

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 324

Rep. Thanedar offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to condemn antisemitism and urge Michigan leaders
2 to prevent, report, and address incidents of antisemitism.

3 Whereas, The Jewish-American experience is a story of faith,
4 fortitude, and progress and is connected to key tenets of the
5 American identity. Generations of Jewish people have come to this
6 nation fleeing oppression, discrimination, and persecution in
7 search of a better life for themselves and their children. These
8 Jewish Americans have created lives for themselves and their
9 families and have played indispensable roles in our nation's civic
10 and community life, making invaluable contributions to our nation
11 through their leadership and achievements. On August 21, 1790,
12 President George Washington sent a letter to the Hebrew
13 Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, expressing that the newly

1 formed United States would be a nation that "gives to bigotry no
2 sanction, to persecution no assistance" and wished that the Jewish
3 people "who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good
4 will of the other Inhabitants ... and there shall be none to make him
5 afraid." We should acknowledge and celebrate the crucial
6 contributions that Jewish Americans have made to our collective
7 struggle for a more just and fair society, leading movements for
8 justice and equality and working to ensure opportunities for all;
9 and

10 Whereas, Alongside this narrative of achievement and
11 opportunity, there is also a history, far older than the nation
12 itself, of racism, bigotry, and other forms of prejudice
13 manifesting in the scourge of antisemitism. Antisemitism is an
14 insidious form of prejudice stretching back millennia that attacks
15 the humanity of the Jewish people and has led to violence, the
16 destruction of lives and communities, and genocide. Conspiracy
17 theories that Jewish people are uniquely evil and influential have
18 led to mass killings of Jewish people throughout time, including
19 the poisonous Nazi ideology that resulted in the murder of
20 6,000,000 Jewish people, including 1,500,000 Jewish children, and
21 millions of other victims of the Nazis in Europe; and

22 Whereas, Over the course of the past decade, Holocaust
23 distortion and denial has grown in intensity. A 2020 survey of all
24 50 states in the United States on Holocaust knowledge among
25 Millennials and Gen Z, conducted by the Conference on Jewish
26 Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), found a clear
27 lack of awareness of key historical facts. Sixty-three percent of
28 respondents did not know that 6,000,000 Jewish people were murdered
29 during the Holocaust, and 36 percent thought that "two million or

1 fewer Jews" were killed; and

2 Whereas, Michigan residents are not immune from believing
3 these falsehoods. The 2020 Claims Conference study found that,
4 among Michiganians between ages 18 and 39, 14 percent of
5 respondents believed that Jewish people caused the Holocaust, more
6 than the 11 percent who believed this nationwide. Twice as many
7 respondents in Michigan outright denied that the Holocaust
8 happened, compared to the national result of 3 percent. And a
9 higher proportion of respondents from Michigan, 18 percent,
10 reported having seen Nazi symbols both in their community and on
11 social media, than the 13 percent reported for the whole United
12 States; and

13 Whereas, There is a documented and dangerous rise of
14 antisemitism globally and in the United States. In this country,
15 Jewish people are increasingly affected by the grotesque spread of
16 misinformation and lies, including blame for the spread of COVID-
17 19; false claims, including the control of the media and the
18 financial system; accusations of dual loyalty; and a multitude of
19 negative stereotypes. The use of antisemitic language, conspiracy
20 theories, and hatred has increased on multiple social media
21 platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok,
22 including tropes about Jewish control and messages praising Hitler
23 and demonizing all Jewish people; and

24 Whereas, There have been numerous incidents of antisemitism in
25 the 2020s, as documented by the American Jewish Committee (AJC),
26 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Anti-Defamation
27 League (ADL). These incidents are increasing at an alarming rate;
28 and

29 Whereas, The American Jewish Committee (AJC)'s 2021 State of

1 Antisemitism in America report is a survey of American Jewish
2 people and the general public's perceptions of antisemitism. This
3 report revealed that 24 percent of Jewish Americans have been
4 personally targeted by antisemitism in the past 12 months; 4 in 10
5 Jewish Americans changed their behavior at least once out of fear
6 of antisemitism; 90 percent believe antisemitism is a problem in
7 the United States; and 82 percent feel it has increased in the past
8 5 years; and

9 Whereas, According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
10 Jewish people were the target of almost 55 percent of religiously
11 motivated hate crime incidents in 2020: 683 out of 1,244 incidents.
12 This is a massively disproportionate share of hate crimes,
13 considering that only about 2.6 percent of those who report having
14 any religious preference are Jewish, based on data gathered in
15 Gallup polls; and

16 Whereas, The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported sharp
17 increases in antisemitism in 2021, compared to 2020. The ADL's 2021
18 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in the United States recorded 2,717
19 acts of assault, vandalism, and harassment this past year alone, an
20 average of more than 7 incidents per day. This was a 34-percent
21 increase from 2020 and the highest year on record since ADL began
22 tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. In 2021, 525 antisemitic
23 incidents took place at Jewish institutions, an increase of 61
24 percent over data collected in 2020, and antisemitic assaults
25 increased by 167 percent in 2021, compared to 2020. This increase
26 is partially attributable to a substantial surge of antisemitic
27 incidents in May 2021, during a military conflict between Israel
28 and Hamas that began on May 10 and lasted through the end of the
29 month. During the conflict, 297 antisemitic incidents were

1 reported, a 141 percent increase compared to 2020. Jewish
2 individuals were violently attacked in major cities, including New
3 York and Los Angeles, and many of the perpetrators explicitly
4 referred to Israel or Zionism; and

5 Whereas, According to the ADL, Michigan was the state with the
6 fifth highest number of antisemitic incidents in 2021. Out of a
7 total of 2,717 incidents in the United States, 112 occurred in
8 Michigan, or about 4 percent. This was out of proportion to the
9 state's population in that year, which was ranked 10th in the
10 United States, with about 3 percent of the nation's people, based
11 on data from the United States Census Bureau. In March 2021, a
12 social media content creator harassed customers at a Kosher market
13 in Michigan; and

14 Whereas, There are regular acts of antisemitic vandalism
15 against synagogues and Jewish schools in the United States, and
16 numerous nonlethal attacks have been made on Jewish Americans,
17 leaving many Jewish people feeling increasingly unsafe in public
18 spaces and houses of worship. In October 2018, 11 people were shot
19 and killed at the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh. The
20 ACJ's 2021 State of Antisemitism in America report revealed that 56
21 percent of respondents' religious institutions had increased
22 security since this shooting. A recent example of violent
23 antisemitism took place on Saturday, January 15, 2022. During
24 religious services at Congregation Beth Israel, a terrorist held 4
25 people, including a rabbi, hostage at gunpoint for 11 hours.
26 Following this hostage situation, police departments in a number of
27 American cities, including New York and Los Angeles, have said that
28 they are stepping up patrols at synagogues and other locations
29 associated with the Jewish community; and

1 Whereas, Harassment at Jewish institutions also occurs in
2 Michigan. The ADL reports that Witness for Peace, an antisemitic
3 and anti-Israel group led by a Holocaust denier, has been
4 protesting outside an Ann Arbor synagogue since 2003. As of 2021,
5 they held protests every week, carrying signs with slogans such as
6 "Israel: No Right to Exist" and "Heil Hitler!"; and

7 Whereas, The rise in antisemitism is part of the larger trend
8 of the rise of hate-filled movements that are targeting
9 marginalized communities here in the United States, and especially
10 in Michigan; now, therefore, be it

11 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we condemn
12 antisemitism in all forms, by all actors, wherever it occurs, as an
13 affront to basic human decency and a civilized society; and be it
14 further

15 Resolved, That we urge all Michigan community leaders to take
16 steps to prevent antisemitism and report any antisemitic incidents
17 to local law enforcement, the Michigan Attorney General's Hate
18 Crimes Unit, or the Michigan Department of Civil Rights; and be it
19 further

20 Resolved, That we urge the Michigan Attorney General and
21 Michigan Department of Civil Rights to investigate and address the
22 ongoing and rising cases of antisemitism in Michigan; and be it
23 further

24 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
25 Michigan Attorney General, the Governor of Michigan, and the
26 Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.