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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

CONDEMNING ANTISEMITISM IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND BEYOND

Introduced By: Senators Zurier, Bell, Miller, and Kallman

Date Introduced: February 12, 2024

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, Antisemitism, which includes harassment on the basis of actual or perceived
2 Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identity, affiliation, or religious faith, remains a persistent,
3 pervasive, and disturbing problem in American society; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2010, the U.S. Department of State adopted the following definition of
5 antisemitism: “Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred
6 toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish
7 or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and
8 religious facilities”; and

9 WHEREAS, Jews continue to be a targeted minority in the United States, who make up
10 only 2 percent of the country’s population, but against whom antisemitic hate crimes accounted
11 for 9.6 percent of all hate crimes reported in 2022 according to an FBI report; and

12 WHEREAS, Eleven worshippers were killed, and several others were injured in the
13 deadliest attack against the American Jewish community at the Tree of Life Synagogue in
14 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 27, 2018; and

15 WHEREAS, On October 7, 2023, Hamas committed horrific atrocities in Israel, causing
16 the murder of Jews in numbers not seen since the Holocaust, and testimonies of sexual violence,
17 beheadings, burnings and other horrific acts perpetrated by Hamas have been emerging as Israelis
18 begin to process the trauma; and

19 WHEREAS, Polling released by the Jewish Federations of North America on November
20 7 found that 74 percent of American Jews believe there is a lot of anti-Semitism in the United

1 States today; and

2 WHEREAS, Institutions and community organizations have a responsibility to protect
3 citizens from acts of hate and bigotry, including antisemitism; and

4 WHEREAS, The White House has released the first ever comprehensive plan to counter
5 antisemitism in the United States, providing valuable tools to inform more accurate reporting,
6 investigation, and policymaking and increase understanding on the rise of antisemitism in the
7 country; and

8 WHEREAS, The White House plan includes language indicating the impact of hate and
9 bigotry on all Americans: “Antisemitism threatens not only the Jewish community, but all
10 Americans. People who peddle these antisemitic conspiracy theories and fuel racial, ethnic, and
11 religious hatred against Jews also target other communities—including Black and brown
12 Americans; Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; LGBTQI+ individuals;
13 Muslim Americans; women and girls; and so many others.”; and

14 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island is home to the United States’ oldest synagogue,
15 Touro Synagogue in Newport, RI. In 1790, George Washington wrote a letter to the congregation
16 in Newport extolling the virtues of Rhode Island as a home for religious plurality that “gives
17 bigotry no sanction”; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby condemns and rejects
19 antisemitism and strongly stands against hate, bias or violence based on identity. We moreover
20 remain committed to the principles of nondiscrimination and human rights, and reaffirm our
21 community as a safe and affirming one for people of all religions and identities; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

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