



Commission to Combat Antisemitism Minutes

Official Government Business

6/21/22 (Virtual)

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

- Chair Rosen: This meeting is getting us in the position to get things done and move forward. I am happy to report Art Sandler is now the vice chair of the commission. I am very impressed with the group of people who are on this commission. We expect the subcommittees to be doing a lot of things and I intend on being an ex officio member of each subcommittee. I looked into others state's efforts and found that a number of states have Holocaust education commissions, but what Virginia is doing is groundbreaking regarding antisemitism. This is an opportunity to do good work and set a path for other states to follow.

Roll Call

Name	Present (P) or Absent (A)
Jeffrey A. Rosen	P
Samuel Asher	P
Mel Chaskin	P
Eric Fusfield	P
Jennifer Goss	P
Bruce Hoffman	P
William Kilberg	P
Julie Strauss Levin	A

Earl Matthews	P
Connie Meyer	P
Kenneth Miller	P
Susan O’Prandy Fierro	P
Eric Rozenman	P
Arthur Sandler	A
Camille Solberg	P
Ex-officio Members	
Jason Miyares, Attorney General of Virginia	P (Don Ferguson designee)
Aimee Guidera, Secretary of Education	P
Robert Mosier, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security	P
Rosa Atkins, Chief Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Officer	P

Quorum Met

Reading and Approval of Minutes/Agenda

- Approve Minutes from DATE (Minutes will be voted on at the next meeting to comply with voting requirements to be in person)
 - *Motion:*
 - *Second:*
- Approve Agenda for 6/21/22 (Agenda will be voted on at the next meeting to comply with voting requirements to be in person)
 - *Motion:*
 - *Second:*

Guest Speaker Presentation

- **Chair:** Ken Marcus is the Chair of the Brandeis Center for Human Rights and a previous Executive Director of the Civil Rights Commission.
- **Marcus:** I am very pleased to see Virginia and Governor Youngkin taking the lead in looking into antisemitism and religious freedom. I’ve spent almost twenty years fighting antisemitism. Antisemitism, I thought, was largely a thing of the past when I began my

career many years ago. This belief is not true and we are not making steady progress towards antisemitism. We have begun moving in the wrong direction in the past two decades. Last year, the Anti-Defamation League found that it was the worst year for antisemitism. It is wise to look at problems of antisemitism because it is growing in the extremes of both the left and the right. In Virginia, we saw it in a disturbing form in Charlottesville during the Unite the Right rally. On college campuses and even in K-12 schools, we are seeing negative attitudes towards Israel. Data showcases this and we are also seeing this on the street. Flyers spread in NOVA blame Jewish people for a number of things, including COVID. If this commission could do anything to address antisemitism, I recommend it address the problem of how to identify antisemitism and develop tools to address it. Sometimes it is easy, such as with Neo Nazis, but other times prove more difficult. For example, stereotypes of Israel and its people are often more difficult to address. The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is something the commission should consider. In addition, I use the 3D test to antisemitism. The three questions are: Are we looking at the demonization of Israel? Is there a delegitimization of the state? Are there double standards used? These are ways to look into this issue. I'd like to point out the executive orders and resolutions that states offer often have no binding effect. The creation of a definition of antisemitism in a systematic way and how it should be used by agencies, schools, government, and public groups should also be a goal. My hope is that the commission is able to provide recommendations on how the tools can be adopted and used in the state. Make sure this issue doesn't sit on a shelf, but instead make this issue something that can be used in a meaningful way.

- **Chair Rosen:** Thinking about ways to make things operational is important and a good idea.
- **Fusfield:** I chair the subcommittee on definitions. We are at a point where governments are adopting a definition of antisemitism. This is an interesting moment because we need to move beyond simply adopting the definition but we need to operationalize it. I hope you will be available to assist us as we move forward.
- **Marcus:** I would be delighted to make myself available for the commission.
- **Sandler:** What states have done something actionable?
- **Marcus:** Texas, Florida, South Carolina and other states have adopted different means of actions. Some simply require the definitions for education. Others require all state agencies and employees to understand the definition. This definition should be used generally to determine if content or actions are antisemitic. These definitions can help determine what is or isn't against the law, or what is or isn't antisemitic.
- **Meyer:** I am the chair of the subcommittee on legislation. We discussed not doing a proclamation because it can be overturned. Using the other state's background we can create something with more lasting impacts. I look forward to working with you on it.

Remarks from State Officials

- **Secretary of Education Guidera:** I look forward to working with the commission and apologize for being late.
- **Secretary Mosier:** Thank you again for doing a virtual meeting. I am reminded of the difficult challenges that people face as a result of the harassment associated with antisemitism. We are committed from a law enforcement standpoint to follow up and promote safety among those who are vulnerable. We have taken on a senior advisor, March Bell, to work with us on these issues.
- **Special Advisor Bell:** I look forward to working with these issues and hope my background in civil rights can help in the commissions work.

Unfinished Business

- **Finalized Subcommittee Assignments:**
 - Definitions and the Scope of the Antisemitism Problem
 - Eric Fusfield, Chair
 - Samuel Asher
 - William Kilberg
 - Educational Responses to Antisemitic Actions
 - Eric Rozenman, Chair
 - Jennifer Goss
 - Julie Strauss Levin
 - Camille Solberg
 - Law Enforcement and Security Responses to Antisemitic Actions
 - Susan Fierro, Chair
 - Kenneth Miller
 - Bruce Hoffman
 - Trade, Laws & Legislation to Combat Antisemitism
 - Connie Meyer, Chair
 - Mel Chaskin
 - Earl Matthews
 - Arthur Sandler
 - **Chair:** I look forward to seeing the subcommittee work and hope you can have a public meeting. We have to meet in person over this summer because of some legal issues. This is a complicated issue and the Attorney General suggests we meet in person.

New Business

- **Discuss Next Meeting:**
 - **Chair:** I know that summer is difficult because of vacations and other things. When can we meet again this summer? We will canvas people, over email, to determine when to meet and how we can get the most commission members present to conduct business and meet quorum.
- **Recent Events in the Media:**

- **Chair:** Ashley Traficant distributed some news clips at my request for us to examine. In the future, send any relevant articles to the chair or vice chair to look at ahead of meetings if it can inform our work.
- **Subcommittee Session**
 - **Definitions and the Scope of the Antisemitism Problem, Fusfield:** I had a chance to work on the federal level with Mr. Marcus. The IHRA working definition is the gold standard and I think that the commission should promote it as widely as possible. There are several areas where subcommittees will overlap. We can discuss vehicles or means of pushing out the definition as we move forward. The White House order focused on education in K12 and higher education but there are many other areas. Law enforcement training and data collection can benefit from education.
 - **Chair:** I would love if subcommittees could meet as soon as possible. People can get a feel for where there is work to be done and keep the momentum moving for the commission.
 - **Educational Responses to Antisemitic Actions, Rozenman:** We want to receive reports of examples of antisemitism in schools, specifically K12 both public and private. We want to offer resources to teachers and educators. The committee will look at ways to connect law enforcement, public officials, other faith communities, and other stakeholders to look at education. Finally, we will look at how we can receive data from schools and better collect data for this issue.
 - **Law Enforcement and Security Responses to Antisemitic Actions, Fierro:** I have four main points. First, assess criminal laws regarding antisemitic crimes. Second, enhance training of law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim support services. Third, rehabilitation and reeducation of offenders. We have no anti-hate classes to send people too. Fourth, how would the Commonwealth respond to an incident and help localities or organizations deal with these situations.
 - **Trade, Laws & Legislation to Combat Antisemitism, Meyer:** I was privileged to help write the Executive Order #8 to create the commission. Much of what this subcommittee does will cross other subcommittees. The most successful way to go about this is to create bipartisan bills with sponsors in both houses. This helps legislators to defend their bills and allows us to get ahead of the short legislative session this coming year.

Public Comment

- **Fusfield:** What are the rules on contacting other members and are personal discussions between commission members okay?
- **Ferguson:** Members can communicate by email, but you cannot have interactive meetings without it being open to the public.
- **Fusfield:** We cannot have a 3-4 person meeting on Zoom?

- **Ferguson:** Prior to July 1, you can have a meeting with 3-4 people without FOIA. After July 1, the AG's office will issue guidance on FOIA and government meetings. I advise a subcommittee to meet virtually before July 1.
- **Chair:** After July 1, groups can meet in person at any location as long as time is allowed for public comment.
- **Fusfield:** If the FOIA requirements are restrictive after July 1, creating separate conversations between just two people is okay and is a work around.
- **Ferguson:** If there are three members it is a meeting, conversations between two people are not a meeting.
- **Samuel Asher:** I volunteer the Virginia Holocaust Museum for meeting space, if it meets the requirements of the state. We have space that we could host many meetings.
- **Chair:** I would love to have the full commission at the museum for a meeting.

Adjournment

- **Closing Remarks by Chair:** The first two meetings have been about building a foundation for the commission with little public or media attention. When we reconvene as a whole commission, I think it would be good to have it at an interesting location and invite the public and media to solicit more attention. I welcome suggestions for this location.
- **Motion to Close:** (No votes to comply with requirements to be in person)
 - *Motion:*
 - *Second:*