

My name is Matthew Vogel, I use he/him pronouns and I am the Executive Director of the Hillel at the University of Vermont. I am representing myself, my role as a father of two children in the Addison County school system, and as a representative of the 1,736 Jewish students, their friends and allies we met on campus last year.

Before I begin my remarks I want to recognize the privilege I bring to this space. I am speaking to you from Western Abenaki land, I am a cis-white male and I am Jewish.

I want this group to be aware of the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights recent resolution of claims of antisemitism at the University of Vermont. I have been engaged in that fight for the past five years. I want this committee to ask itself why so many Jewish people from around the state are speaking out now to this issue. We have advocated that the definition of Ethnic Groups be exactly as it appears in the ACT 1 law. In ACT 1, Ethnic groups intentionally includes part be, "Groups that have been historically subject to persecution or genocide." This aligns with the White House's recent National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

I stood alongside Jewish victims of sexual assault as they were told by their administrators and educators that their bias and harrassment was invalid because others may not experience antisemitism in their exclusion from a group. Their identity was decided for them and they were excluded because they were Jews. This could regularly occur if we don't have our K-12 curriculum equitable in a way that recognizes people, not just the act of genocide.

Vermont leads the nation in so many ways.

Why must Vermont lead the nation in ignoring Jewish voices and minimizing victims and impact of genocide as well through this change in language?

In order to tamp down the antisemitism I see on campus we need to better prepare our Vermont students in their K-12 experience. I fully support teaching ethnic studies, and I want to ensure it is done in a way that includes the teaching of the Jewish people AND all other people historically subjected to persecution or genocide.

Matt Vogel
Executive Director
www.uvmhillel.org
Burack Hillel
439 College Street
Burlington, VT 05405
Phone: 802-238-4326
Mobile: 802-355-6695
[he/him](#)