

Correspondence received by the
Concord Select Board
Week Ending –February 9, 2026

1. Jennifer Bell

Please Note: The Select Board Correspondence policy has been updated as of January 27, 2025. The letters posted here reflect the views and opinions of the author as recorded in the body of their email. Neither the Select Board nor Town staff have verified or reviewed the contents. The Select Board and the Town do not necessarily agree, condone, support or advocate the ideas expressed in these letters and have not verified any factual statements made in the letters.

The town of Concord is a deliberative direct democracy, not a representative democracy. The Concord Select Board are not elected as representatives of voters and are not authorized to make broad policy decisions without evidence of the support of the majority voters.

With respect to the recent proclamation adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the Select Board has over-reached their authority. There is no evidence of majority voter support for the IHRA definition. The passing of the proclamation represents a significant town process failure which justifies reversing the decision.

While there is support for the controversial IHRA definition from some Concord residents, there is also strong opposition to the definition from the Massachusetts Jewish community, who argue that by infringing on Constitutional rights regarding speech about an unpopular foreign state, the definition increases antisemitic sentiment instead of fighting it [1]. As was recently argued by a Harvard Law expert in Constitutional antidiscrimination law at a Jan. 15th event in the Concord Carlisle High School auditorium, the Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism report is a compromise document that stops short of recommending the definition. Moreover, the ADL document compelling the Town to adopt the definition was legally unsound [2].

The IHRA definition has not been an agenda item or specifically discussed at any committee meeting save the most recent select board meeting, where the agenda was posted mere days in advance. Despite the short notice the community gathered a letter in opposition with more than 70 resident signatures, and the Massachusetts ACLU wrote a letter discouraging the proclamation on a Constitutional basis [3]. Despite this, the Select Board chose to pass the proclamation anyway.

The passing of the proclamation is best viewed as both an error in judgement and a misunderstanding of the select board's role as facilitators of the will of the majority of Concord voters. Please reverse the proclamation. A more appropriate forum for its consideration would be the spring meeting or a special town meeting convened for this purpose.

Thank you,

Jennifer Bell

38 Edgewood Rd.

[1] <https://jewishjournal.org/2025/10/03/majority-of-public-commenters-strongly-criticize-antisemitism-commission-findings-and-composition/>

[2] <https://youtu.be/uNaTmCdzx94?si=cZHgvYBd12YKT5h9>

[3] <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pw5u2dd7pru7cfzlytjgc/ACLU-of-Massachusetts-Letter-to-Concord-Select-Board-January-27-2026-1.pdf?rlkey=lfkb7nhyfcyq3e5kvgd8o3fr1&e=1&dl=0>