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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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July 7, 2025

The Honorable Craig J. Coughlin
Speaker of the General Assembly
569 Rahway Avenue
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095

Dear Speaker Coughlin:

I am writing to urge you please to immediately bring Assembly Bill A3558 to the floor for a vote. This important legislation will establish the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism as law in New Jersey. It is unacceptable that, in light of the rise in antisemitic incidents both in New Jersey and nationwide, that the New Jersey Assembly, once again, opted not to vote on the measure. Now, more than ever, it is critical that the State Legislature pass this commonsense bill and immediately send it to the Governor for his signature.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), 2024 was the worst year for antisemitic incidents since the ADL began tracking these incidents more than four decades ago.¹ According to the FBI, antisemitic incidents have soared since October 7, leading to the highest number of antisemitic hate crimes on record in the U.S.² Even more concerning, New Jersey had the third-highest number of incidents nationwide, 76% higher than in 2022, suggesting a concerning and heightened new normal of antisemitism in our state.³ Jewish communities in Bergen County, for example, faced a wave of anti-Israel antisemitic activity last year. Protesters held multiple demonstrations directly outside synagogues in Teaneck and harassed Jewish individuals, spraying red paint, shouting, "Go back to Europe" and "Baby killers."⁴ Cases like these highlight the urgent need to pass A3558.

The IHRA definition is a comprehensive and globally recognized framework addressing both modern day and ancient tropes of antisemitism. The definition has already been adopted by thirty-five states across America and in the District of Columbia, in addition to forty-five

¹ <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>.

² <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-releases-2023-crime-in-the-nation-statistics>.

³ https://knowlegis.cq.com/file/download/ZLHlaRiCn1e/Top-10_Audit_2024-New+Jersey.png/.

⁴ <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/northern-new-jersey-jewish-communities-face-wave-israel-related-antisemitism>.

countries worldwide.⁵⁶ Importantly, the City of Highland Park, the Borough of Woodcliff Lakes, the Borough of Flemington, Warren Township, and the towns of Margate, Longport, Ventnor, Woodbine, Livingston, Princeton, Brigantine, Middletown, Scotch Plains, Westfield, and Clinton have all already adopted or endorsed the IHRA definition. Bill A3558 also clearly states that adopting the IHRA definition does not diminish nor infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

In May of last year, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed my bipartisan bill, the Antisemitism Awareness Act, which would require the Department of Education to apply the IHRA definition when carrying out Title VI investigations. This bill will give State officials, universities, communities, and law enforcement a clear framework for identifying and evaluating antisemitism, so they can hold harassers accountable.

Hate and discrimination have no place in New Jersey. I ask that you please clarify the following questions:

1. Why was the legislation not taken up for a vote on June 23, despite the fact that nearly 70 percent of the Assembly is already a co-sponsor of the bill?
2. The Assembly has had multiple hearings and opportunities for the public to provide input on the bill. What is the issue preventing the Assembly from taking up the legislation?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter to our Jersey constituents. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

CC:

The Honorable Phil Murphy, Governor
The Honorable Nicholas Scutari, Senate President
The Honorable Gary Schaer
The Honorable Rosaura Bagolie
The Honorable Michael Inganamort
The Honorable James Beach
The Honorable Robert Singer

⁵ <https://www.ajc.org/use-of-the-working-definition-in-the-us>.

⁶ <https://ihra.combatantisemitism.org/>.