

H.B.30 Factsheet (2023)

Why Do We Need to Address Antisemitism?

Antisemitism is at crisis levels and getting worse, including in Georgia.

While Jews only comprise about 2% of the U.S. population, they suffer approximately 60% of all religiously-motivated hate crimes. In 2022, antisemitic incidents increased by more than 130% in Georgia compared to 2021.

Despite the demonstrable prevalence of antisemitic incidents, one-third of all Americans say they have never even heard the word antisemitism, or at the very least, do not know what it means. That means that many Georgians, including public officials, may not know what is considered antisemitic or not when an incident occurs.

Why Do We Need to Define Antisemitism?

We cannot fight antisemitism if public officials cannot recognize and define it. The bill is necessary because Jewish identity is multifaceted, incorporating aspects of religion, culture, national origin, and ethnicity. Without a standard definition, it is easy for antisemites to hide behind ambiguity, committing antisemitic acts, and then claiming it was not antisemitism because it was not based on a particular characteristic. Similarly, without a definition, public officials who are not familiar with antisemitism may not recognize an incident for what it is and therefore not adequately respond.

Why the IHRA Definition?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism is the world consensus. It has already been adopted by over 1,100 separate governments, NGOs, and other key institutions.

The IHRA Definition has been adopted and used by various departments of the federal government and both Republican and Democratic presidential administrations. It has already been incorporated into law by nine states and endorsed by proclamation in 22 states. This specific definition also has broad support from almost every major American Jewish organization.

What H.B.30 does:

- **H.B.30 ensures proper assessment and response** to criminal conduct and discriminatory incidents motivated by antisemitism.
- **H.B.30 helps to implement valid monitoring and enforcement.**
- **H.B.30 can support officials in applying the state's existing laws** protecting against unlawful conduct toward Jews, therefore strengthening Georgia's hate crimes law.
- **H.B.30 ensures that incidents of antisemitic hate and bias are addressed equally** under the law compared to other types of hate and bias.
- **H.B.30 assists public institutions to stay in compliance** with federal civil rights obligations.

Valid monitoring, informed analysis, and effective policy-making all require uniform definitions. Georgia has a responsibility to protect their citizens from acts of hate and bigotry motivated by discriminatory animus—including antisemitism—and must be given the tools to do so. This bill reaffirms that hate has no place in our state.

What H.B.30 does NOT do:

- **H.B. 30 does not revise any existing anti-discrimination policies;** it simply defines a term and ensures that existing laws will be consistently applied.
- **H.B.30 does not limit or chill freedom of speech** or expression. With this bill, anyone can still say whatever they want, however hateful, about Jews or Israel. Antisemitic and anti-Israel speech would remain constitutionally protected.
 - The bill explicitly states, “Nothing contained in this bill is to be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.”
 - This definition would only be used when government agencies are responding to an incident that is already illegal. It simply assists officials in determining intent.
- **H.B.30 does not create any new protected class,** enhance punishment, regulate, or restrict academic freedom. It provides guidance on how to apply existing laws.
- **H.B.30 does not provide any special treatment for Jews.** This bill is not about establishing Jewish exceptionalism. It is about providing clarity to what is defined as antisemitism.
 - The importance of having a clear definition is not unique to antisemitism. Should other groups facing hateful bias find the need to implement a uniform definition to clarify what is and is not bias-motivated conduct, such concerns should be similarly addressed.

Who Supports H.B.30?

H.B.30 is supported by a near-unanimous majority of the Georgia Jewish community and other communities who recognize the dangers of antisemitism. While the Jewish community is not a monolith and holds diverse opinions on many issues, few issues exist that the Jewish community agrees with more than the need to adopt IHRA. Here are just some of the local organizations supporting the bill, representing tens of thousands of Jewish Georgians across our state:

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| American Jewish Committee | Hadassah |
| Anti-Defamation League | HemShech Holocaust Survivors Family & Friends |
| Atlanta Jewish Academy | Hillels of Georgia, including Emory Hillel, |
| Atlanta Jews of Color Council | Georgia Tech Hillel, and UGA Hillel |
| Atlanta Jewish Community Relations Council | Israeli-American Council for Action |
| Atlanta Israel Coalition | Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta |
| B'nai B'rith International - Atlanta Lodge | Jewish Moms of Atlanta |
| Center for Combating Antisemitism | National Jewish Advocacy Center |
| Chabad Decatur | Netzach Israel |
| Chabad of North Fulton | New Toco Shul |
| Congregation Anshi S'fard | Savannah Jewish Federation |
| Congregation Beth Jacob | StandWithUs Southeast |
| Congregation Beth Shalom | Students Supporting Israel |
| Congregation Beth Tefillah | The Temple |
| Congregation Dor Tamid | Temple Emanu-El |
| Congregation Etz Chaim | Torah Day School of Atlanta |
| Congregation Ohr HaTorah | The Weber School |
| Congregation Or VeShalom | World Jewish Congress |
| Congregation Shearith Israel | Zachor Shoa |
| The Epstein School | |