



Statement Urging Massachusetts City Councils, Select Boards and School Committees to Address Antisemitism without Adopting the Controversial IHRA Definition of Antisemitism:

Definition is rejected by civil rights and human rights organizations; Growing field of legal scholarship to defend Jews from this definition

Together for an Inclusive Massachusetts is a group of Jewish, Muslim, labor, education, civil rights and other organizations and individuals advocating for justice and equity in the Commonwealth. Our alliance includes representatives from the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, Arlington for Palestine, Boston Workers Circle, Council on American-Islamic Relations - MA, Jewish Voice for Peace Boston, Jewish Voice for Peace Western MA, If Not Now Boston, Mass Peace Action, National Lawyers Guild - MA, Sawa: Newton-Area Alliance for Peace and Justice, Worcester Havurah and 29 other local organizations.

Our goal is to work collectively to ensure that Massachusetts local and state policy makers address antisemitism using an anti-racist, solidarity framework. We reject partisan efforts to exclude Jewish people who are critical of Israel or to redefine antisemitism in a way that harms Palestinians.

TIM urges the City Council/Select Board/School Committee to adopt a resolution condemning and committing to address antisemitism but ask that the resolution exclude the adoption of the IHRA definition to inform these local actions.

Antisemitism is a real problem in the Commonwealth, and one that deserves serious attention. In a time when discrimination and bigotry is being platformed and emboldened nationally, the Commonwealth must protect and support our Jewish communities, alongside all communities facing increased threat to their safety. However, it is not possible in today's climate to address antisemitism without discussing the conflation of antisemitism and criticism of Israel, including opposition to Zionism as a political ideology. It is critical for policy makers to ensure that we do not address antisemitism in a way that negatively impacts the rights of Palestinians, encroaches on free speech or uses an understanding of antisemitism that conflates antisemitism with criticism of Israel.

While it has many institutional supporters, the adoption of the IHRA definition is opposed by leading Jewish, civil liberties, and human rights organizations including its lead drafter

who explained its origin and its early “[abuse of the definition](#)” in 2010.¹ Legal scholars also published a guide “[Defending Jews From the \[IHRA\] Definition of Antisemitism](#)”.²

What does a proclamation or resolution to adopt the IHRA definition do?

If passed, while not legally binding, would impose the IHRA definition on municipal employees and institutions, which could have the effect of chilling free speech — including by reframing education about Israel/Palestine that explores history, literature, or the current genocide as a form of hate speech.

What is Antisemitism?

[Antisemitism](#) is hostility, discrimination, prejudice, and violence toward Jews as Jews or Jewish institutions as Jewish. Antisemitic rhetoric and behavior hold Jews collectively responsible for societal ills or perceived evils in the world, resulting in marginalization, persecution, and violence.³ Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Direct acts of violence against Jews for being Jewish
- Spreading conspiracy theories that Jews are especially wealthy and powerful, control global media and government, and/or will replace other peoples
- Denying or minimizing the Holocaust
- **Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel or assuming all Jews are aligned with the state of Israel.**

Like any kind of hate or discrimination in our society, anyone no matter their background or political orientation can hold antisemitic views.

The IHRA definition conflates antisemitism and criticism of Israel

In today’s national political climate, we have seen accusations of antisemitism that rely on the blanket conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, and even criticism of Israeli government actions more broadly. These accusations have been misused and misappropriated to advance reactionary and repressive politics, such as detaining visa-holding political activists and cutting funding from universities. Such policies claim to protect Jews while dangerously endorsing an antagonism between the human rights and safety of Jewish people, on the one hand, and the human rights and safety of other

¹ Kenneth Stern, *A Bad Deal: By Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, Universities are Sacrificing Academic Freedom*, Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, September 5, 2025. <https://knightcolumbia.org/content/a-bad-deal-why-using-the-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism-on-campus-is-incompatible-with-academic-freedom-and-students-right-to-open-inquiry>

² Itamar Mann and Lihi Yona, *Defending Jews From the Definition of Antisemitism*, UCLA Law Review, December 23, 2024. <https://www.uclalawreview.org/defending-jews-from-the-definition-of-antisemitism/>

³ Diaspora Alliance, *Antisemitism Explained*, https://diasporaalliance.co/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/What-is-Antisemitism_-Diaspora-Alliance-.pdf

marginalized groups, on the other. **This in turn, has the potential to actually increase antisemitism by isolating Jewish communities from their neighbors.**

Many academics and experts have worked to parse out the difference between antisemitic speech in the context of Israel/Palestine, and speech that is critical of the State of Israel and/or Zionism as a political ideology but not antisemitic. **It is not the role of local or state government to adjudicate the differences of opinion within the Jewish community and among scholars of antisemitism.** In fact, to do so would be a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

What is Zionism and anti-Zionism?

Zionism can most simply be defined as the political ideology of Jewish Nationalism. Many understand Zionism as a project for self-determination of the Jewish people, and thus many Jews see it as a core aspect of their identity. For this group, anti-Zionism means opposition to a core part of their Jewish identity.

An increasing number of Jews, as well as many Palestinians and their supporters of all backgrounds, understand Zionism as a political system of inequality and oppression that in practice privileges the rights and lives of Jews in Palestine/Israel over the rights and lives of Palestinians. For this group, anti-Zionism means opposition to that political system of inequality and oppression.

It is also important to note that most people who consider themselves Zionists in America are not Jewish—there are nearly twice the number of members of a single evangelical Christian Zionist organization, Christians United for Israel (10 million) than the entire population of American Jews (approx. 5.8 million). Many Christian Evangelicals who identify as Zionist believe in a theology wherein Jews need to return to the land of Israel in order for the second coming of the messiah to occur, at that point Jewish people would be forced to either convert or be killed. This is an antisemitic idea. It is thus possible to hold Zionist ideology and also harbor antisemitic views, another reason it is important to avoid conflating the two ideas.

Part of the complexity and controversy that comes with the conversation around the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is the vastly divergent associations these different groups have with the words “Zionism” and “anti-Zionism.” There is no shared understanding of these words within the Jewish community in Massachusetts, let alone in the Commonwealth more broadly.

The IHRA definition is widely disputed and controversial.

The claim by its proponents that the IHRA definition is the “consensus” definition of antisemitism is patently false. Even one of the main drafters of the IHRA definition,

Professor Kenneth Stern, frequently speaks out against the way it is being used to [silence legitimate debate](#), saying “[Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it.](#)”⁴

- More than 300 scholars (many Jewish) of Holocaust Studies, Antisemitism, Jewish History endorsed [a rejection](#)⁵ of the IHRA definition and [128 scholars](#)⁶ of antisemitism who urged the UN not to adopt it.
- [More than 100 civil society groups](#), including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the ACLU, B’Tselem, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights urged the U.N. not to adopt it.⁷
- [Harvard University scholars of Jewish studies](#) filed an amicus brief in Harvard’s federal lawsuit that Harvard’s adoption of the IHRA definition not only misrepresents Jewish diversity, they violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act by subjecting Jews to harmful stereotypes about what constitutes “authentic” Jewish identity.⁸
- The [American Civil Liberties Union](#),⁹ the [Center for Constitutional Rights](#),¹⁰ the [National Lawyers Guild](#),¹¹ and [Palestine Legal](#)¹² call it a threat to free speech.

⁴ Kenneth Stern, *I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it*, The Guardian, Dec 13, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/13/antisemitism-executive-order-trump-chilling-effect>. See also Kenneth Stern, Testimony to the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Mar 27, 2025. <https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/06e69363-9e5d-54f9-8019-dbe95168b2a9/Stern%20Testimony.pdf>.

⁵ Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>

⁶ 128 scholars warn: ‘Don’t trap the United Nations in a vague and weaponized definition of antisemitism. Nov 3, 2022. <https://media.euobserver.com/9e86df02ddf67c6046d190b65e4380df.pdf>

⁷ Human Rights and other Civil Society Groups Urge United Nations to Respect Human Rights in the Fight Against Antisemitism, Apr 4, 2023. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/04/human-rights-and-other-civil-society-groups-urge-united-nations-respect-human>

⁸ Barry Trachtenberg, Victor Silverman, Atalia Omer, Raz Segal, Rebecca T Alpert and Judith Butler, *Harvard appears to think all Jews support Israel. That is discriminatory*, The Guardian, Jun 12, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/12/harvard-jews-srael-discriminatory>

⁹ ACLU, *Reject Definitions of Antisemitism that Encompass Protected Speech*, Feb 6, 2024. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/reject-definitions-of-anti-semitism-that-encompass-protected-speech>

¹⁰ Center for Constitutional Rights, *Letter: Civil Rights Groups Demand DOE Reject IHRA Definition of Antisemitism*, Jan 18, 2024. <https://ccrjustice.org/letter-civil-rights-groups-demand-doe-assistant-secretary-marcus-end-attacks-free-speech>

¹¹ ACLU, Americans for Peace Now, Center for Constitutional Rights, Foundation for Middle East Peace, and Palestine Legal, along with 37 other organization signatories. *Letter to Co-Sponsors of Proposed American Bar Association Resolution 514 on Antisemitism*, Jan 19, 2023. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/letter-co-sponsors-proposed-american-bar-association-resolution-514-antisemitism>

¹² Palestine Legal, *Backgrounder on Efforts to Redefine Antisemitism as a Means of Censoring Criticism of Israel*, updated Jan 2020. <https://palestinelegal.org/redefinition-efforts>

- [The American Association of University Professors](#) condemned it as a threat to academic freedom.¹³
- Dozens of U.S. Jewish organizations including [Union for Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Women of Reform Judaism](#) say it should not be codified into law.¹⁴

Adopting this definition in any municipality or school district, would create a legal nightmare. (See Appendix A for recent court rulings)

There are no legally binding definitions for other forms of ethnic, racial or religious discrimination in MA antidiscrimination law. Singling out antisemitism for definition would create a legal anomaly that could only be fixed by attempting to define all forms of discrimination as well. Adoption of the IHRA definition threatens [Constitutional protections](#) against state establishment of religion by setting boundaries of Jewish identity, belief, and belonging.¹⁵

Defend our democracy against those who seek to undermine our civil rights.

Constitutionally protected free speech is a foundational civil liberty that makes our communities safer and stronger. Criticism of Israel, including opposition to Zionism as a political ideology, is not inherently antisemitic, and painting all pro-Palestine and anti-Zionist speech as such undermines both our ability to discern and dismantle actual antisemitism and our ability to advocate for the safety and freedom of all people in Israel/Palestine.

Antisemitism can and must be addressed within a framework of safety and freedom for everyone. Historically, societies where Jewish communities have thrived with lower incidences of antisemitism are societies that have had strong rights and protections for all minority groups. Meaningfully combating antisemitism must include both fighting antisemitism and fighting its sibling hatreds: racism, Islamophobia, White Nationalism, and xenophobia, as well as addressing the underlying conditions, such as economic inequality, that help fuel antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Thank you for considering our recommendations. Please contact Together for an Inclusive Massachusetts at info@inclusivemassachusetts.org or learn more at www.inclusivemassachusetts.org

¹³ American University of University Professors, *Legislative Threats to Academic Freedom: Redefinitions of Antisemitism and Racism*, Mar 2022. <https://www.aaup.org/report/legislative-threats-academic-freedom-redefinitions-antisemitism-and-racism>

¹⁴ Reform movement: IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is helpful but should not be codified into law, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Jan 25, 2021. <https://www.jta.org/2021/01/25/united-states/reform-movement-ihra-definition-of-anti-semitism-is-helpful-but-should-not-be-codified-into-law>

¹⁵ Barry Trachtenberg, Victor Silverman, Atalia Omer, Raz Segal, Rebecca T Alpert and Judith Butler, *Harvard appears to think all Jews support Israel. That is discriminatory*, The Guardian, June 12, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/12/harvard-jews-srael-discriminatory>

APPENDIX A: Recent Legal Challenges to the IHRA Definition

The adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism by government and private institutions has resulted in these institutions interpreting criticism of Israel or Zionism and education about or advocacy for Palestinian rights as a form antisemitic hate speech in schools, higher education, policing, work place and others. Some of these repercussions resulted in federal lawsuits where judges have called out the instrumentalization of that definition to infringe on civil rights and as a tool of censorship. Some of the most recent cases include:¹⁶

- [Torres et al v. Carlson et al, No. 1:2025cv03474](#)

*"Plaintiffs allege that the Occupiers' publicly stated goal was to pressure Columbia to acquiesce to CUAD's demands, which included opposing the policies of the Israeli Government in Gaza and divesting from and cutting ties with Israel because of those policies. As was the case in StandWithUs, Plaintiffs have not pleaded 'any facts suggesting a purpose beyond or behind these stated goals.'" 158 F.4th at * 18, *26. As the First Circuit explained, "[P]laintiffs' allegations **offer no facts to plausibly suggest that the protestors agreed to target Jewish {persons}, as opposed to agreeing to demand that the university adopt the activists' position regarding the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.**" Id. at *25 (emphasis added)..."*

"...the allegations simply do not admit of an inference that interfering with the civil rights of 'perceived Jews and their supporters' was a goal of the conspiracy..."

- [Khalil v. The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York \(1:25-cv-02079\)](#) (March 2026)

*"As to their First Amendment challenge to Columbia's revised anti-discrimination policy, plaintiffs have adequately pleaded each of the necessary elements to establish an injury in fact for the purposes of Article III. First, plaintiffs' desire to engage in 'public debates about Palestine and Israel' involves a course of conduct tied to a First Amendment interest...Second, plaintiffs' contemplated speech is arguably proscribed by Columbia's revised anti-discrimination policy...Third, the two plaintiffs alleged to be current Columbia students have demonstrated that they face a credible threat of enforcement...Having shown a cognizable injury-in-fact through a threat of specific future harm, those two plaintiffs must also plausibly allege causation and redressability. Causation is satisfied because they plausibly allege that the Agency defendants coerced **Columbia to adopt a definition of***

¹⁶ Foundation for Middle East Peace, "Tracking Lawfare: FMEP's research and documentation on the campaign to exploit U.S. laws and courts to quash American activism for Palestinian rights." <https://lawfare.fmep.org/>

antisemitism through which it would punish and suppress plaintiffs' political speech."

*Vullo analysis: "For the reasons discussed above, both the February 13 and March 13 letters 'could be reasonably understood to convey a threat of adverse government action in order to punish or suppress the plaintiff's speech,' so plaintiffs have stated their Vullo claims against the Agency defendants and Columbia. Indeed, other courts have upheld similar Vullo claims...the Agency defendants claim there's no coercion because 'the demands in the March 13 Letter do not align with the actions taken by Columbia,' including that 'Columbia did not adopt the IHRA definition.'" Dkt. 117 at 16–19; see Dkt. 86 at 24 (arguing that 'Columbia did not follow all the [Agency] Defendants' demands' and that any changes came from within). **But Columbia has adopted the IHRA definition, and even if it hadn't, plaintiffs have still plausibly pleaded coercion for the reasons discussed above...**plaintiffs have plausibly alleged that the Agency defendants have threatened coercive action against one party (Columbia) to squelch the protected speech of a third party (plaintiffs)... plaintiffs have plausibly alleged that the Agency defendants are improperly motivated by a desire to suppress plaintiffs' political speech...the Agency defendants argue that '[a]ntisemitic harassment is not shielded by the First Amendment.' Dkt. 86 at 26. They are correct that '[t]rue threats of [antisemitic] violence are outside the bounds of First Amendment protection.' *Counterman v. Colorado*, 600 U.S. 66, 69 (2023). But plaintiffs allege that their contemplated speech doesn't involve harassment, threats, or violence, but rather 'protected . . . speech regarding Palestinian human rights that the [Agency defendants] disfavor.' SAC ¶ 176. **For example, the double standards that plaintiffs allegedly apply to Israel—i.e., critiques they level at the Israeli government but not any other governments—aren't inherently antisemitic threats. SAC ¶ 179.** In any event, even if the government can enforce the law and police the use of public funds, they may not do so 'in order to punish or suppress [plaintiffs'] protected expression.'" "*

- [American Association of University Professors v. Rubio, 1:25-cv-10685 \(D.Mass\) – 25-1658 \(1st Cir.\)](#) (January 2026) finding that the Trump administration's justification of the deportation of college students under [two executive orders that rely on the IHRA Definition](#)¹⁷ is viewpoint discrimination in violation of the First Amendment and violates the Administrative Procedure Act:

"Secretaries Noem and Rubio have intentionally and in concert implemented Executive Orders in 14161 and 14188 a viewpoint-discriminatory way to chill protected speech" that "violated the First Amendment." AAUP, 802 F. Supp. 3d at

¹⁷ President Trump signed Executive Order 14188, [Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism](#), reaffirming Trump's 2019 Executive Order 13899 which relies on the IHRA definition for Title VI enforcement. See Southern Poverty Law Center's *Trump's Executive Order on Antisemitism – Explained at* <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/guides/trump-executive-action-antisemitism-faq/>

175. Further, " the Public Officials' threats to continue detaining, deporting, and revoking visas based on political speech serves as circumstantial evidence that such enforcement exists, is viewpoint discriminatory, and has objectively chilled the Plaintiffs' speech. [...] The Court therefore declares, for the reasons set forth in its findings, that that the "enforcement policy " and its implementation: (1) violates the First Amendment right of freedom of speech set out in the Constitution of the United States, and (2) the Administrative Procedure Act."

- [Sussman v. Massachusetts Institute of Technology – 1:25-cv-11826 \(D.Mass\)](#) (January 2026) where the plaintiff explicitly based their case on the IHRA definition

*"The First Circuit has rejected the contention that plaintiffs' more general allegations about alleged discrimination on the MIT campus suffice to establish severe and pervasive racial harassment within the scope of Title VI. See Stand With Us Ctr. for Legal Just. v. Massachusetts Inst. of Tech., 158 F.4th 1, 11 (1st Cir. 2025). (The Amended Complaint admittedly does include additional incidents post-dating the events described in the Stand With Us Complaint. But **the court sees no basis on which to distinguish the First Circuit's conclusion that anti-Israeli sentiment is not, without more, antisemitic messaging.**)"*

- [Segev v. President and Fellows of Harvard College – 1:25-cv-12020 \(D-Mass\)](#) (December 2025) where the plaintiff explicitly based their case on the IHRA definition

*"...nothing in the Amended Complaint plausibly supports the notion that his assailants' conduct was motivated by race-based antisemitism. At best, Segev notes that he was overtly wearing a blue bracelet symbolizing his support for Israel. But it is not clear that protestors understood the import of his bracelet or that, if they did, they were acting based on antisemitism rather than disagreement with the underlying political message. Stand With US Ctr. for Legal Just. v. Massachusetts Inst. of Tech. , 158 F.4th 1, 18 (1st Cir. 2025). **Segev cannot transform his assailants' anti-Israel sentiment into antisemitism based on their use of certain rhetoric -- for example, chants of 'from the river to the sea.'** Am. Compl. 149. The relevant question is whether the protestors chanting these slogans viewed them as antisemitic. See Stand With US , 158 F.4th at 19. Nothing in the Amended Complaint plausibly permits the inference that they did."*

- [Stand with Us Center for Legal Justice v. Massachusetts Institute of Technology – 1:24-cv-10577 \(D.Mass\)](#)

"Plaintiffs are entitled to their own interpretive lens equating anti-Zionism (as they define it) and antisemitism. But it is another matter altogether to insist that others must be bound by plaintiffs' view. Plaintiffs' equation finds no consensus support in dictionary definitions. Nor does a review of the academic literature point to any

consensus that criticism of Zionism is antisemitic. And we do not find it dispositive that the United States Department of State has defined antisemitism as "[d]enying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor."...**This absence of consensus reflects ongoing debate as to the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism -- debate that our constitutional scheme resolves through discourse, not judicial fiat.**"

- [American Association of University Professors v. Rubio – 1:25-cv-10685](#) (September 2025)

*"It was never the Secretaries [of State and Department of Homeland Securities'] immediate intention to deport all pro-Palestinian non-citizens ... The intent of the Secretaries was more invidious -- to target a few for speaking out and then use the full rigor of the Immigration and Nationality Act (in ways it had never been used before) to have them publicly deported **with the goal of tamping down pro-Palestinian student protests and terrorizing similarly situated non-citizen (and other) pro-Palestinians into silence** because their views were unwelcome."*

Footnote: *"This gambit has been accompanied by **the Trump administration's full-throated assault on the First Amendment across the board under the cover of an unconstitutionally broad definition of Anti-Semitism.** As it should, this Court confines itself to the facts proven herein and makes no further comment."*

- [The Louis D. Brandeis Center, Inc. v. Regents of the University of California – 3:23-cv-06133](#) (March 2025)

*"the FAC repeatedly alleges that 'Zionism is a central tenet of the Jewish faith.' FAC ¶¶ 8, 15, 127-28, 170-72. This raises concerns about whether Brandeis intends to call upon the Court to determine the articles of faith of Judaism. If so, **a serious constitutional problem would arise. The Establishment Clause properly forbids the federal courts from saying what the tenets of a religion are...**This proscription is particularly forceful when, as here, there is genuine disagreement on the matter. See FAC ¶¶ 14, 118-19. Because the FAC as a whole plausibly alleges that Jewish students and professors were disparately treated because they are Jewish, the Court need not get into the issue now. The 'Establishment Clause will be no worse for not having been so tested.' *Satanic Temple, Inc. v. City of Boston*, 111 F.4th 156, 185 (1st Cir. 2024) (Barron, J., concurring). It may be that the Court may properly determine whether Zionism is a sincerely held religious belief for some individuals, as circumstances might warrant, but the Court will not determine if it is a central tenet of Judaism."*

- [Ally Landau, HJSB, HJSC and Jews at Haverford v. The Corporation of Haverford College -- Case 2:24-cv-02044](#) (January 2025)

"...Plaintiffs also dedicate a full eight pages of their Complaint to their effort to link Judaism to Zionism, while simultaneously insisting that they are not asking the Court to resolve any religious issues. *Id.* ¶¶ 56-103. **Plaintiffs' equivocation is disingenuous, but likely strategic, seeking to blur the line between Zionism as a political philosophy and Zionism as a component of Jewish identity, and in the process implicitly sweep any and all criticism of Israel into the basket of antisemitism.** As a threshold matter, as I have done previously, I reject Plaintiffs' embedded proposition that any anti-Israel speech is intrinsically antisemitic, because reasonable people acting in good faith can challenge decisions of the Israeli government without harboring antisemitic views..."

- [Concerned Jewish Parents and Teachers of Los Angeles, et al. v. Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium –CV 22-3243](#) (November 2024)

"The essence of plaintiffs' alleged injuries appears to be that they are aware of the challenged curriculum, disagree with it, and fear it will be adopted or used in LAUSD classrooms. (See Dkt. 119, SAC at ¶¶ 26-30). But it is far from clear that learning about Israel and Palestine or encountering teaching materials with which one disagrees constitutes an injury. See *Caldwell v. Caldwell*, 545 F.3d 1126, 1133 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that a parent's 'offense' to online instructional material was an 'abstract objection' insufficient to support standing). As the Supreme Court has noted, 'the psychological consequence presumably produced by observation of conduct with which one disagrees . . . is not an injury sufficient to confer standing under Art. III, even though the disagreement is phrased in constitutional terms.' *Valley Forge Christian Coll. v. Americans United for Separation of Church & State, Inc.*, 454 U.S. 464, 485-86, 102 S.Ct. 752, 765 (1982). Neither the parent-plaintiffs nor the teacher-plaintiffs have identified 'any personal injury suffered by them as a consequence of the alleged constitutional error[.]' See *Valley Forge*, 454 U.S. at 485, 102 S.Ct. at 765 (emphasis omitted); (see, generally, Dkt. 119, SAC at ¶¶ 64-221). Plaintiffs may not 'sue merely because their legal objection is accompanied by a strong moral, ideological, or policy objection to a [purported] government action.' 12 *Hippocratic Medicine*, 602 U.S. at 381, 144 S.Ct. at 1556. In other words, the individual plaintiffs' potential exposure to ideas with which they disagree is insufficient to support standing."

- [Students for Justice in Palestine, at the University of Houston, et al., Plaintiffs, v. Greg Abbott, in his official capacity only as the Governor of the State of Texas, et al., Defendants. -- 1:24-cv-00523](#) (October 2024)

"...as a threshold issue, the Court finds **the incorporation of this specific definition of antisemitism is viewpoint discrimination.** In general, including the word "antisemitism" in speech policies, perhaps in the context of protecting students from discrimination and harassment, is not inherently a First Amendment

violation. The Defendants wish to view the speech policies in this vacuum, claiming the revised policies do not in fact prohibit any specific expression. (Dkt. 31, at 35-36). But here, the speech policies do not leave “antisemitism” open to constitutional definitions and interpretations, because GA-44 mandated a specific definition. (Dkt. 21-1). That definition, by incorporation of the IHRA’s examples, labels “calling the State of Israel a racist endeavor” and “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis” as antisemitic. And students can be punished for antisemitic speech under the revised speech policies. *Supra*, n.2-5. Plaintiffs follow this thread, reasonably understand that their intended speech is now punishable under the revised policies, and hesitate to engage in such expression. (Dkt. 21, at 5). Because of this, Court finds the revised policies are intertwined with GA-44 and the IHRA examples, which identify content-specific expression—like that the State of Israel is a racist endeavor or drawing comparisons between Israel and Nazis. Through the connection to these examples, the policies make that speech punishable, thereby chilling it.”

"In conclusion, the Court finds that Plaintiffs are likely to succeed on their claim, even under *Tinker*, that the GA-44-compliant university policies **impose impermissible viewpoint discrimination that chills speech in violation of the First Amendment**"

- [Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L – 20-255, US Supreme Court](#) (Alito, J., concurring). (June 2021)

“Public school students, like all other Americans, have the right to express ‘unpopular’ ideas on public issues, even when those ideas are expressed in language that some find ‘inappropriate’ or ‘hurtful’; **public schools have the duty to teach students that freedom of speech, including unpopular speech, is essential to our form of self-government.**”