

RESOLUTION TO CONFRONT, CONDEMN AND COMBAT ANTI SEMITISM

WHEREAS, individuals looking to promote hate in the United States have historically exploited and continue to exploit bigotry and weaponize hate for political gain, targeting traditionally persecuted peoples, including African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other people of color, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and other marginalized groups with verbal attacks, incitement, and violence; and;

WHEREAS, harassment on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish ancestry, ethnicity, identity, affiliation, or faith, remains a pervasive and disturbing problem in contemporary American society and fundamentally contradicts the values of our West Orange community; and

WHEREAS, antisemitism, violates the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans of all backgrounds together; and

WHEREAS, incidents of antisemitism in the United States, including in the state of New Jersey, have greatly increased in recent years as evidenced by the following:

- In 2022, The Anti-Defamation League's ("ADL ") Audit of Antisemitic Incidents tabulated 3,697 antisemitic incidents across the United States. This represents a 36% increase from the 2,717 incidents recorded in 2021 and is the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.
- According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (the "FBI") antisemitic hate crimes rose 25% in 2022 from 2021. The FBI also reported that the number of reported single-bias, anti-Jewish hate crimes rose from 817 incidents in 2021 to 1,122 in 2022 and comprised more than 50% of all religion-based hate crimes in 2022, despite Jews only accounting for 2% of the population in the US;
- Between October 7, 2023 and December 7, 2023, ADL recorded a total of 2,031 antisemitic incidents, up from 465 incidents during the same period in 2022, representing a 337% increase year-over-year;

WHEREAS, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and ethnicity is unlawful under state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, antisemitism, including harassment on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identify, affiliation, or faith, remains a persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in West Orange.;

WHEREAS, in light of the above-mentioned facts and danger to the Jewish community, this Council finds it necessary to adopt, give effect to, and combat incidents of a workable definition of Antisemitism;

WHEREAS the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (“IHRA”) definition helps clarify what is antisemitic;

WHEREAS the IHRA definition of antisemitism reads as follows:

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.

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish, collectively. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective - such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

WHEREAS, the Township acknowledges the following attacks which were horrific and impact all persons: (i) the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018; (ii) the Chabad of Poway in San Diego on April 27, 2019; (iii) the Kosher supermarket in Jersey City on December 10, 2019; and (iv) a Chanukah gathering in Monsey, New York on December 28, 2019. As a result, all houses of faith especially West Orange synagogues were compelled to re-evaluate their own security measures to keep their congregations safe;

WHEREAS, swastikas have been found on the sidewalk in front of Temple B’nai Shalom which were vigorously investigated by the West Orange Police Department as well as on the bridge at South Mountain Arena and in many public schools in and around West Orange. In 2023, a Livingston Board of Education school bus was stolen and the suspect found to have a journal that contained notes about jihad and other language against Jewish people and law

enforcement; and further in Bloomfield at Temple Ner Tamid a Molotov cocktail was hurled at the doors of their synagogue. In 1971, a bomb was planted and exploded in the sanctuary of the then West Orange Jewish Center (now Temple B’nai Shalom). All of these acts have detrimentally impacted our community and must be taken as an opportunity to teach about these issues and seek paths for healing and eliminating such hate;

WHEREAS, the Township of West Orange has a responsibility to protect citizens from acts of hate and bigotry, including antisemitism, and must be given the tools to do so;

WHEREAS, Alisa Drive in the Township of West Orange next to the West Orange High School Parking Lot has been named in honor of Alisa M. Flatow, a West Orange resident who was killed in a suicide bombing attack in Gaza on April 9, 1995.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of West Orange, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that the Township confront and denounce antisemitism, discrimination, racism, hate, and violence in all of its manifestations and stand in solidarity with our Jewish community members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Council affirms the Township’s commitment to cultivating an inclusive, safe, and just society and culture that values the diversity of our community, works to ensure equitable opportunities in all major facets of society, and celebrates both our individuality and commonality.

Karen J. Carnevale, R.M.C.
Municipal Clerk

Bill Rutherford
Council President

Adopted: January 9, 2024