



## Nipissing University Faculty Association

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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my serious concern with the proposed Bill 168, Combatting Antisemitism Act. While the goal of the act is laudable, its method is deeply problematic. In particular, the act's reliance on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, that could be interpreted as equating criticism of Israel with antisemitism, is likely to have a deleterious effect on free speech and academic freedom on Ontario's university campuses.

Kenneth S. Stern, Executive Director of the Justus & Karin Rosenberg Foundation and the original lead drafter of the IHRA definition, has warned against legislation based on that definition on the grounds that it could restrict academic freedom. In his testimony before the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, Stern made it clear that "the definition was not drafted, and was never intended, as a tool to target or chill speech on a college campus." A recent investigation of the "Conflict over Gaza" conference (hosted by Duke University and the University of North Carolina) under Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos should give us pause. Closer to home, the University of Winnipeg recently held a conference to explore the Trump Administration's decision to move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem. University administration, citing the IHRA definition, declared certain statements expressed at the conference to be a violation of the institution's anti-harassment policy. We must not conflate legitimate criticism of the State of Israel with antisemitism.

Finally, I am concerned that Bill 168 will be passed without proper and full public consultation. The bill was scheduled for public hearings this week, but the government has seen fit to preemptively recognize the IHRA definition by means of an Order in Council. This bypassing of the democratic process is troubling. Let the government make its case before the people.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Kozuskanich". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nathan Kozuskanich  
President, Nipissing University Faculty Association