



September 10, 2025

The Honorable Sasha Renée Pérez
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 715 (Zbur & Addis) - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Perez,

On behalf of the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA), I write to **strongly oppose Assembly Bill 715 (Zbur & Addis)**. CAIR-CA is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization, with four offices across California and over 100 staff working to serve the state's estimated one million Muslims and many allies.

While we appreciate attempts by Senate committee staff to incorporate some community feedback in the latest bill amendments, the bill remains deeply flawed and threatens to undermine both academic freedom and equal protection for California students.

We, alongside numerous other civil rights organizations and educators, have raised concerns that remain unaddressed. AB 715 continues to blur the distinction between religion and political ideology by conflating Jewish identity with the state of Israel, a framing that suppresses legitimate political critique. It relies on the Biden Administration's *United States National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism* and the contested International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which has been widely criticized – even by its authors – for being weaponized to silence speech. This approach risks labeling factual statements, such as those recognized by international human rights organizations regarding humanitarian conditions in Gaza, as discriminatory.

Furthermore, to make this definition the basis on which the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator is anchored is deeply troubling. Despite the establishment of other, more generally categorized, coordinators, this not only privileges one community's political ideology over others, but also sets a precedent where government offices can dictate which perspectives are acceptable in our classrooms. Instead of protecting students, it risks turning schools into compliance offices where teachers and districts are punished for presenting material that challenges state-sanctioned narratives. This approach undermines the very diversity of thought and honest inquiry that public education is supposed to foster.

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AB 715 also introduces vague and sweeping standards for instruction that will have a chilling effect on classrooms. The requirement that teachers adhere to an undefined standard of 'factual accuracy' and avoid any statements that could be construed as 'advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship' leaves them exposed to politically motivated complaints from across the spectrum. This will encourage preventative self-censorship rather than open and honest dialogue in our schools.

We are further alarmed that AB 715 mandates the 'immediate and permanent' removal of instructional materials deemed objectionable, even if this strips classrooms of entire textbooks mid-year. School leaders are also made liable if they are found to have had 'reason to know' that an objectionable material was used. Such provisions create impossible standards for teachers and administrators, making it far too easy to punish good-faith educators while stifling learning.

We strongly believe that preventing antisemitism and all forms of hate requires investment in education and restorative practices, not punitive overregulation enforced by a subjective and politically motivated process. California should prioritize resources for culturally competent training, restorative justice, and inclusive ethnic studies implementation rather than vague standards that chill discourse and expose schools to costly litigation.

For these reasons, CAIR-CA respectfully urges a NO vote on AB 715. We remain committed to working with lawmakers on solutions that protect all students from hate and discrimination without sacrificing academic freedom, equitable treatment, or the ability of educators to teach with honesty and integrity.

Should you have any questions regarding our position, please feel free to contact me at hayloush@cair.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hussam Ayloush".

Hussam Ayloush
Chief Executive Officer
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California