

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee: We warn Wisconsin: IHRA bills chill free speech and shield U.S. and Israeli violence abroad

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A coalition of 40 civil rights, faith, labor, and community organizations urgently calls on Wisconsin leaders to reject Senate Bill 445 and Assembly Bill 446.

These bills would enshrine the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism into state law—a framework increasingly deployed as a political “catch-all” to neutralize criticism of U.S. and Israeli government actions abroad, including atrocity-level violence in Palestine. While its use has so far been limited to this context, the coalition warns it could predictably extend to Iran, and beyond, threatening constitutionally protected speech, disproportionately targeting Palestinians and their advocates, and providing a shield for U.S. and Israeli foreign policy under the guise that any criticism could be labeled antisemitic.

A letter sent today by the coalition urges Governor Evers, members of the Wisconsin Senate, and the Wisconsin Assembly to reject SB445 and AB446 in their entirety. A copy of the letter is attached. The letter reaffirms that civil rights laws must protect all communities and that the First Amendment cannot be distorted to suppress political advocacy or criminalize lawful criticism of government policy.

“This legislation is a direct attack on the First Amendment and on the public’s ability to advocate for human rights, including Palestinian rights. SB445 and AB446 are unconstitutional on their face as they brazenly criminalize political dissent across

the state of Wisconsin,” the letter continues.

“We fully support lawful efforts to combat antisemitism,” the letter states. “But SB445/AB446 do not protect Jewish communities from genuine antisemitism. Instead, they shield the State of Israel from political criticism and grant the government power to police viewpoints, punish dissent, and intimidate students, educators, and community members—including Palestinians and those speaking in support of Palestinian rights—whose advocacy is constitutionally protected. Wisconsin law already protects against hate.”

The coalition’s statement follows months of sustained organizing that began in September 2025 in response to proposals to enshrine IHRA into Wisconsin law. The attached letter provides detailed analysis of the legislation’s constitutional and human rights implications.

For more information, contact Sandy Pasch pasch.sandy@gmail.com 414-213-4761

Full coalition letter is available [here](#):

Organizations endorsing the statement include:

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Baraboo Acts Coalition

Citizen Action of Wisconsin

CODEPINK Milwaukee

Drop the ADL from Schools

Echo Valley Hope

Freedom Road Socialist Organization

Green Bay Anti-War Committee

Hate Free Outagamie

Healthcare Workers for Palestine—Milwaukee

Interfaith Peace Working Group

Islamic Society of Milwaukee

Islamic Society of Sheboygan

Jewish Voice for Peace Action

Jewish Voice for Peace—Madison

Jewish Voice for Peace—Milwaukee

Madison DANA (Dharma Action for Nonviolence and Awareness)

Madison-Rafah Sister City Project

Madison Students for a Democratic Society

Madison Women's International League For Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression

Milwaukee For Yemen

Milwaukee Islamic Da'wa Center

Muslim Women's Coalition

Oshkosh Mosque

Palestine Partners

Peace Action Wisconsin

Reproductive Justice Action Milwaukee (RJAM)

Sanctuary for All, Madison

Students For a Democratic Society (UWM)

Transgender Resistance Action Committee

UW Muslim and Muslim-Allied Faculty and Staff

Voces de la Frontera

We Are All Gaza/We Are All Palestine

WISDOM

Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement

Wisconsin Education Association Council

Wisconsin Christians for Justice in Palestine

Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance

Wisconsin Jews for Justice