

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Miriam Saperstein <miriamsaperstein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2019 12:23 PM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Testimony for 5/16/19 hb 4436

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your time. I didn't get a chance to speak so I am submitting this written testimony. My name is Miriam Saperstein and I am a student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

I came to Lansing today to voice my concerns about Michigan house bill 4436. This bill puts marginalized people on campus in danger by making it easier to bring speakers to campus who incite violence against us. It is very easy to create a student organization on campus which then becomes an pathway to bring people who advocate for eugenics, genocide, or other dangerous ideologies to campus very easily.

While this bill is called a "free speech bill" the way it is actually designed would limit the free speech of people on campus. With vague wording it creates a situation where protesters could be punished for exercising their first amendment rights to shout over or disrupt speakers in public spaces. It is our right to disrupt speakers in public spaces, especially those who would advocate our destruction or other types of harm.

Additionally, bringing people to campus who do not respect the humanity of all students, faculty and staff on campus does not create a culture where free speech and debate are welcome. Debating someone's right to exist is not a real debate, it is using hateful rhetoric to justify violence. Free speech thrives when people are safe to live their lives and voice concerns via protest without fear of retaliation by the state or the university. Restricting the rights of protesters' free speech creates a dangerous environment where no one is allowed to counter speakers who espouse violence towards marginalized people. This is not just a theoretical idea, either. People like Richard Spencer have tried to come to university campuses in the last couple years, people whose followers include neo-Nazis who do harm based on racist, islamaphobic, antisemitic and anti-LGBT rhetoric. This puts me and other people on campus in direct danger of violence and does not make an environment where we are free to learn, which is what a university space should be.

I urge you to oppose HB 4436.

Thank you for your time,  
Miriam Saperstein

