

September 7, 2025

Dear Mayor Pugh and Croton Board of Trustees,

We, the undersigned, ask the Village to ratify language clarifying its intentions around the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

We realize that the three board members who voted for the resolution to adopt the IHRA definition on August 22 did so to help members of the community feel safer in light of the alarming rise of antisemitism.

Unfortunately, the way the IHRA definition has been used—both in the past decade and **currently**—to penalize critics of Israel deeply concerns a significant number of Croton's community. The Trump administration's demonstrated intent to further employ the IHRA definition as a tool to suppress free speech has only heightened these concerns. Community members **do not feel safe** with the unqualified adoption of this language.

Some people have heard Mayor Pugh and Trustees Simon and Slippen assert that they have no intention of using the adopted IHRA language to limit community members' criticism of Israel or advocacy for the Palestinian people.

Members of the Croton community, including those who may not attend village board meetings, also deserve to know that the Village of Croton-on-Hudson will always stand up for the First Amendment and uphold our right to free speech, even beyond the terms of the current Mayor and Board of Trustees.

We propose adoption of the following, or similar, language to address the needs of the community:

Clarification of the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Croton on 8/20/25.

Given the Village Board of Trustees' adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which includes some ambiguities regarding certain criticisms of Israel and certain pro-Palestinian sentiments being labeled as antisemitic, and the Board's commitment to not inhibit free speech, we would like to clarify that the following examples are not inherently antisemitic:

*Speech that advocates for equal rights for Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza is not antisemitic.

*The suggestion that Israel is committing genocide, ethnic cleansing or apartheid is not antisemitic.

*Criticizing our own government for providing weaponry and military support to Israel is not antisemitic.

*Discussion of the Nakba or “catastrophe” in Arabic, which is the displacement and dispossession of some 750,000 Palestinians to create the state of Israel in 1948, is not antisemitic.

*Stating that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians did not begin on Oct. 7, 2023, is not antisemitic.

*Wearing a keffiyeh or displaying the Palestinian flag is not antisemitic.

We appreciate the Board’s commitment to ensure the safety and liberty of all Village residents and visitors, and we hope you will see how the above language is a crucial next step in doing so.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our community.

Sincerely,

1. Elisa Silverglade
2. Nora Regis Odland
3. Benjamin Faber
4. Cheryl Wong
5. Cristina Alvarez-Arnold
6. Andrew Courtney
7. Andrea Furey Cohen
8. Michelle Celarier
9. Harry Soloway
10. Taher Shafie
11. Sherry Horowitz
12. Sydney Regier
13. Faith Rivers
14. Alejandro Godoy
15. Joe Rader

16. Laura Mercogliano-Clarke
17. Nia Hough
18. Leila Goldmark
19. David Sternberg
20. Jordan Sternberg
21. Julie Minter
22. Richard Grimaldi
23. Miles Kafka
24. Luisa Godoy-Rosales
25. Francesca Battaglia
26. Joshua Diamond
27. Michael Odland
28. Amanda Victoria Mintz
29. Jessica Das
30. Erik Ferguson
31. Cathie Elliot
32. Elizabeth Spector
33. Tully McGowan
34. Laure Shea
35. Adriana Zavala
36. Alanna Fraase
37. Meredith Phillips
38. Jill Ferson
39. Marlena Horton
40. Ibrahim Jamal
41. Evan Perdomo-Cohen
42. Laura Perdomo-Cohen
43. Anna Adler
44. Feryal Jamal
45. Mahmoud Jamal
46. Lindsay Hoffman
47. Rawan Nahas
48. Sharbel Ayoub
49. Keith Fraase
50. Stephanie Duval
51. Brad Einhorn
52. Yvonne Tony Ayoub
53. Matthew Beckemeyer
54. Matthew Broudy
55. Heather Bishop

- 56. Danny Ferguson
- 57. Paolo R. (Full name withheld)
- 58. Joanna Nnama