

FISHBACK FACTSHEET

1. The IHRA Definition Does Not Suppress Free Speech

MYTH: The IHRA Definition suppresses free speech

Florida has criminalized criticism of Israel by adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

FACT: Florida has not created any crime related to criticizing Israel.

The IHRA definition is used only as a tool to identify antisemitic discrimination within existing civil-rights law. The definition itself explicitly states that criticism of Israel comparable to criticism of any other country is not antisemitic. The law addresses discriminatory conduct and harassment, not political speech. Americans remain fully free to criticize Israeli policy.

2. Free Speech Is Not Being Suppressed On Campus

MYTH: Florida punishes students at public universities for criticizing Israel.

FACT: No Florida law punishes students for criticizing Israel.

Public university students retain full First Amendment protections. Florida's universities use the IHRA framework to determine when the combination of speech and conduct crosses into harassment or discrimination against Jewish students, which universities are legally required to prevent.

4. The "Dual Loyalty" Accusation

MYTH: Florida's IHRA legislation was signed in Israel as a pledge of allegiance to Israel.

FACT: H-741 had already been signed into law before a ceremony was held in Israel.

The signing event in Jerusalem was symbolic, highlighting the global fight against antisemitism. Claims that American officials act out of loyalty to Jews or Israel rather than the United States repeat one of the oldest antisemitic accusations in history. The IHRA definition does not require loyalty to Israel.

5. Israel Bonds and Florida Pension Investments

MYTH: Florida invested hundreds of millions in Israeli bonds to give financial aid to Israel and for political reasons.

FACT: Israel Bonds Are Standard Sovereign Investments, NOT Financial Aid

Israel Bonds are standard sovereign investments, like U.S. Treasury bonds.

Israel Bonds have never defaulted since 1951. They are widely purchased by U.S. institutional investors. Fixed-income sovereign bonds are a normal part of portfolio diversification. **These investments are not aid;** they are routine financial instruments used in pension and treasury portfolios.

6. Claims of Jewish Political Control

MYTH: "Wealthy pro-Israel donors" or organizations like AIPAC control politicians and manipulate government policy.

FACT: This claim reflects a classic antisemitic conspiracy theory.

Alleging that Jews secretly control governments or politics is a recognized antisemitic trope. Americans of every background—including Jews—have the constitutional right to participate in politics, donate to campaigns, and advocate for policies. Singling out Jewish political participation as nefarious and illegitimate mirrors conspiracy narratives found in historical propaganda such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

7. Rights of Muslim Citizens in Israel

MYTH: Israel denies Muslim citizens due process and equal rights.

FACT: Arab citizens of Israel have formal citizenship with full equal rights. They vote in national elections, serve in the Israeli parliament (Knesset), sit on Israel's courts, including the Supreme Court, and bring cases before the judiciary.

8. "Antisemitic Speech Is Being Suppressed"

MYTH: Antisemitic viewpoints are being censored.

FACT: No Florida law punishes Antisemitic speech.

The ability of James Fishback to tour campuses and publicly promote his antisemitic views itself demonstrates that his speech is not suppressed. The controversy surrounding such events reflects public disagreement and maybe even institutional disagreement, but not government censorship.

9. "Universities Don't Have Free Speech Rights"

MYTH: University administrators violate free speech when they condemn antisemitism.

FACT: Free speech protects everyone, including institutions and administrators.

University leaders, like all individuals and institutions, have the right to express their views and respond to speech with speech. When administrators publicly condemn anti-Semitism, they are not restricting anyone's speech. They are exercising their own right to speak and affirm the university's values and policies.

10. "Accusations of Antisemitism Is Just an Ad Hominem Attack"

MYTH: Accusations of antisemitism are simply a tactic to silence critics.

FACT: Antisemitism is a documented and rising problem.

Recent years have seen record levels of antisemitic incidents in the United States, including: assaults, synagogue attacks, campus harassment, bomb threats, and vandalism. Highlighting and confronting antisemitism is not suppressing debate—it is responding to a real pattern of discrimination and violence. Acts of anti-Semitic discrimination and violence have increased by 344% in the US in the last 5 years.

11. Jews Receive "Special Legal Protections"

MYTH: Laws protecting Jews from antisemitism give Jews special treatment.

FACT: These Laws Ensure Equal Protection, NOT Special Treatment.

Many laws prohibit discrimination based on race or national origin but not religion, creating a gap that left many antisemitic incidents unaddressed. Recent policy changes simply ensure Jews receive the same protections already provided to other groups.

12. Divestment From Israel Helps Americans

MYTH: Divesting from Israel benefits taxpayers and promotes justice.

FACT: Boycott and divestment campaigns harm economic interests

These efforts often harm exports, reduce employment opportunities, discourage investment and innovation in key sectors that impact quality of life. In addition, many divestment campaigns single out Israel for economic penalties that are not applied to other countries engaged in global conflicts or human rights controversies. Policies that target businesses or institutions based on their Israeli national origin raise serious concerns about national origin discrimination under U.S. law.