

ASSEMBLY, No. 4395

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 16, 2024

Sponsored by:

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District 13 (Monmouth)

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District 27 (Essex and Passaic)

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SYNOPSIS

Creates “New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force”.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/20/2024)

1 AN ACT creating the “New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force” to
2 conduct research and develop recommendations to address the
3 harms caused by anti-Semitism, and supplementing Title 52 of
4 the Revised Statutes.

5
6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

8
9 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

10 a. All Americans have a stake in fighting anti-Semitism, as all
11 Americans have a stake in fighting every form of bigotry and hatred
12 against people based on religion, race, or place of birth and origin.

13 b. Anti-Semitism is the centuries-old bigotry and form of
14 racism faced by Jewish people simply because they are Jews.

15 c. Anti-Semitism includes blaming Jewish people when things
16 go wrong, calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of
17 Jewish people in the name of a radical ideology or extremist view
18 of religion, or making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or
19 stereotyped allegations about Jewish people.

20 d. Jewish people are portrayed in the media and political
21 campaigns with dangerous anti-Semitic myths, such as claims that
22 Jewish people control the United States government or seek global,
23 political, and financial domination.

24 e. Accusing Jewish people of being more loyal to Israel or to
25 the Jewish community than to the United States constitutes anti-
26 Semitism because it suggests that Jewish citizens cannot be
27 patriotic Americans and trusted neighbors, when Jewish people
28 have loyally served and continue to serve the United States, whether
29 in public or community life or military service.

30 f. Scapegoating and targeting of Jewish people in the United
31 States has persisted for many years, including by the Ku Klux Klan,
32 the America First Committee, and modern neo-Nazis.

33 g. There is clear evidence of increasing incidents and
34 expressions of anti-Semitism throughout the world.

35 h. A May 2014 survey by the Anti-Defamation League, “The
36 ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism,” which surveyed
37 people in over 100 countries about their attitudes toward Jewish
38 people, found that a majority of people surveyed overall have either
39 not heard of the Holocaust or do not believe the Holocaust
40 occurred.

41 i. On August 11 and 12, 2017, self-identified neo-
42 Confederates, white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and Ku Klux Klansmen
43 held white supremacist events in Charlottesville, Virginia, where
44 they marched on a synagogue under the Nazi swastika, engaged in
45 racist and anti-Semitic demonstrations, and committed brutal and
46 deadly violence against peaceful Americans.

47 j. In 2017, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 37
48 percent increase in hate crimes against Jewish people or Jewish

1 institutions and found that attacks against Jewish people or Jewish
2 institutions made up 58.1 percent of all religious-based hate crimes.

3 k. A 2018 report from the Anti-Defamation League noted that
4 in 2018 there were 1,879 anti-Semitic incidents against Jewish
5 people and Jewish institutions.

6 l. On October 27, 2018, the perpetrator of the deadliest attack
7 on Jewish people in the history of the United States killed 11
8 worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh,
9 Pennsylvania and reportedly stated that he “wanted all Jews to die”.

10 m. New Jersey ranked third in the nation in anti-Semitic
11 incidents in 2018, with 200 anti-Semitic incidents reported.

12 n. In New Jersey, Bergen, Middlesex, Ocean, and Union
13 counties had the largest number of reported anti-Semitic incidents
14 in 2018 at 36, 23, 21, and 19, respectively.

15 o. In 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported an
16 increase in hate crimes against Jewish people or Jewish institutions
17 and found that attacks against Jewish people or Jewish institutions
18 made up 60.3 percent of all religious-based hate crimes.

19 p. There is an urgent need to ensure the safety and security of
20 Jewish communities, and synagogues, schools, cemeteries, and
21 other institutions.

22 q. Anti-Semitism is a challenge to the basic principles of
23 tolerance, pluralism, and democracy and the shared values that bind
24 Americans together.

25 r. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution
26 established the United States as a country committed to the
27 principles of tolerance and religious freedom, and the Fourteenth
28 Amendment established equal protection of the laws as the heart of
29 justice in the United States.

30 s. Adherence to these principles is vital to the progress of the
31 American people and the diverse communities and religious groups
32 of the State of New Jersey.

33 t. Prejudice against Jewish people as a national, ethnic,
34 religious, or racial group has no place in New Jersey or in the
35 United States of America.

36

37 2. There is hereby established in the Department of State in the
38 Executive Branch of the State Government a task force to be known
39 as the “New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force”.

40 a. The task force shall be permanent and consist of 18 members
41 as follows:

42 (1) The Senate President, who shall serve ex officio, or a
43 designee;

44 (2) The Senate Minority Leader, who shall serve ex officio, or a
45 designee;

46 (3) The Speaker of the General Assembly, who shall serve ex
47 officio, or a designee;

- 1 (4) The General Assembly Minority Leader, who shall serve ex
2 officio, or a designee.
- 3 (5) The Chair of the New Jersey Holocaust Education
4 Commission, who shall serve ex officio, or a designee;
- 5 (6) The Chair of the New Jersey Israel Commission, who shall
6 serve ex officio, or a designee;
- 7 (7) A representative of the Hadassah, The Women's Zionist
8 Organization of America, Inc., from the northern region of New
9 Jersey, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 10 (8) A representative of the Hadassah, The Women's Zionist
11 Organization of America, Inc., from the southern region of New
12 Jersey, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;
- 13 (9) A representative of the State Police, appointed by the
14 Superintendent of the State Police;
- 15 (10) A representative of the New Jersey Division of Criminal
16 Justice's Bias Crimes Unit, appointed by the State Attorney
17 General;
- 18 (11) A representative of the Anti-Defamation League, appointed
19 by the Governor;
- 20 (12) A representative from the Simon Wiesenthal Center,
21 appointed by the Governor;
- 22 (13) A representative of the Governor's Office, appointed by the
23 Governor;
- 24 (14) A member of the public, appointed by the Governor;
- 25 (15) A member of the public, appointed by the Senate President;
- 26 (16) A member of the public, appointed by the Senate Minority
27 Leader;
- 28 (17) A member of the public, appointed by the Speaker of the
29 General Assembly; and
- 30 (18) A member of the public, appointed by the General
31 Assembly Minority Leader.
- 32 b. The task force shall appoint a chair and vice-chair to serve a
33 two-year term, with the chair being precluded from serving more
34 than one term consecutively.
- 35 c. Any vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be
36 filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.
- 37
- 38 3. a. The "New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force" shall
39 organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of a majority
40 of its members and shall select a chair and a vice-chair among its
41 members and a secretary who need not be a member of the task
42 force.
- 43 The presence of ten members of the task force shall constitute a
44 quorum. The task force may conduct business without a quorum,
45 but may only vote on recommendations when a quorum is present.
46 The task force may incur traveling and other miscellaneous
47 expenses as it may deem necessary, within the limits of funds made
48 available to it for its purposes. Members of the task force shall

1 serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses
2 actually incurred in the performance of their duties.

3 b. The appointed members of the task force shall be appointed to
4 serve for a period of four years and may be terminated only for
5 cause upon notice and opportunity to be heard. The public
6 members initially appointed by the Attorney General and the
7 Superintendent of the State Police shall serve for a term of one year;
8 the public members initially appointed by a member of the
9 Legislature shall serve for a term of two years; and the public
10 members initially appointed by the Governor shall serve for a term
11 of three years. Thereafter, all public members shall serve four-year
12 terms. Each qualified member shall remain in office for their term
13 of appointment and until a successor is appointed and qualified.
14 Any vacancy in the membership other than by expiration of term
15 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but
16 for the remainder of the unexpired term only.

17 c. The task force shall hold at least four public meetings each
18 year, with at least one meeting held in-person. The other meetings
19 may be conducted virtually via videoconferencing. At no time shall
20 a meeting be held via conference call. The task force shall invite
21 persons to testify who are leaders in anti-Semitism educational
22 organizations or have training or a verifiable interest in the history
23 of anti-Semitism, New Jersey history and political science, penal
24 history and law enforcement, economics, education, health, human
25 services, law, psychology, religion, or sociology. All issues raised
26 by those testifying at the meetings shall be recorded and included,
27 together with the task force's responses, if any, in the task force's
28 report to the Governor and the Legislature.

29 d. The task force shall invite public comment, including
30 testimony at its meetings, on the issues the task force is required to
31 address as part of its responsibilities, in a manner that encourages
32 public participation.

33 e. The Department of State shall publicize the task force's
34 mission and procedures on the department's website.

35 f. The task force shall be entitled to avail itself of the
36 assistance and services of the staff of the Department of State, and
37 of the employees of any other State department, board, bureau,
38 commission, or agency, as it may require and as may be available to
39 it for its purposes.

40 g. The task force may avail itself of the assistance of members
41 of the public for submissions of any information or research with
42 regard to the duties of the task force set forth by section four of this
43 act.

44
45 4. The New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force shall conduct
46 research, develop recommendations to address the harms caused by
47 anti-Semitism, and annually issue a report to the Governor and
48 Legislature regarding the state of anti-Semitism in New Jersey.

- 1 a. In performing this duty, the task force shall:
- 2 (1) Identify, compile, and synthesize the relevant corpus of
- 3 evidentiary documentation relative to the history and current status
- 4 of anti-Semitism at college campuses and state universities and in
- 5 the world, with a focus on New Jersey-specific information. The
- 6 task force's documentation and examination shall include, but not
- 7 be limited to, facts related to:
- 8 (a) The definition and ideology of anti-Semitism;
- 9 (b) Misconceptions and stereotyping relative to the Jewish
- 10 people; and
- 11 (c) Discrimination and systemic failings relative to the fair
- 12 treatment of the Jewish people.
- 13 (2) Recommend appropriate remedies in consideration of the
- 14 task force's findings on the matters described in this section.
- 15 (3) Recommend appropriate ways to educate the New Jersey
- 16 public of the task force's findings.
- 17 b. In making recommendations, the task force shall address
- 18 among other issues:
- 19 (1) how the recommendations comport with national and
- 20 international standards of remedy for wrongs and injuries, as well
- 21 as relevant national and international protocols, laws, and findings;
- 22 (2) how New Jersey laws and policies that continue to
- 23 disproportionately and negatively affect the Jewish people as a
- 24 group can be eliminated; and
- 25 (3) how the injuries resulting from matters described in this
- 26 section can be reversed and provide appropriate policies, programs,
- 27 projects, and recommendations for the purpose of reversing the
- 28 injuries.
- 29
- 30 5. The New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force shall issue a
- 31 report each year to the Governor and the Legislature reflecting its
- 32 research findings, recommendations to address the harms caused by
- 33 anti-Semitism, and detailing the state of anti-Semitism in New
- 34 Jersey. The task force shall submit its reports to the Legislature
- 35 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The task
- 36 force shall provide its first annual report no later than 12 months
- 37 following its initial meeting.
- 38
- 39 6. This act shall take effect immediately.
- 40
- 41

42 STATEMENT

43

44 This bill establishes the New Jersey Anti-Semitism Task Force to

45 conduct research, develop recommendations to address the harms

46 caused by anti-Semitism, and annually issue a report to the

47 Governor and Legislature regarding the state of anti-Semitism in

48 New Jersey.

1 The task force will be permanent and consist of 18 persons, at
2 least five of whom will be members of the public.

3 The bill requires the task force to conduct research, develop
4 recommendations to address the harms caused by anti-Semitism,
5 and annually issue a report to the Governor and Legislature
6 regarding the state of anti-Semitism in New Jersey. In performing
7 this duty, the task force will:

8 (1) Identify, compile, and synthesize the relevant corpus of
9 evidentiary documentation relative to the history and current status
10 of anti-Semitism at college campuses and state universities and the
11 world, with a focus on New Jersey-specific information. The task
12 force's documentation and examination will include, but not be
13 limited to, facts related to:

14 (a) The definition and ideology of anti-Semitism;

15 (b) Misconceptions and stereotyping relative to the Jewish
16 people; and

17 (c) Discrimination and systemic failings relative to the fair
18 treatment of the Jewish people;

19 (2) Recommend appropriate ways to educate the New Jersey
20 public of the task force's findings; and

21 (3) Recommend appropriate remedies in consideration of the
22 task force's findings.

23 The task force will hold at least four public meetings each year,
24 with at least one of those meetings being held in-person. The other
25 meetings may be conducted virtually, via videoconferencing.
26 Meetings via conference call will not be permitted.

27 The task force will issue a report each year to the Governor and
28 the Legislature and will provide its first annual report no later than
29 12 months following its initial meeting.