



New Jersey Association of Black Psychologists

50 CHURCH STREET, SUITE 102 • MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY 07042

August 12, 2019

Honorable Phil Murphy
Governor of the State of New Jersey
125 W State St.
Trenton, NJ 08608

RE: Senate Bill 4001

Dear Governor Murphy,

The New Jersey Association of Black Psychologists (NJABPsi) is a professional association with a 40+ year history (see <http://www.njabpsi.org/>). We are a chapter of Association of Black Psychologists (<https://www.abpsi.org/>) with national headquarters in Fort Washington, Maryland. Our members include Psychologists who provide mental health and related care in independent practice; in hospitals and health settings; and in schools, universities, and other educational institutions. Our members include university administrators and professors, court approved expert witnesses, as well as consultants to corporate, religious, and governmental organizations. Our members also include graduate and undergraduate students who are studying toward careers in psychology and related fields.

We have reviewed New Jersey Senate Bill 4001 and we object to the proposed legislation for three basic reasons which we present and elaborate below.

1. Even though Jewish people have been, and continue to be, victimized by acts of violent bigotry, they are not alone in being targets of violence based on ethnicity, creed, or faith. Thus, we see no reasonable basis for Jewish people to receive any greater, or lesser, protection than any other ethnic or religious group.

2. We hold that no government, or governmental policy, is above criticism. In fact, active and engaged critical scrutiny of governments and government policy leads to informed public dialogue which we view as supportive of mental health and human development. It is dictatorial and totalitarian governments that discourage and prohibit criticism of government policies, and we oppose such practices. We suggest that the educational professionals in our classrooms (teachers and professors) are equipped to initiate and/or monitor discussions regarding government policy and are capable of ensuring such discussions are free from ethnic, religious, or other prejudicial bias. Thus, we oppose legislation that would protect the Israeli government from criticism, just as we oppose legislation that would protect the US government, or any other government from scrutiny and criticism.

3. Based on our review of this proposed legislation, it appears to be unacceptable as it clearly violates the valued principle of free speech, which we view as essential.


It seems apparent to us that this proposed legislation is an effort to curtail the growing international criticism of the Israeli government's discriminatory practices toward Palestinian people. This discrimination is manifest in the Israeli government's denial of full citizenship rights to non-Jewish citizens, the imposition of apartheid-like security and surveillance measures that target the Palestinian population, the annexation ("settlement") of Palestinian lands in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and the refusal to recognize the 'right to return' of displaced Palestinian families.

We believe inquiry into Israeli government policy is necessary because these policies appear to be clearly un-democratic. We also believe inquiry is warranted because The State of Israel receives more US foreign aid than any other nation (despite Israel's relatively small geographic size and population).

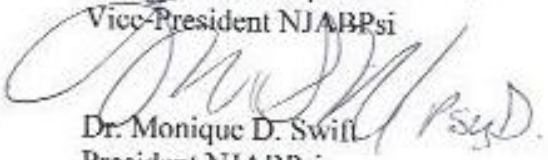
We believe that the Israel and Palestine issues deserve attention and scrutiny, just as the issues surrounding the African-American people, the Native American people, and the US governments, demand our examination. We do not believe protecting one particular government from scrutiny is a productive way to proceed with the inquiry.

We are willing to meet with you and/or your staff to further discuss this very important matter at your request.

Respectfully,



Dr. Barbara Prempch
Vice-President NJABPsi



Dr. Monique D. Swift
President NJABPsi

Cc: Lt. Governor