

Communication from Public

Name: Dre Guttag

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 12:15 PM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: I'm Dre. I am a young and progressive Jew. And I am scared. Something I never thought I would be saying in Los Angeles in the year 2022. In recent years I've watched people's internalized antisemitism turn into outward bigotry. I've watched that bigotry turn into hate speech and I've watched that hate speech turn into harassment and physical violence. The IHRA definition of antisemitism in no way limits fair, reasonable, and oftentimes warranted criticism of the Israeli government. It is not a threat to free speech and I resent the at best uninformed, and at worst antisemitic people, who are painting it that way. The definition uses contemporary anti-racist terms to educate people who intentionally or unintentionally engage in antisemitism. I also serve as the chair of the Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee at the Mid City West Neighborhood Council. Over a year ago, in June 2021, after hours of debate the Mid City West Neighborhood Council passed an RFA asking for more action from our elected officials to protect our Jewish population. One of the reasons for the lengthy debate was the lack of understanding of how antisemitism pops up in contemporary left spaces. Passing today's motion will help people understand things like engrained and systemic antisemitism. It will allow Jews to call out microaggressions that are directed at us. And it will help bring civility and respect to complex and necessary conversations about Israel and the Jewish diaspora. To close, my safety and the support of my community shouldn't be conditional. Antisemitism and how it surfaces should not be a matter of philosophical debate in class rooms or in government halls. Pass today's motion, as it is written, because every minority group should be the leading voice in defining what hatred against them is.

Communication from Public

Name: Khansa Jones-Muhammad

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 12:24 PM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: 11/1/2022 City Council Meeting - Item 38 and general comment. The IHRA definition reads 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-Jewish individuals and/ or their property toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Please vote no on 38. This language is flawed and intends to make a hate crime not only of rhetoric but also of perception ie opinions and would create unequal protections because it usurps the first amendment of the constitution. The trans Atlantic slave trade and chattel slavery, the American Freedmen holocaust happened on American soil. The IHRA definition gets into international politics holding another sovereign nation in higher regard than our own country. I stand with the Jewish community against anti-semitism but this is not the way. When I first moved to Los Angeles I lived at 1515 S. Beverly Drive a predominantly Jewish building and had the police called on me by my Jewish neighbors for a housewarming party after accidentally putting trash on the curb instead of the designated area. Friday night Seder's were normal and disruptive, but as a person raised in NYC with a prominent Jewish Community as a Sunni Muslim & Baptist Christian I understood the right to worship. This experience did not cause me to hate all Jewish people, but the anti-blackness that I experienced as a young person was very real. My mother made sure to give her children hyphenated last names to include her Jones family name as protection against anti-islamic hate. I did not use my full last name until I went to college. So I sympathize. The city allows the word nigger to be used in front of this body with impunity. I strongly support the adoption of anti-hate language including anti-semitism language so long as it is equal and protect all Angelenos.

Communication from Public

Name: Ellis Bahl

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 01:12 PM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Councilmember, my name is Ellis Bahl and I am a member of the Los Angeles Jewish community. I am greatly disturbed by the recent antisemitic incidents and am grateful for the resolution that passed last Thursday condemning antisemitism. At the same time, I am opposed to the resolution to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This resolution would advance a partisan and controversial definition of antisemitism that can stifle legitimate criticism. The resolution would cause painful division within the Jewish community in a difficult time. At this moment when the city is attempting to come together and show solidarity after the racist revelations and antisemitic actions of past weeks, this is the wrong action at the wrong time. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Communication from Public

Name: Rachel Leider

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:36 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Rachel and I am a member of the Jewish community and I've worked in the Jewish community for many years. I am greatly disturbed by the recent antisemitic incidents and am grateful for the resolution that passed on Thursday condemning antisemitism. At the same time, I am opposed to the resolution that will be before the Council on Tuesday to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This resolution would advance a partisan and controversial definition of antisemitism that can stifle legitimate criticism. I know you are trying to support Jews in LA, but this is in no way a slam dunk on antisemitism. The resolution would cause painful division within the Jewish community in a difficult time. At this minute when the city is attempting to come together and show solidarity after the racist revelations and antisemitic actions of past weeks, this is the wrong action at the wrong time. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Asher Kaplan

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:26 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Asher Kaplan, and I am an urban planner, Jewish community organizer, and lifelong Angeleno. I grew up on the west side attending Temple Beth Am, Pressman Academy, and Camp Alonim, and now live in Los Feliz. My grandparents were both Holocaust survivors, and my grandmother, Clara Kaplan, was in Auschwitz as a teenager. Today, concerning incidents of antisemitism are on the rise in the United States. I'm writing today to thank the council for standing with the Jewish people against antisemitism. However, I am also writing in opposition to adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism. Although this organization claims the "Holocaust" name, it is an opportunistic and politically-motivated appropriation of the legacy of the Holocaust. This is a deeply divisive and harmful definition that should not be adopted. Now, I love being Jewish, and I love Jewish people, but loving something means caring about it, and caring about something demands loving critique, with the goal of helping my community and my people be the best version of ourselves that we can. Just as my deep love for America demands that I call out and work against destructive forces of right-wing political actors seeking to dismantle our democracy, my love for Judaism demands that I call out the harmful policies of the government of the Jewish state, which claims to act in my name. The IHRA definition of antisemitism would equate my political criticism of the Israeli government with a hate crime. It is an effort by the right-wing, Trump-aligned segments of the Jewish community to stifle political debate and make opposition to their agenda tantamount to hatred against the entirety of the Jewish people. It is because of my deep love for the Jewish people that I stand in opposition to Israeli policies that I feel are in contradiction with our values and beliefs. In order to truly honor the legacy of our tradition, and to honor the memory of those in our community and in my own family who perished in the Holocaust, we must demand the right to loving critique and political debate, the right to speak truth to power. To adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, to equate political criticism of the Israeli government with hatred against the Jewish people, is to advance the agenda of the right-wing, Trump-aligned segment of our community. Would you adopt a resolution declaring political criticism of the American government, or of the LA City Council,

to constitute a hate crime against all Americans, or all Angelenos?
There are alternatives - this is not the only definition antisemitism
out there. Thank you for considering my statement. Asher Kaplan.

Communication from Public

Name: Joelle

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:29 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: I am a proud member of the Los Angeles Jewish community. I work at a Jewish nonprofit and am involved in the Jewish community through volunteering and local organizing. I am greatly disturbed by the recent antisemitic incidents and am grateful for the resolution that passed last Thursday condemning antisemitism. At the same time, I am opposed to the resolution that will be before the Council today to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This resolution would advance a partisan and controversial definition of antisemitism that can stifle legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy. The resolution would cause painful division within the Jewish community in a difficult time. At this minute when the city is attempting to come together and show solidarity after the racist revelations and antisemitic actions of past weeks, this is the wrong action at the wrong time. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Jessica Marglin

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:44 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Dear City Councilmembers, I understand that the L.A. City Council will be considering a resolution to condemn antisemitism that relies on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition (IHRA). I am a scholar of Jewish studies whose professional life is devoted to understanding the history and culture of Jews, as well as the long and tragic story of antisemitism. I am alarmed by the ongoing rise in antisemitic expression in this country, and especially by the reaction by hate-filled white nationalists to the latest antisemitic rantings of Kanye West. I applaud your efforts to call out antisemitism wherever and whenever it rears its head. That said, I think that now is not the time to introduce into a Council resolution the IHRA definition. The non-binding IHRA definition that is referenced in the Council resolution is, itself, acceptable. But it is important to point out that this definition relies on a list of “contemporary examples” that the IHRA uses to illustrate the phenomenon. A number of these examples blur, in my view, the boundary between hatred of Jews and legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy. I believe that now is not the time to complicate a simple resolution condemning antisemitism with a partisan and controversial formulation. I strongly encourage you to proceed with a resolution condemning antisemitism but without the IHRA definition, which will needlessly dilute the impact of the resolution. Thank you for your consideration. Jessica Marglin

Communication from Public

Name: Wolf Gruner

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:50 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Dear City Councilmembers, I understand that the L.A. City Council will be considering a resolution to condemn antisemitism that relies on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition (IHRA). I am a scholar of Jewish studies whose professional life is devoted to understanding the history and culture of Jews, as well as the long and tragic story of antisemitism. I am alarmed by the ongoing rise in antisemitic expression in this country, and especially by the reaction by hate-filled white nationalists to the latest antisemitic rantings of Kanye West. I applaud your efforts to call out antisemitism wherever and whenever it rears its head. That said, I think that now is not the time to introduce into a Council resolution the IHRA definition. The non-binding IHRA definition that is referenced in the Council resolution is, itself, acceptable. But it is important to point out that this definition relies on a list of “contemporary examples” that the IHRA uses to illustrate the phenomenon. A number of these examples blur, in my view, the boundary between hatred of Jews and legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy. I believe that now is not the time to complicate a simple resolution condemning antisemitism with a partisan and controversial formulation. I strongly encourage you to proceed with a resolution condemning antisemitism but without the IHRA definition, which will needlessly dilute the impact of the resolution. Thank you for your consideration Prof. Wolf Gruner Shapell-Guerin Chair in Jewish Studies and Professor of History Founding Director, USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research for more info go to:
<https://dornsife.usc.edu/cagr> Director, Genocide Studies, Collection Convergence Initiative, USC Doheny Library University of Southern California

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:40 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: I am a proud member of the Los Angeles Jewish community. I work at a Jewish nonprofit and am involved in the Jewish community through volunteering and local organizing. I am greatly disturbed by the recent antisemitic incidents and am grateful for the resolution that passed last Thursday condemning antisemitism. At the same time, I am opposed to the resolution that will be before the Council today to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This resolution would advance a partisan and controversial definition of antisemitism that can stifle legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy. The resolution would cause painful division within the Jewish community in a difficult time. At this minute when the city is attempting to come together and show solidarity after the racist revelations and antisemitic actions of past weeks, this is the wrong action at the wrong time. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: David Miller

Date Submitted: 10/31/2022 05:40 PM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Please pass 22-1241 as written. Every minority group should have the right to define what hatred against them is and be the leading voice in the conversation. That is not too much to ask for. The right to define antisemitism lies solely with the majority of the Jewish people. I urge Los Angeles City Council to vote yes and adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. Thank you, David Miller

Communication from Public

Name: Christian La Mont

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 09:19 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Please pass 22-1241 as written. Every minority group should have the right to define what hatred against them is and be the leading voice in the conversation. That is not too much to ask for. The right to define antisemitism lies solely with the majority of the Jewish people. I urge Los Angeles City Council to vote yes and adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. With appreciation, Christian La Mont

Communication from Public

Name: Ben Ratskoff

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 11:14 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: Dear City Councilmembers, I understand that the L.A. City Council will be considering a resolution to condemn antisemitism that relies on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition (IHRA). I am a scholar of Jewish studies whose professional life is devoted to understanding the history and culture of Jews, as well as the long and tragic story of antisemitism. I am alarmed by the ongoing rise in antisemitic expression in this country, and especially by the reaction by hate-filled white nationalists to the latest antisemitic rantings of Kanye West. I applaud your efforts to call out antisemitism wherever and whenever it rears its head. That said, I think that now is not the time to introduce into a Council resolution the IHRA definition. The non-binding IHRA definition that is referenced in the Council resolution is, itself, acceptable. But it is important to point out that this definition relies on a list of “contemporary examples” that the IHRA uses to illustrate the phenomenon. A number of these examples blur, in my view, the boundary between hatred of Jews and legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy. I believe that now is not the time to complicate a simple resolution condemning antisemitism with a partisan and controversial formulation. I strongly encourage you to proceed with a resolution condemning antisemitism but without the IHRA definition, which will needlessly dilute the impact of the resolution. Thank you for your consideration. Ben Ratskoff
Visiting Assistant Professor Hebrew Union College-Jewish
Institute of Religion

Communication from Public

Name: Michael Rothberg

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 11:24 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: I understand that the L.A. City Council will be considering a resolution to condemn antisemitism that relies on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition (IHRA). I am a scholar of the Holocaust and have worked for many years in the field of Jewish Studies, with particular focus on questions of antisemitism. While I am alarmed by the rise in public expressions of antisemitism in the United States and elsewhere, I do not believe that this is the time to adopt the IHRA definition, which is vague and easily subject to abuse. Hundreds of scholars of antisemitism and genocide have raised concerns about the IHRA definition and have offered an alternative, the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism. We can oppose and condemn antisemitism without adopting or codifying a particular, controversial definition.

Communication from Public

Name: Brooke Wirschafter
Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 10:28 AM
Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: To the Members of the Los Angeles City Council, We write to you to respectfully express our deep concern about the motion you are considering today (motion # 22-1241) that would make the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definition of antisemitism the basis for city policy. We care deeply about the safety of the Jewish people, both in this city and around the world, and we are fully invested in the struggle against antisemitism. In particular, we appreciate the council's concern for the rising tide of antisemitism we have witnessed in recent weeks and years. And yet, we firmly believe that adopting the IHRA definition is a divisive and misguided effort that has the potential to harm our community and create moral ambiguity around antisemitism, precisely when we need moral clarity. The problem is not with the IHRA definition itself, but with its accompanying "contemporary examples," and specifically with its application to criticism of Israeli government actions and advocacy for Palestinian rights. Conflating antisemitism with criticism of Israel government policy does not help us in the fight against antisemitism. On the contrary, it distracts us from the very real threats against our community today. That is why we, as people deeply invested in the health and vitality of the State of Israel-- who advocate for a future of justice, dignity and safety for all Israelis and Palestinians-- are concerned that the IHRA definition, if adopted by the Los Angeles City Council, will be exploited to sow division, silence dissent, and suppress legitimate free speech. We fear that it will create fissures within our Jewish community and between the Jewish community and others in Los Angeles with whom we have worked hard to build and maintain important alliances of solidarity and mutual support. Again, we appreciate your desire to address rising anti-Jewish bigotry and hate-speech. We thank you for taking a stand against antisemitism. And even still: we ask you not to adopt this motion today. Sincerely, Rabbi Sharon Brous, Senior Rabbi Brooke Wirschafter, Director of Community Organizing LA City Human Relations Commissioner

November 1, 2022

To the Members of the Los Angeles City Council,

We write to you to respectfully express our deep concern about the motion you are considering today (motion # 22-1241) that would make the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definition of antisemitism the basis for city policy.

We care deeply about the safety of the Jewish people, both in this city and around the world, and we are fully invested in the struggle against antisemitism.

In particular, we appreciate the council's concern for the rising tide of antisemitism we have witnessed in recent weeks and years. And yet, we firmly believe that adopting the IHRA definition is a divisive and misguided effort that has the potential to harm our community and create moral ambiguity around antisemitism, precisely when we need moral clarity.

The problem is not with the IHRA definition itself, but with its accompanying "contemporary examples," and specifically with its application to criticism of Israeli government actions and advocacy for Palestinian rights. *Conflating antisemitism with criticism of Israel government policy does not help us in the fight against antisemitism.* On the contrary, it distracts us from the very real threats against our community today.

That is why we, as people deeply invested in the health and vitality of the State of Israel-- who advocate for a future of justice, dignity and safety for all Israelis and Palestinians-- are concerned that the IHRA definition, if adopted by the Los Angeles City Council, will be exploited to sow division, silence dissent, and suppress legitimate free speech. We fear that it will create fissures within our Jewish community and between the Jewish community and others in Los Angeles with whom we have worked hard to build and maintain important alliances of solidarity and mutual support.

Again, we appreciate your desire to address rising anti-Jewish bigotry and hate-speech. We thank you for taking a stand against antisemitism. And even still: *we ask you not to adopt this motion today.*
Sincerely,

Rabbi Sharon Brous, Senior Rabbi

Brooke Wirtschafter, Director of Community Organizing
LA City Human Relations Commissioner

Communication from Public

Name: Jesse M Winfield

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 10:47 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: As a Jewish lay leader of Congregation Kol Ami, I desperately urge the council to reject the ill-advised proposal to officially equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. The debate, even and particularly among Jews about the wisdom of establishing a Jewish ethno-state is both a historical and present-day fact. I personally am agnostic on Israel, having never visited. but from my deep reading on the subject I'm inclined toward anti-Zionism. Am I therefore anti-Semitic? No. I am not, and would be appalled and insulted to be labeled as such. This proposed amendment would cause irreparable damage to relationships in my synagogue and in my Jewish social justice mileu. It is a bridge too far. Vote NO!

Communication from Public

Name: Emily Caesar

Date Submitted: 11/01/2022 10:51 AM

Council File No: 22-1241

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Emily and I am a member of the Jewish community. I am greatly disturbed by the recent antisemitic incidents and am grateful for the resolution that passed on Thursday condemning antisemitism. At the same time, I am opposed to the resolution that will be before the Council on Tuesday to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This resolution would advance a partisan and controversial definition of antisemitism that can stifle legitimate criticism. The resolution would cause painful division within the Jewish community in a difficult time. At this minute when the city is attempting to come together and show solidarity after the racist revelations and antisemitic actions of past weeks, this is the wrong action at the wrong time.