



# Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta Opposes HB 30

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On March 6, the Georgia House of Representatives favorably adopted a version of HB 30 and the bill will now move on to consideration in the state Senate. Asian Americans Advancing Justice remains firmly opposed to HB 30. We remain concerned that the bill is still a threat to First Amendment rights.

House Bill 30 defines anti-semitism in law at the expense of the right to free speech protected by the First Amendment. The bill relies on a controversial definition of anti-semitism provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that includes criticism against and protest of Israel among its definitions of anti-semitism. While some proponents of the bill insist that it does not bar any type of speech, others have explicitly admitted that they would like the bill to be used to chill free speech against the State of Israel.

We oppose HB 30 because the definition of anti-semitism outlined in the bill leaves it open to misinterpretation and misuse. The bill's sponsors refuse to exclude examples in the IHRA definition that define criticism of the state of Israel as anti-semitism. Despite the sponsors' insistence that the IHRA definition does not impinge on free speech, there are numerous instances in which the IHRA definition has been used to suppress the First amendment rights of those who dissent against the State of Israel and the displacement of Palestinian people.

Given the rise in anti-Asian violence in recent years, we understand the grave effects of hate speech and violence and the pernicious nature of antisemitism. However, legislation like HB 30 is not the solution. Rather than addressing the root causes of racist violence, such legislation does little to deter bigots and instead contributes to the expansion of a carceral system of surveillance, criminalization, detention, and deportation.

Our work in the wake of violent incidents affecting Asian-American communities has been to center victims and their families by providing financial and community support rather than to advance solutions that risk further constricting our constitutional rights to freedom of speech and expression.