

From: [Samiya Irene](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: SAY NO TO HB 2299 Written Testimony
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 2:12:42 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to HB 2299. This bill cannot and should not pass the Kansas Legislature; it fundamentally conflicts with our rights to free speech and assembly. While there are certainly types of speech that should not be protected--this bill does not aim at protecting anyone.

Antisemitism CANNOT be tolerated, and yet this bill proposes conflating antisemitism and any critique or discussion of Israel. This is dangerous, especially for the people it aims to protect. It essentially puts Jewish individuals no matter where they are and who they are on the hook for any and all actions of a *country*--purporting that they are one and the same. THIS IS NOT TRUE.

Jewish people need honest protections against rising antisemitism in the U.S.--rule that wouldn't allow blatant Nazi salute or gestures. Adopting a definition of anti-semitism that is far more focused on protecting the state of Israel, which has been committing genocide for the past 15 months as shown by the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, Amnesty International, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Jewish Voice for Peace, and most importantly the thousands of civilians in Palestine that have been removed from their homes, starved, or murdered.

Critiquing a state is not critiquing a religion nor a people. You know this as many Jewish individuals have written to you opposing this bill as well. You've seen that these conversations are crucial for America's global standing and human rights here and abroad--it's been proven by the huge swaths of progress made in South Africa after global protest. Being able to talk about these issues on university grounds, in community spaces, and while taking care of one's health while masking (especially with the current rise of Kansas TB cases) is vital. It's American to use our free speech rights to seek justice.

It is deeply important to reject HB 2299 for the safety, care, and representation of Jewish, Palestinian, and all other types of Kansans.

Best,
Sam Rasheed
Constituent of Kansas