2018).

evidence the Committee received about a definition of antisemitism, we include the below information for the Commission’s benefit.

The IHRA definition has been used in the United States for many years. The U.S. Department of State has employed a working definition of antisemitism since 2010.¹⁷ In 2016, the United States, along with 30 other member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), adopted a non-legally binding “working definition” of antisemitism, which is known as the IHRA definition.¹⁸

Gary Daniels, the ACLU of Ohio’s legislative director, outlined current legislative activities relating to Ohio’s efforts to define antisemitism for the purpose of expanding and enforcing state civil-rights laws:¹⁹

• RECENT OHIO LEGISLATION & EFFORTS – ANTISEMITISM

- * EXECUTIVE ORDER 2022-06D - SIGNED APRIL 2022
REQUIRES ADOPTION OF IHRA DEFINITION OR “APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE DEFINITION”
- * HOUSE BILL 606 (135TH GA, 2023-24)
BROAD PROTECTIONS; MORE THAN ANTISEMITISM; NO DEFINITION
- * SENATE BILL 297 (135TH GA, 2023-24)
CODIFIES EO 2022-06D; REQUIRES IHRA DEFINITION + “CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES”
- * SENATE BILL 94 (135TH GA, 2023-24)
INCORPORATED HB 606 LANGUAGE; PASSED & ENACTED
- * SENATE BILL 87 (136TH GA, 2025-26)
VERY SIMILAR TO SB 297; DOES NOT INCLUDE “CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES”
- * HOUSE BILL 90 (136TH GA, 2025-26)
IHRA DEFINITION + “CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES”

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The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State. *Defining Anti-Semitism*. Accessed Dec. 31, 2025. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2010/122352.htm>

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State. *Defining Antisemitism*. Accessed Dec. 29, 2025. <https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/>.

¹⁹ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, p. 7. Regarding Senate Bill 87: Testimony provided at the time of the Committee’s Briefing on July 9, 2026, noted that S.B. 87 did not include “contemporary examples,” however, the “contemporary examples” in the IHRA definition were added to S.B. 87 and are pending as of March 2026.

²⁰ Daniels Testimony, Slides_OH SAC Panel Briefing I_07.09.2025, at 6.

Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.²¹

The IHRA provides more guidance and contemporary examples of antisemitism following this definition:

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

1. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
2. Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
3. Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
4. Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
5. Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
6. Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

²¹ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. *Working Definition of Antisemitism*. Accessed Dec. 29, 2025. <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

7. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
8. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
9. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
10. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
11. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.²²

Arguments in favor of using the IHRA definition alongside its contemporary working examples to identify and combat antisemitism

Panelists noted that the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples have been widely adopted as a comprehensive tool for identifying antisemitism.²³ James Pasch, Vice President of Litigation for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), praised recent steps in Ohio to address antisemitism that include the 2022 Executive Order adopting the IHRA definition²⁴ and the 2024 Campus Act that requires higher-education institutions to develop harassment and intimidation policies,²⁵ but noted that Ohio should affirm the IHRA definition at the state level, as 35 states and over 40 countries have already done.²⁶ Lee C. Shapiro, Regional Director of American Jewish Committee (AJC) Cleveland, and Marc Ashed, Assistant Vice President of External

²² International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. *Working Definition of Antisemitism*. Accessed Dec. 29, 2025. <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

²³ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 17; Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 12, 30.

²⁴ Ohio Exec. Order No. 2022-06D (Apr. 14, 2022).

²⁵ Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act, 2024 Ohio Laws File 119 (Sub. S.B. 94) (enacted July 24, 2024).

²⁶ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8.

Affairs and Director of Government Relations for the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, further outlined that the IHRA definition and its examples have been adopted or endorsed in 46 countries, 35 states and the District of Columbia, close to 100 city and county governments within the United States, and over 1,200 other organizations and entities.²⁷

Howie Beigelman, President and CEO of Ohio Jewish Communities, Mr. Ashed, and Ms. Shapiro all stressed the need to define antisemitism to be able to identify and combat it.²⁸ Mr. Beigelman noted that when it comes to hate, “unless you can define it, you can’t fight it.”²⁹ Mr. Ashed agreed, noting that there must be consensus on what constitutes hate speech in order to address it.³⁰

Arguments against using the IHRA definition and its contemporary working examples to identify and combat antisemitism

Opposition to codifying the IHRA definition in Ohio law centers on concerns that adopting a definition of antisemitism may limit or chill free speech when discussing Israel’s actions. While the Committee received testimony in support of codifying the IHRA definition as a necessary tool to combat antisemitism,³¹ the Committee also received testimony against codifying the IHRA definition in Ohio state law,³² including the concern that the IHRA definition conflates anti-Israel speech with antisemitism in a manner that could limit free speech.

²⁷ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 12; Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 17.

²⁸ Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, p. 15; Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 17; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 12.

²⁹ Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, p. 15.

³⁰ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 17.

³¹ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 8-9; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 13; Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 17-18; Boris Zilberman, CUFI (Christians United for Israel) Action Fund Statement, at 1; Kenneth L. Marcus, Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law Statement, at 15; Pastor Tim Throckmorton, National Director of Church Engagement and Community Impact for the Family Research Council in Washington DC, Statement at 1.

³² Schaer Testimony, Transcript II, p. 5; George testimony, Transcript I, p. 18; Cole Testimony, pp. 2-3; Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 8-9; Ameer Ghazy Statement, at 1; Andrea Kleinhenz Statement, at 1; Andrew Karas Statement, at 1; Ann Ghazy Statement, at 1; Barry Goldberg Statement, at 1; Benjamin Goldberg Statement, at 1; Darcy Orzan Statement, at 2; David Shutkin Statement, at 1; Diane Sette Statement, at 1; Don Bryant Statement, at 1; Emily Kichler Statement, at 1; Emmy Levine Statement, at 1; Eric Dreamer Statement, at 1; Eric LeMay Statement, at 1; Estelle Raskin Statement, at 1; Fred and Adele Hetzel Statement, at 1; Heather Cantino Statement, at 1; Jack Johnson Statement, at 1; Jan Nespor Statement, at 1; Janos Jalics Statement, at 1; Joseph Liptow Statement, at 1; Juheena Irshad Statement, at 1; Keanan Roberts Statement, at 1; Leila Khan Statement, at 1; Max Petkiewicz Statement, at 1; Megan Daoust Statement, at 1; Michelle Nguyen Statement, at 1; Moshe Koval Statement, at 2; Narges Sohrabi Statement, at 1; Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, Cleveland Peace Action, Students for Justice in Palestine (Toledo Chapter), People for Peace and Justice Sandusky County, and Mike Ferner (former national director of Veterans for Peace) Statement at 1; Robin Beth Schaer Statement, at 1; Saima Hussein Statement, at 1; Sandra Liptow Statement at 1; Selma Osman Statement, at 1; Seth Langenkamp Statement, at 1; Sezny Watkins Statement, at 1; Shaher Ahmad Statement, at 1; Vincent Kuertz Statement, at 1; Wendy Bilgen Statement, at 1; Rabbi Miriam Geronimus Statement, at 1.

Panelists agreed that criticism of Israel is not inherently antisemitic.³³ Ms. Shapiro noted that use of the IHRA definition has not interfered with criticism of Israel in the places it has been adopted.³⁴ In response to questioning about why the government of Israel’s policies are the subject of discussion on antisemitism in Ohio, Mr. Ashed noted that anti-Israel hate tends to bleed into anti-Jewish hate.³⁵ Ms. Shapiro said, “It is no secret that much of today’s antisemitism, but by no means, all of it, is related to Israel. I want to be perfectly clear so there is no misunderstanding, criticism of Israel is not inherently anti-Semitic. I do not know anyone in the Jewish community who thinks otherwise. Certainly, no one in the established organizations of American Jewry think that. And most certainly, the American Jewish Committee does not think that, nor do we act otherwise.”³⁶

Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University and Director of Princeton’s James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, and Mr. Beigelman both highlighted in their remarks that some antisemitic speech can be protected speech.³⁷ Mr. Daniels also expressed concerns that legislating the use of the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples could limit free speech, especially as at least six of the 11 examples appear to address criticism of Israel rather than religious discrimination³⁸ Mr. Daniels informed the Committee that the ACLU does not endorse a specific definition of antisemitism, and instead refers to existing anti-discrimination laws that include religion.³⁹

Juan Cole, a history professor at the University of Michigan, noted that the IHRA definition was originally created for data collection, and not as a rule for discourse.⁴⁰ Mr. Turaani told the Committee that Kenneth Stern, lead author of the IHRA definition, has said he never intended for the definition to be used to target or chill speech on college campuses,⁴¹ yet students, colleges, and intellectuals are now targeted because of speech that criticizes Israel.⁴² Mr. Turaani shared that he believes the IHRA definition is not only counterproductive, but actively induces hatred of Jewish people when it stifles criticism of Israel.⁴³

³³ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 13; Gross Testimony, Transcript III, p. 5; Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 29-30; Naser Testimony, Transcript II, p. 7; Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 18.

³⁴ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 13.

³⁵ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 16.

³⁶ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 13.

³⁷ George Testimony, Transcript I, p. 26; Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 29-30.

³⁸ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 8-10.

³⁹ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 11; 22.

⁴⁰ Cole Testimony, Transcript II, pp. 2-3.

⁴¹ U.S. House of Representatives, *Written Testimony of Kenneth S. Stern, November 7, 2017 Hearing on Examining Anti-Semitism on College Campuses*, p. 6, Accessed Jan. 15, 2026, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/ju/ju00/20171107/106610/hrg-115-ju00-wstate-sternk-20171107.pdf>.

⁴² Turaani Testimony, Transcript II, p. 13.

⁴³ Turaani Testimony, Transcript II, p. 13.

Professor Cole expressed that the Middle East Studies Association has strongly criticized the definition as threatening constitutionally protected rights to free speech, making it impossible to teach history or culture of the Middle East region or the Arab-Israeli conflict, and undermining academic freedom for professors to determine the discourse, tools, and methods of analysis for topics within their field.⁴⁴ He also cautioned against regulating speech about international affairs that American ethnic groups disagree on, as it will not be productive and distracts from addressing bigotry in Ohio.⁴⁵

Referring to understandable fear and concern of Jewish Ohioans, Mr. Daniels recommended it was preferable to develop narrower definitions of antisemitism; increase education about the effects of discrimination, certain speech, and actions; and develop spaces for connection as better tools for addressing antisemitism than codifying the IHRA definition.⁴⁶

Professor George agreed with Mr. Daniels, noting that he is concerned about legislating vague or overbroad definitions of antisemitism due to free speech protections.⁴⁷ But Professor George strongly believes civil society, rather than government, can call out antisemitism using definitions like the IHRA definition.⁴⁸

There are multiple frameworks for addressing antisemitism

Dayan Gross, Director of Development at the Maltz Museum for Jewish Heritage, noted human-rights activist Natan Sharanky’s three Ds of delegitimization, double standards, and demonization as a useful framework for recognizing antisemitism, in which delegitimization denies the right to self-determination, double-standards hold Israel to different standards than other nations, and demonization echoes historic antisemitic tropes.⁴⁹

In one of her comments to the Committee, Aliza Weidenbaum stated the matter simply: “The law does not need to define the term ‘antisemitism’ at all. The committee has the opportunity to care about anti-Jewish sentiment (& discrimination) by saying this: ‘When we mean anti-Jewish, we should say ‘anti-Jewish.’ That’s simple, clear, accurate, non-confusing, & non-politicizing.”⁵⁰

Multiple panelists argued against codifying a definition of antisemitism in Ohio law, urging instead that Ohio rely on existing anti-discrimination laws to combat antisemitism.⁵¹ Robin Beth

⁴⁴ Cole Testimony, Transcript II, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵ Cole Testimony, Transcript II, pp. 30-31.

⁴⁶ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, p. 11.

⁴⁷ George Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 18-19, 24.

⁴⁸ George Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 18-19, 24.

⁴⁹ Gross Testimony, Transcript III, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Weidenbaum July 9, 2025, Statement, at 1.

⁵¹ Turaani Testimony, Transcript II, p. 15; Schaer Testimony, Transcript II, p. 15; Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 11; 22.

Schaer, a member of Jewish Voice for Peace, noted Ohio already has laws that address hate based on a victim’s race, color, religion, or national origin,⁵² and discrimination,⁵³ that are well-established and enforced.⁵⁴ She stressed, “I hope it was clear that I think that protecting the discourse around Israel and Palestine will ultimately help Jewish communities, allowing us to parse these differences and untangle these connotations can ultimately serve to clarify and dismantle antisemitism as well as other related bigotries.”⁵⁵

Khalid Turaani, Executive Director of CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) - Ohio, said that if there has to be a legislated definition of antisemitism, he would recommend the Committee consider the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism.⁵⁶

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism is:

Definition

Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).

Guidelines

A. General

1. It is racist to essentialize (treat a character trait as inherent) or to make sweeping negative generalizations about a given population. What is true of racism in general is true of antisemitism in particular.
2. What is particular in classic antisemitism is the idea that Jews are linked to the forces of evil. This stands at the core of many anti-Jewish fantasies, such as the idea of a Jewish conspiracy in which “the Jews” possess hidden power that they use to promote their own collective agenda at the expense of other people. This linkage between Jews and evil continues in the present: in the fantasy that “the Jews” control governments with a “hidden hand,” that they own the banks, control the media, act as “a state within a state,” and are responsible for spreading disease (such as Covid-19). All these features can be instrumentalized by different (and even antagonistic) political causes.
3. Antisemitism can be manifested in words, visual images, and deeds. Examples of antisemitic words include utterances that all Jews are wealthy, inherently stingy, or unpatriotic. In antisemitic caricatures,

⁵² Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2927.12 (LexisNexis 2025).

⁵³ Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 4112.02 (LexisNexis 2021).

⁵⁴ Schaer Testimony, Transcript II, p. 15.

⁵⁵ Schaer Testimony, Transcript II, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Turaani Testimony, Transcript II, p. 15.

Jews are often depicted as grotesque, with big noses and associated with wealth. Examples of antisemitic deeds are: assaulting someone because she or he is Jewish, attacking a synagogue, daubing swastikas on Jewish graves, or refusing to hire or promote people because they are Jewish.

4. Antisemitism can be direct or indirect, explicit or coded. For example, “The Rothschilds control the world” is a coded statement about the alleged power of “the Jews” over banks and international finance. Similarly, portraying Israel as the ultimate evil or grossly exaggerating its actual influence can be a coded way of racializing and stigmatizing Jews. In many cases, identifying coded speech is a matter of context and judgement, taking account of these guidelines.
5. Denying or minimizing the Holocaust by claiming that the deliberate Nazi genocide of the Jews did not take place, or that there were no extermination camps or gas chambers, or that the number of victims was a fraction of the actual total, is antisemitic.

B. Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are antisemitic

6. Applying the symbols, images and negative stereotypes of classical antisemitism (see guidelines 2 and 3) to the State of Israel.
7. Holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel’s conduct or treating Jews, simply because they are Jewish, as agents of Israel.
8. Requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism (for example, at a political meeting).
9. Assuming that non-Israeli Jews, simply because they are Jews, are necessarily more loyal to Israel than to their own countries.
10. Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality.

C. Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are not antisemitic

(whether or not one approves of the view or action)

11. Supporting the Palestinian demand for justice and the full grant of their political, national, civil and human rights, as encapsulated in international law.
12. Criticizing or opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism, or arguing for a variety of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. It is not antisemitic to support arrangements that accord full equality to all inhabitants “between the river and the

sea,” whether in two states, a binational state, unitary democratic state, federal state, or in whatever form.

13. Evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state. This includes its institutions and founding principles. It also includes its policies and practices, domestic and abroad, such as the conduct of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, the role Israel plays in the region, or any other way in which, as a state, it influences events in the world. It is not antisemitic to point out systematic racial discrimination. In general, the same norms of debate that apply to other states and to other conflicts over national self-determination apply in the case of Israel and Palestine. Thus, even if contentious, it is not antisemitic, in and of itself, to compare Israel with other historical cases, including settler-colonialism or apartheid.
14. Boycott, divestment and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.
15. Political speech does not have to be measured, proportional, tempered, or reasonable to be protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments. Criticism that some may see as excessive or contentious, or as reflecting a “double standard,” is not, in and of itself, antisemitic. In general, the line between antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech is different from the line between unreasonable and reasonable speech.⁵⁷

Responding to a question about whether the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA) could be a useful definition instead of the IHRA definition, Mr. Ashed strongly disagreed, noting that the JDA’s acceptance of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement as not antisemitic conflicts with recent AJC and ADL data that Americans believe the BDS movement is antisemitic.⁵⁸ Ms. Shapiro,⁵⁹ Mr. Beigelman,⁶⁰ and Mr. Pasch⁶¹ agreed that the JDA definition should not supplant the IHRA definition, with both Mr. Pasch and Mr. Beigelman highlighting that the IHRA definition became attacked as a tool to quell free speech only after the October 7, 2023 attack in Israel.⁶²

⁵⁷ Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism. *Definition and Guidelines*. <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>. Accessed January 12, 2026.

⁵⁸ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 22.

⁵⁹ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁰ Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, p. 22.

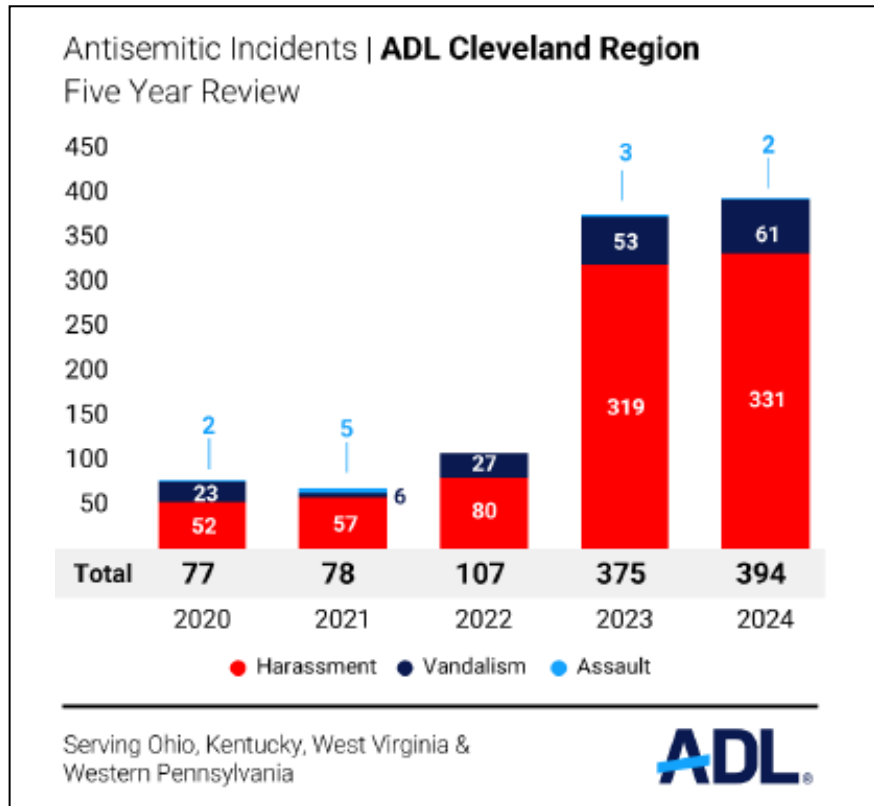
⁶¹ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 22.

⁶² Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, p. 22; Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 22.

Finding II: Antisemitism is increasing in Ohio.

Panelists agree that antisemitism is increasing in Ohio.⁶³ To understand the scale of the issue in Ohio, Mr. Pasch observed that “Ohio is home to approximately 147,700 Jewish residents representing just 1.3% of our state’s population.”⁶⁴ **Nationally, Jewish people make up 2% of the American population, but were the target of 70% of all religiously motivated hate crimes in 2024, the highest level since collection on this data began by the FBI in 1991.**⁶⁵

Mr. Pasch and Mr. Ashed noted that the current trends of increasing antisemitism began before the October 7, 2023 attack in Israel.⁶⁶ Ms. Shapiro referred to incidents on Cleveland’s high-school athletic fields, Nazis marching in Columbus, and the desecration of cemeteries in Cincinnati.⁶⁷ Referring to his prior role as the Midwest Regional Director of the ADL from 2019 through early 2023, Mr. Pasch noted that “in the state of Ohio, there was one constant in those four years, which was that each year we broke the prior year’s historical record in the state of anti-Semitic incidents of assault, harassment, and vandalism.”⁶⁸ After the October 7, 2023 attack in Israel, panelists noted antisemitism surged in Ohio.⁶⁹



⁶³ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, p. 7; Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, p. 14.

⁶⁴ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7.

⁶⁵ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 10.

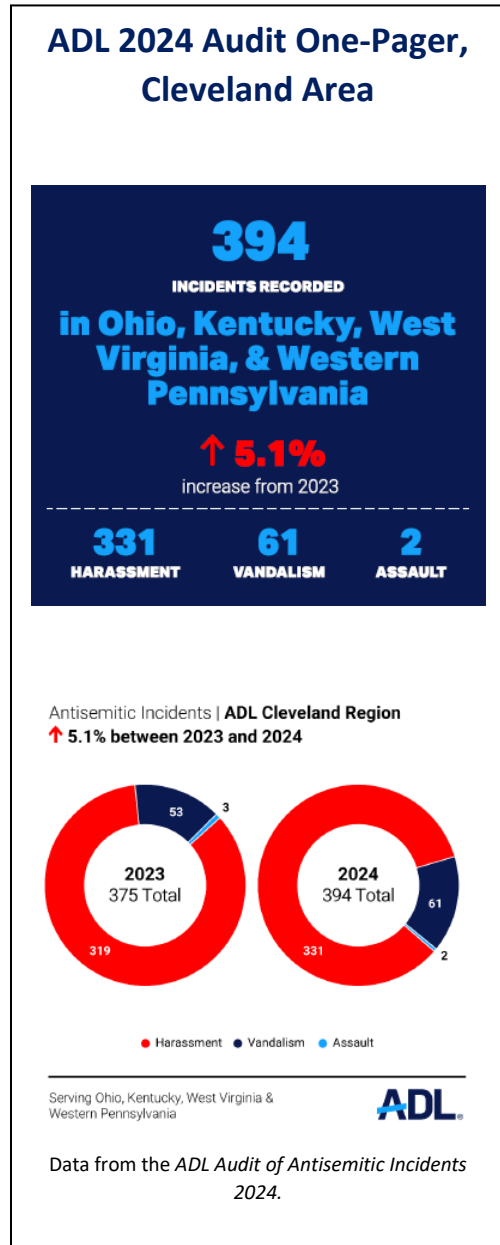
⁶⁶ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 6, 19; Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁷ Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 6.

⁶⁹ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 10.

Mr. Ashed noted that, “While American Jews and Ohio Jews were reeling with the devastating images and videos coming out of Israel, the campaign against Israel and against the Jewish community had already begun. Two days later, across Ohio were rallies, protesting Israel’s actions that had yet to occur and labeling Israel’s anticipated response, a genocide, before any action was taken.”⁷⁰



When asked about who was organizing the response, Mr. Ashed shared, “the most specific example is, Students for Justice in Palestine, which is the organizing umbrella of Palestinian activism on college campuses, had a toolkit that they released on October 8th of how to essentially actionize the actions of October 7th on American campuses.”⁷¹ Mr. Pasch shared that rates of antisemitism rose from 61 antisemitic incidents reported to ADL in 2022, to 237 incidents in 2023, and 233 incidents in 2024, representing a 282% increase from 2022 to 2024.⁷²

Ohio’s trends mirrored increasing rates nationally, with 9,354 national incidents of assault, harassment, and vandalism reported to ADL in 2024, a 344% increase over the previous five years.⁷³ Mr. Pasch mentioned that 2024 was the worst year for antisemitic incidents since ADL started tracking incidents over four decades ago.⁷⁴ Ms. Schaer observed that there is disagreement in accepting ADL’s reporting, noting that Jewish Currents magazine concluded that the ADL’s data includes anti-

⁷⁰ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 16.

⁷¹ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 21.

⁷² Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>, Accessed Jan. 30, 2026.

⁷³ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7.

Zionist data in a way that skews data about antisemitism.⁷⁵

In January 2024, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights opened a Title VI Shared Ancestry Investigation at Ohio State University relating to allegations that the University failed to respond to antisemitic incidents on campus.⁷⁶ In April 2024, ADL joined with StandWithUs and the Louis D. Brandeis Center to submit a formal complaint to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights against Ohio State University, alleging “the university has failed to address the severe discrimination and harassment of Jewish and Israeli students following the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel, which fostered “a hostile antisemitic environment that is now pervasive” at Ohio State.”⁷⁷

Mr. Pasch noted that the incidents on campus are related to actions, not speech.⁷⁸ Mr. Pasch mentioned that two Jewish students were assaulted steps outside of Ohio State University in November 2023, with one student sustaining a fractured jaw, the other a fractured nose, and the assailant pleading guilty in August, 2025 to violating the Federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act.⁷⁹

The ADL provided information in response to the Committee’s questions about antisemitic incidents in Ohio, which includes data related to other states in ADL’s Cleveland Region reporting area. Incidents tracked are primarily harassment in nature, followed by vandalism, then assault, and, in its list of each incident corresponding to its map, ADL tracks whether the incident relates to anti-Israel or anti-Zionism.⁸⁰

ADL reports indicate that rate of antisemitic incidents related to assaults has increased in the past ten years: ⁸¹

⁷⁵ Schaer Testimony, Transcript II, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; The Columbus Dispatch, *Ohio State under investigation by Department of Education for antisemitism allegations*, Jan. 24, 2024, <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/education/2024/01/24/ohio-state-under-federal-investigation-for-antisemitism-complaint/72336345007/>, Accessed Jan. 15, 2026; U.S. Department of Education, *List of Open Title VI Shared Ancestry Investigations*, Dec. 23, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/race-color-and-national-origin-discrimination/race-color-and-national-origin-discrimination-key-issues/discrimination-based-shared-0>, Accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

⁷⁷ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/standwithus-adl-brandeis-center-file-title-vi-complaint-against-ohio-state>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2026.

⁷⁸ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 7; 18 U.S.C. § 249 (2018).

⁸⁰ <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-to-track-hate/heat-map>, Accessed Jan. 30, 2026.

⁸¹ <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-to-track-hate/heat-map>, Accessed Jan. 30, 2026. Of these 8 incidents, the only the 6/19/2025 incident related to Israel/Zionism according to the ADL.

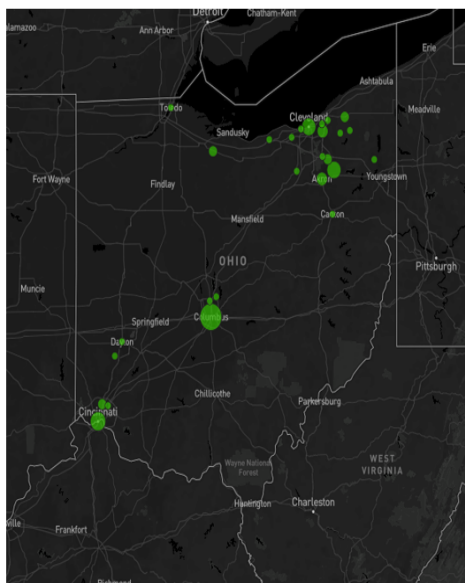
ADL List of Antisemitic Incidents Related to Assault Only, 2002-2025

Date	City	Description
6/19/2025	Cleveland	An individual swerved his car at an elected official on the highway while waving a Palestinian flag and shouting, "I'm going to cut your throat and your daughter's," and "You're a dirty Jew...I'm going to fucking kill you all. I know who you are and where you live."
11/10/2023	Columbus	An Orthodox Jewish woman was assaulted at a pro-Palestine rally by an individual who removed her sheitel from her head.
11/9/2023	Columbus	Two Jewish students were punched in the face by individuals who allegedly used an antisemitic slur and asked the victims if they were Jewish.
10/1/2021	University Heights	Someone yelled "fucking Jew" and threw a glass bottle at a Jewish girl as she got off the school bus.
6/1/2021	Beachwood	Two Jewish students were struck by paintballs shot from a passing car while walking in front of a synagogue.
5/1/2021	Cincinnati	A person yelled "Stop killing babies" to a Jewish person wearing a shirt with Hebrew lettering on it and proceeded to throw items at the target.
7/1/2020	Cleveland Heights	A Jewish man was targeted by a driver who nearly ran him over with his vehicle and called him "Jew boy."
2/1/2016	Columbus	4 people were injured in an unprovoked attack when a man with large knife entered an Arab-Israeli owned restaurant and stabbed multiple patrons. The attacker was killed by police. The assailant believed the patrons and owner to be Jewish.

In the last year, antisemitic incidents of harassment, vandalism, and assault were primarily clustered around Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, but incidents

have occurred across the state in smaller towns as well.⁸²

ADL HEAT MAP of Antisemitic Incidents in Ohio
Jan. – Oct. 2025



2024 Worthington, OH Impact Story from the ADL 2024 Audit

On a quiet Monday evening in Worthington, Ohio, what should have been a routine city council meeting was disrupted by something far more disturbing: an antisemitic, hate-filled rant delivered by a caller during the public comment period. As councilmembers and residents listened in shock, the speaker launched into a vile tirade that targeted the Jewish community with hateful rhetoric and dangerous conspiracy theories.

This was not just an attack on Jewish people, it was an attack on the values of inclusion, civility, and democracy that communities like Worthington strive to uphold.

In response to this moment, ADL Cleveland has continued its efforts to support local leaders by providing resources and training on how antisemitism and other forms of hate manifest – both in speech and in action. We have worked with city council members and municipal staff across the region, including in Worthington, to build awareness, strengthen response protocols, and foster communities where all residents feel safe and respected. These partnerships are vital, because only by working together – across faiths, backgrounds, and positions – can we push back against hate in all its forms.

Shereen Naser, Associate Professor of Psychology at Cleveland State University and Research Fellow with the Institute for the Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism, noted that false accusations of antisemitism can cause great harm, and

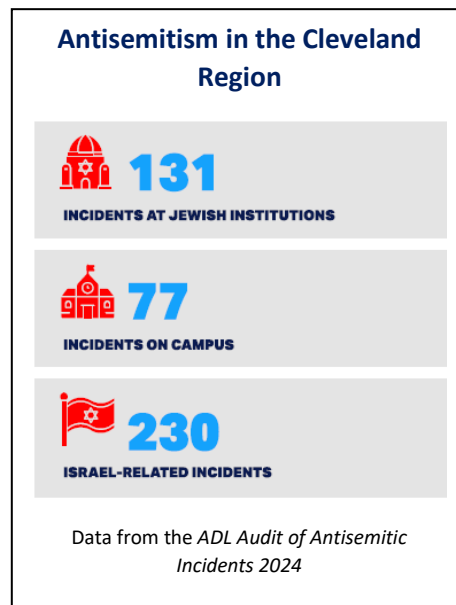
⁸² ADL HEAT MAP of Antisemitic Incidents, Jan. - Oct. 2025 only. <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-to-track-hate/heat-map> Accessed Jan. 30, 2026; 2024 Audit One-Pager, Cleveland Area. Data from the *ADL Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2024*.

highlighted an example in which her students were falsely accused of antisemitism.⁸³

Antisemitism is not confined to campuses

Panelists shared that antisemitism is not confined to campuses, both pre- and post- the October 7, 2023 attack in Israel.⁸⁴ Mr. Pasch said: “It’s invaded K through 12 educational spaces. It’s invaded the workplace, the unions, et cetera. And so, from somebody who runs a team that operates ADL’s legal-response system, I could tell you the [antisemitism] complaints coming in are certainly not confined to campus.”⁸⁵

Mr. Ashed stated that hate displays are commonplace in Ohio, including in July 2025 when neo-Nazis draped a sign over an Ohio overpass reading, “Deport the Jews.”⁸⁶



Mr. Pasch observed that antisemitism has surged, particularly in the digital realm, with hate, harassment, and threats sometimes leading to, and celebrating, violent physical action.⁸⁷ Referring to national trends, he said that “ADL’s 2024 online hate and harassment survey found that 34% of Jewish adults were more likely to be harassed for their religion compared to 18% of non-Jews, and 41% of Jews changed their online behavior to avoid being recognized as Jewish at all, that nearly two-thirds of Jews felt less safe than they did in the previous year.”⁸⁸

Mr. Beigelman mentioned the now-daily impact of increased rates of antisemitism, explaining, “[i]t’s not just during high holidays, it’s every day now, I would say. And that’s daycares, that’s preschools, community centers, college campuses, nursing homes. Jews don’t gather anymore anywhere in the United States without armed guards. That’s the fact of life.”⁸⁹ Mr. Ashed concurred, noting that “[i]n order to congregate in any sort of setting, the amount of coordination it takes between us, local law enforcement, city law enforcement, to mourn, we had a community vigil on October 10th where we had drones and police helicopters flying above to mourn 1,200 Israelis being killed. So, the fact that we cannot gather more than a dozen people without additional security is a fact of life. And not only are synagogues and day schools protected by

⁸³ Naser Testimony, Transcript II, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁴ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 27; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 10.

⁸⁵ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 27.

⁸⁶ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III, p. 15.

⁸⁷ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Beigelman Testimony, Transcript III, pp. 32-33.

security guards, they're locked down. They need to operate with closed doors at all times with controlled access or else those threats we've seen are realized.”⁹⁰

Finding III: Education can be a tool to combat anti-Jewish hate.

Panelists agree that education about hate and discrimination is important for fighting and understanding anti-Jewish hate.⁹¹ Mr. Pasch and Ms. Shapiro highlighted the importance of mandatory Holocaust education,⁹² as there is currently no mandated Holocaust education in K-12 schools.⁹³ Mr. Pasch also noted that Ohio's passage of the 2024 Campus Act⁹⁴ requiring higher-education institutions to adopt policies on harassment and intimidation is meaningful in an educational setting, but more actions to further education about antisemitism are needed.⁹⁵

Mr. Daniels emphasized that expanded education on anti-discrimination, antisemitism, and the First Amendment would all be helpful for university settings, noting: “even some very brief information about the First Amendment on campus to students, because you have some students out there in a public university setting that think the First Amendment means all bets are off. I can say and do whatever it is that I want. And then you have students that go the opposite direction. Well, I didn't know that I could be saying or doing all those sorts of things, but it strikes me it's probably very difficult from a university or campus perspective to talk about these issues, to enforce these types of things when the students themselves don't have a full understanding of what the First Amendment allows and does not allow or can be punished on campus.”⁹⁶

Professor George noted that education efforts must respect freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of discussion, warning that there should be an understanding that anti-bigotry education itself runs the risk of becoming ideological and turning into propaganda.⁹⁷ Further, Professor George observed that education and dialogue attempts need to occur in earnest, rather than checking off a box that the attempt was made.⁹⁸ Mr. Daniels agreed, sharing with the Committee his concern that those most likely to participate in anti-hate, antisemitism, or antidiscrimination educational events voluntarily may already have significant knowledge of the issues at hand, but it can be challenging to reach the individuals who are not already well-informed on the topic.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ Ashed Testimony, Transcript III., pp. 33.

⁹¹ Naser Testimony, Transcript II, p. 20; George Testimony, Transcript I, p. 25; Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, p. 11; Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 14.

⁹² Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8; Shapiro Testimony, Transcript III, p. 14.

⁹³ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8.

⁹⁴ Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3320.05 (2024).

⁹⁵ Pasch Testimony, Transcript III, p. 8.

⁹⁶ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 25-26.

⁹⁷ George Testimony, Transcript I, pp. 25-26.

⁹⁸ George Testimony, Transcript I, p. 31.

⁹⁹ Daniels Testimony, Transcript I, p. 31.

Recommendations

Among their duties, advisory committees of the Commission are authorized to advise the Commission (1) concerning matters related to discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution and the effect of the laws and policies of the Federal Government with respect to equal protection of the laws, and (2) upon matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and Congress.¹⁰⁰ In keeping with these responsibilities, and given the evidence obtained about this topic, the Ohio Advisory Committee submits the following recommendations to the Commission:

1. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should:
 - a. Support initiatives to mandate education about antisemitism and the Holocaust.
 - b. Support initiatives to fund efforts related to education about antisemitism and the Holocaust. (None of the mandates and funding should be to exclusion of, and should include, education about the history of all racial and religious bigotry in America, because students should understand how the issues affecting one minority population are interconnected with other communities' historical experiences.)
 - c. Support the use of existing law, including anti-discrimination law, to combat antisemitism.
2. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should issue the following recommendations to the President and Congress:
 - a. Fully fund the Department of Justice's grant programs, including the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, the community-based approaches to prevent and address hate crimes programs, and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crime Program that support federal, state, and local efforts to prevent, investigate, and respond to hate crimes through improved data collection, law-enforcement training, victim-support services, and public education.
 - b. Increase nonprofit-security-grant-program funding to significantly expand federal funding beyond its current levels to protect at-risk houses of worship, schools, and community centers.

¹⁰⁰ 45 C.F.R. § 703.2 (2018).

- c. Urge the U.S. Department of Education to support Holocaust and antisemitism programs.
 - d. Employ existing law, including anti-discrimination law, to combat antisemitism.
3. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should issue the following recommendations to Ohio's Governor and Legislature:
- a. Support initiatives to fund efforts related to education about antisemitism and the Holocaust.
 - b. Support initiatives to mandate education about antisemitism and the Holocaust.
 - c. Support and mandate Holocaust and antisemitism education, particularly in K-12 schools.
 - d. Include antisemitism in required professional bias training. Direct Ohio's professional licensing boards, particularly in healthcare, to incorporate antisemitism awareness into training requirements.
 - e. Per federal and state law, end any practices at Ohio's institutions that marginalize or exclude Jewish students.
 - f. Create a statewide antisemitism-reporting portal. Encourage a centralized, anonymous reporting mechanism for people to report antisemitic incidents.
 - g. Encourage Ohio's non-sectarian private universities to bind themselves to the same First Amendment standards as public universities.
 - h. Employ existing law, including anti-discrimination law, to combat antisemitism in Ohio.

Appendix

Materials related to the Committee's study can be found here:

<https://usccr.box.com/s/qn5pvgzs79muuagez8je46vkujbj7vs6>

A. Briefing Materials

- a. Recordings
- b. Transcripts
- c. Agenda
- d. Minutes
- e. Briefing Slides

B. Written Testimony

C. Committee Member Statements

- a. David F. Forte
- b. Bradley A. Smith

Committee Member Statements

David F. Forte, Vice-Chair

Concurring and dissenting,

I

The opinion of the Advisory Committee on Antisemitism in Ohio, declares in the background section of its report that “[t]he first quarter of the 21st century has seen the greatest level of antisemitism animus in our history.” In Finding No. II, the Committee states that “Antisemitism is increasing in Ohio.” And it credited testimony that acts of violence against Jews and Jewish institutions had markedly increased, including reports that anti-Jewish hate crimes have risen over 300%. It declared also that “community and religious leaders, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims must join in an affirmation of dignity of the Jewish individual and Jewish religion, and Jewish organizations and entities. Political leaders of all persuasions must step up and fight the evil of antisemitism. Appropriately, the Committee identified education as a prime method for dealing with the rise in antisemitism. With these statements and findings, I concur.

However, the Committee failed to confront the root causes of the surge in antisemitism in the current era, and the intensity of the hatred for Jews and Jewish institutions that we now see. Consequently, its conclusions and findings are mild and prosaic, and even in one instance, counterproductive.

II

To appreciate the dire moral position in which the country and our state now find itself, we must first appreciate how Jews have been part of the American experience and the American quest for liberty.

The nation, at its founding, welcomed Jews. In his famous letter to the Jewish Congregation at Truro in Providence, R.I., Washington declared,

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy

worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

As the Committee noted, “Jews bore arms in the fight for independence, and men like Haym Salomon were critical in financing the patriot cause. The Jewish history in America was melded into American history, from serving on both sides in the Civil War to being part of the great wave of Eastern and Southern European immigration at the turn of the 20th century, to serving in vast numbers of World War II, to succeeding in business, law, medicine, the academy, and in the entertainment industries.”

“Jews experienced several anti-semitic reactions to their presence during the last two centuries, an object of hatred of the Ku Klux Klan, limitations on their immigration even during the dark days of World War II, and the victims of the quotas in academia and the professions in the mid-twentieth century. But in the main, the United States had been the most welcoming haven for Jews in their history.”

Jews in America never blamed the country for the disabilities placed upon them. They never claimed victim status. They struggled persuasively to undo the prejudicial limitations placed upon them, left them behind, and then went on to succeed, contribute, and flourish in this country.

Times have changed. Despite what Jewish Americans have done for their country and themselves, the first quarter of the twenty-first century has seen the greatest level of antisemitic animus in our history, and the political elites of the nation, both left and right, bear a direct responsibility.

The academy, supported and encouraged by the political left, has proven to be a fecund place where antisemitism has found a fertile ground. For decades, universities have divided the world into victim and perpetrator and have schooled students to seek their personhood in racial, sexual, or ethnic identity, and to find the world’s ills as coming nearly exclusively from white, male “occupiers”: categories that Jews neatly fit into.

At the same time, in seeking to bolster their straining budgets, universities have opened their doors to thousands of graduate students, many from nations who have a long-standing animus to Jews and the state of Israel. It is no surprise, shocking though it may be, that so many university organizations and demonstrations erupted in a frenzy after the genocidal attacks on Israel in October 2023. It is also no surprise that universities and their administrations were seen as morally empty shells when the full-blown hatred erupted upon their campuses. It is simply false to hold that evidences of antisemitism were a regrettable occasional outburst from some demonstrators. Antisemitism of the most purple hue animated the campus demonstrations from the start.

Yet, during our hearings, when the representative of MESA asked what that organization was doing to combat anti-semitism in the academy, he disingenuously stated that MESA is only an academic institution interested to study of the Middle East. Yet MESA has taken overt stands on political issues opposing Israel, including support for the BDS divestment program.

At the same time, out of prominent spokesmen on the right has recent arisen an atavistic antisemitism, full of the ancient tropes of the evil conspiratorial Jew. They claim that America is being undermined by Jews, by Israel, and by a cabal that never seems to die. Through mass media and the internet, these right-wing opinion-leaders infect the body politic down to the local community with such animosities. The political leaders of the right, state and national, have a duty to squelch such lies that go against the grandest part of the American political tradition.

Against such a growing wave of antisemitism, community and religious leaders, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims need to join in an affirmation of dignity of the Jewish individual, the Jewish religion, and Jewish organizations and entities. Yet in testimony before the Committee, and in the independent research done by me, there was little indication that religious entities in Ohio are sufficiently engaged in confronting this evil. From the example of Pope St. John Paul II, Catholics have a particular duty to advance toleration and understanding of Judaism and the Jewish people. It was also disappointing (and revealing) that the representative of CAIR, asked for specific ways that organization is combating antisemitism among Muslims, could give no instance.

III

By failing to confront the root causes of the upsurge in invidious hatred for Jews, the Committee's conclusions and recommendations sound tentative, even risk-averse, and inconsequential.

For example, the Committee declined to decide between the definitions of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism.

In my mind, the definition by the IRHA is preferable, for it describes not only classical forms of antisemitism, but also other forms masquerading as political criticism. The definition explicitly excludes political criticism of Israel as antisemitic. Yet, everyone knows that "Palestine will be free from sea to sea" is a call for the extermination of Jews in Israel. Everyone knows that the slogan "Globalize the intifada" is to make antisemitism a world-wide project. The IRHA definition has been relied upon by the Department of State and has been approved by the State of Ohio. We should have supported it. At least, the Committee should not have shied away from taking a stand.

To its credit, the Committee's recommendations include supporting "initiatives to mandate education about hate and bias, including antisemitism and the Holocaust." It also desires that there a significant expansion of "federal funding ... to protect at-risk houses of worship, schools and community centers."

Nonetheless, the universities, both within and outside the state of Ohio, have the duty in their programs and training to right this wrong that burst onto and out of their campuses, and the Committee, in my view, should have made this as a priority recommendation.

Most importantly, one of the Committee's recommendations would undermine any effectiveness of the Committee's proposals and would even lay the groundwork for making things worse. I refer to Recommendation 1 (b) which states:

Support initiatives to fund efforts related to education about antisemitism and the Holocaust. (None of the mandates and funding should be to exclusion of, and should include, education about the history of all racial and religious bigotry in America, because students should understand how the issues affecting one minority population are interconnected with other communities' historical experiences.)

By including “education about the history of all racial and religious bigotry in America” and the interconnectedness of antisemitism with the experiences of other minority populations, the Committee undoes all the benefits, modest though they are, that it hoped to accomplish with this report.

First, the recommendation undervalues the particular virulence of antisemitism today, homogenizing the Jewish experience with others and thereby devaluing it. Second, and most disturbingly, it perpetuates the narrative of the victim and perpetrator, the evil that the United States has been to minorities throughout its history, and validates the kind of culture so prevalent on university campuses of hatred for the other. If followed, it will not ameliorate antisemitism but strengthen the very cultural grounding of it.

From that recommendation in particular, I most strongly dissent.

I am informed that Lee Strang, Chair, and Bradley Smith, Member, concur in this opinion.

Bradley A. Smith, concurring:

I believe that this Report, on the whole, advances the ball, and voted in favor. I agree, however, with the sentiments and recommendations of Professor Forte's partial concurrence, and believe that this Report would be stronger had Professor Forte's approach prevailed in the whole Committee.

**Ohio Advisory Committee to the
United States Commission on Civil Rights**



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