

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONDEMNING ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND BEYOND

Introduced By: Representatives Ackerman, Finkelman, Boylan, Shekarchi, Knight, Blazewski, Kazarian, Kennedy, Edwards, and McNamara

Date Introduced: February 01, 2024

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Anti-Semitism, which includes harassment on the basis of actual or
2 perceived Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identity, affiliation, or religious faith, remains a
3 persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in American society; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2010, the United States Department of State adopted the following
5 definition of anti-Semitism: “Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be
6 expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are
7 directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish
8 community institutions and religious facilities”; and

9 WHEREAS, Jews continue to be a targeted minority in the United States and are
10 consistently the most likely of all religious groups to be victimized by incidents of hate. Jews
11 make up only 2 percent of the country’s population, yet anti-Semitic hate crimes accounted for
12 9.6 percent of all hate crimes reported in 2022 according to an FBI report. Furthermore, the attack
13 on Israel on October 7 and resulting conflict has caused anti-Semitic events in America to
14 increase by 388 percent per the Anti-Defamation League’s latest reports, including local incidents
15 of leafletting, vandalism, and verbal harassment; and

16 WHEREAS, Eleven worshippers were killed and several others were injured in the
17 deadliest attack against the American Jewish community at the Tree of Life Synagogue in
18 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 2018; and

19 WHEREAS, The attack by the terrorist organization Hamas on October 7, 2023, in Israel,
20 marked the murder of Jews in numbers not seen since the Holocaust, and testimonies of sexual

1 violence, beheadings, burnings and other horrific acts perpetrated by Hamas have been emerging
2 as Israelis begin to process the trauma; and

3 WHEREAS, According to Hillel International, since the terrorist attack on Israel by
4 Hamas on October 7, 2023, anti-Semitic incidents against Jewish students on college campuses
5 have reached alarmingly high rates, increasing by 700 percent over the same period last year; and

6 WHEREAS, Institutions and community organizations have a responsibility to protect
7 citizens from acts of hate and bigotry; and

8 WHEREAS, The White House has released the first ever comprehensive plan to counter
9 anti-Semitism in the United States, providing valuable tools to inform more accurate reporting,
10 investigation, and policymaking and increase understanding on the rise of anti-Semitism in the
11 country; and

12 WHEREAS, The White House plan includes language indicating the impact of hate and
13 bigotry on all Americans: “Anti-Semitism threatens not only the Jewish community, but all
14 Americans. People who peddle these anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and fuel racial, ethnic, and
15 religious hatred against Jews also target other communities---including Black and Brown
16 Americans, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders; LGBTQI+ individuals;
17 Muslim Americans, women and girls; and so many others”; and

18 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island is home to the United States’ oldest synagogue,
19 Touro Synagogue in Newport. In 1790, George Washington wrote a letter to the congregation in
20 Newport extolling the virtues of Rhode Island as a home for religious plurality that “gives bigotry
21 no sanction”; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island does
23 hereby proclaim a condemnation of anti-Semitism and strongly stands against hate, bias or
24 violence based on identity and remains committed to the principles of nondiscrimination and
25 human rights; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That this House hereby condemns and rejects anti-Semitism and reaffirms
27 our community as a safe and affirming one for people of all religions and identities; and be it
28 further

29 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
30 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Governor of the State of Rhode
31 Island, Daniel J. McKee, the Honorable Attorney General of the State of Rhode Island, Peter
32 Neronha, and the Regional Director of the New England Anti-Defamation League,

1 Rabbi Dr. Jonah Sternberg.

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