

Resolution No.: 19-1433
Introduced: July 12, 2022
Adopted: November 1, 2022

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: To address and combat antisemitism

Background

1. Antisemitism, including harassment on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identity, affiliation, or faith, remains a persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in contemporary American society.
2. Antisemitism is a challenge to the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans and many allies together.
3. The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL's) 2021 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in the United States recorded 2,717 acts of assault, vandalism, and harassment in 2021 alone, an average of more than seven incidents per day; a thirty-four percent increase from 2020 and the highest year of incidents on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.
4. According to the American Jewish Committee's 2021 State of Antisemitism in America report, one in four American Jews has been the target of antisemitism over the past 12 months including verbal or physical attacks, harassment online or on social media.
5. Discrimination on the basis of religion, race, and ethnicity is unlawful under the County's human rights law, as well as under state and federal law.
6. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism, including the eleven contemporary examples, adopted by 35 countries, and embraced by the United States under both Republican and Democratic administrations, provides a road map to defining and rooting out antisemitism.
7. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity and blames Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.
8. Defining antisemitism increases awareness in the community, leading to better monitoring and reporting, more informed analyses and investigation of incidents in order to enhance public safety and policymaking.

9. The Montgomery County Council has consistently condemned antisemitism and committed to combatting all forms of hate and extremism in previous resolutions and statements, and along with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington and other community partners, works with law enforcement, interfaith and community leaders, and in schools to denounce hatred and bigotry of all kinds.
10. Montgomery County is committed to cultivating an inclusive community and ending the spread of hate, bigotry, and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic as defined by law.
11. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition is intended to be a non-legally binding statement of guidance and educational tool to help combat antisemitism in Montgomery County, Maryland. Nothing in this resolution should be construed to limit anyone's right to free speech or political debate, which are protected under the First Amendment.
12. Modern forms of antisemitism can manifest through anti-Zionism when denying the Jewish right to existence and self-determination or employing an antisemitic trope. However, criticism of Israeli government policies or actions does not constitute antisemitism.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

1. Montgomery County affirms the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism, including the eleven contemporary examples, as a useful educational tool, among other resources, concerning the identification of discrimination rooted in antisemitism and for discussions to address such discrimination:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

2. Montgomery County denounces and condemns antisemitism in all its manifestations.
3. The Council affirms the County's ongoing commitment to cultivate an inclusive, safe, and just society and culture that values the diversity of our community, works to ensure equitable opportunities in all major facets of society, and celebrates both our individuality and commonality.

4. Montgomery County commits to countering antisemitism and hate through engagement with community leaders, governmental transparency, and public information-sharing regarding efforts to fight antisemitism, and the investigation and prosecution of those who commit criminal acts, consistent with civil liberties protections.
5. The Council urges residents to join us by adopting these values in their own lives, calling attention to these harms, and denouncing antisemitism, hate and extremism to help keep us all safe.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Judy Rupp
Clerk of the Council