

FROM PLAYGROUND TO CLASSROOM: THE SPREAD OF ANTISEMITISM IN K-12 SCHOOLS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD,
ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Serial No. 119-27

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and Workforce



Available via: *edworkforce.house.gov* or *www.govinfo.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

63-857 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2026

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FROM PLAYGROUND TO CLASSROOM: THE SPREAD OF ANTISEMITISM IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY,
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:17 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Kevin Kiley (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Kiley, Miller, Thompson, Owens, Rulli, Moylan, Mackenzie, Harris, Messmer, Walberg, Bonamici, Hayes, Lee, Mannion, Wilson, Adams, Ansari, and Scott.

Also present: Representative Fine.

Staff present: Jenna Berger, Investigative Counsel; Lexi Boccuzzi, Investigator; Antonette Bowman, FDD Fellow; Vlad Cerga, Director of Information Technology; Maren Emmerson, Staff Assistant; Cabell Fleet, Intern; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Libby Kearns, Press Assistant; Isaiah Knox, Legislative Assistant; Campbell Ladd, Clerk; R.J. Laukitis, Staff Director; Danny Marca, Director of Information Technology; R.J. Martin, Professional Staff Member; Audra McGeorge, Communications Director; Eli Mitchell, Legislative Assistant; Ethan Pann, Deputy Press Secretary and Digital Director; Ian Prince, Professional Staff Member; Chance Russell, Economist and Policy Advisor; Dominico Sassano, Intern; Kent Talbert, Investigative Counsel; Leah Raymond, Intern; Anders Vendt, Legislative Assistant; Ann Vogel, Director of Operations; James Whittaker, Damian Arambula, Minority Intern; Ellie Berenson, Minority Press Assistant; Ilana Brunner, Minority General Counsel; Christian Haines, Minority General Counsel; Sarah Holehouse, Minority Intern; Maxine Jones, Minority Intern; Alexandra Pernie, Minority Intern; Stephanie Lalle, Minority Communications Director; Raiyana Malone, Minority Press Secretary; Kwesi Matthews, Minority Einstein Fellow; Marie McGrew, Minority Press Assistant; Eleazar Padilla, Minority Staff Assistant; Veronique Pluviose, Minority Staff Director; Banyon Vassar, Minority Director of IT.

Chairman KILEY. The Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education will come to order. I note that a quorum is present. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to call a recess at any time. Good morning. Over the past 2 years, the Committee on Education and Workforce has been instrumental in

investigating the horrifying rise in antisemitism at universities across the country.

Following this Committee's oversight, several prominent university Presidents have stepped down, and we have seen important reforms at leading institutions. Progress, however, remains uneven, and far too many Jewish students continue to face discrimination, harassment, and civil rights violations at universities across the country.

This jarring State of affairs is unfortunately not limited to higher education. Antisemitism is also a growing problem in our K-12 education system. At some schools in my home State, California, the antisemitic environment is so hostile that Jewish children are withdrawing and transferring to other schools.

Even the California Department of Education has found ethnic studies curricula to be antisemitic in multiple school districts. As with higher education, there are clear factors driving antisemitism in K-12 schools. Today's hearing will address these underlying causes.

First, teachers colleges increasingly prime faculty to see themselves as activists rather than educators, prioritizing divisive ideologies and casting Israel as an oppressor, instead of focusing on preparing future teachers.

Second, local and national teachers' unions abuse their monopolies to put antisemitic activism into action. Take the National Education Association for example, which the Committee recently announced it will investigate. The NEA uses its position as the largest union in the country to spread antisemitism nationwide.

In July, its representative assembly unbelievably voted to ban one of the Nation's premiere antisemitism watchdogs, the Anti-Defamation League. Third, an expansive network of outside groups partners with school districts to promote the use of instructional material that traffics in antisemitic tropes. Such groups often advance foreign interests and an anti-Israel agenda.

These driving factors incite severe discrimination against Jewish students and teachers, forcing many to move schools to avoid being targeted by their peers and colleagues. Administrative malaise or even prejudice, at the school, district, and State level has allowed antisemitism to fester and even become normalized.

Many of the incidents documented by our witnesses today truly shock the conscience. I will tell you that I have also met personally with many students in our K-12 system, who have had to live through things that we would never have imagined in this country; outright discrimination, sometimes you know the discrimination and the bigotry is couched, cloaked in simply, you know, anti-Israel rhetoric or other tropes.

Sometimes it is just outright undisguised antisemitism that they are confronted with as they are just going about their lives, trying to get an education in our public school system. This disgraceful reality that we are faced with, that one of the world's most ancient retrograde prejudices has deeply infected our public education system, demands decisive action.

We must use every tool available to protect students across America and to stop poisonous ideologies from corrupting their schooling. My colleagues and I are committed to understanding

why antisemitism has gone unchecked at the K–12 level and to ensuring a safe learning environment for Jewish students.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses today, as it will certainly inform this Committee’s ongoing work, and with that I will turn to the Ranking Member for an opening statement.
[The prepared statement of Chairman Kiley follows:]



Opening Statement of Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-CA), Chairman
Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee
“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12
Schools”

September 10, 2025

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning.

Over the past two years, the Committee on Education and Workforce has been instrumental in investigating the horrifying rise in antisemitism at universities across the country. Following this committee’s oversight, several prominent university presidents have stepped down, and we have seen important reforms at leading institutions. Progress, however, remains uneven, and far too many Jewish students continue to face discrimination, harassment, and civil rights violations at universities across the country.

This jarring state of affairs is not limited to higher education. Antisemitism is also a growing problem in our K-12 education system. At some schools in my home state of California, the antisemitic environment is so hostile that Jewish children are withdrawing and transferring elsewhere. Even the California Department of Education has found ethnic studies curricula to be antisemitic in multiple school districts.

As with higher education, there are clear factors driving antisemitism in K-12 schools. Today's hearing will address these underlying causes. First, teachers colleges increasingly prime faculty to see themselves as activists rather than educators, prioritizing divisive ideologies and casting Israel as an oppressor instead of focusing on preparing future teachers.

Second, local and national teachers unions abuse their monopolies to put antisemitic activism into action. Take the National Education Association for example, which the Committee recently announced it will investigate. The NEA uses its position as the largest union in the country to spread antisemitism nationwide. In July, its Representative Assembly voted to ban one of the nation's premier antisemitism watchdogs, the Anti-Defamation League.

Third, an expansive network of outside groups partners with school districts to promote the use of instructional material that traffics in antisemitic tropes. Such groups often advance foreign interests and an anti-Israel agenda.

These driving factors incite severe discrimination against Jewish students and teachers—forcing many to move schools to avoid being targeted by their peers and colleagues. Administrative malaise—or even prejudice—at the school, district, and state level has allowed antisemitism to fester and even become normalized.

Many of the incidents documented by our witnesses today truly shock the conscience. The disgraceful reality we are faced with – that one of the world's most ancient, retrograde prejudices has deeply infected our

public education system – demands decisive action. We must use every tool available to protect students across America and to stop poisonous ideologies from corrupting their schooling.

My colleagues and I are committed to understanding why antisemitism has gone unchecked at the K-12 level and to ensuring a safe learning environment for Jewish students.

I look forward to hearing your testimony today, as it will certainly inform this Committee's future work.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses. We can all agree that schools are responsible for creating safe, learning environments for students, teachers, and faculty, free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. There is no question that antisemitic acts of harassment and intimidation have increased, especially since October 7th of 2023.

As I have said repeatedly in this Committee, we must do more. This is now the 11th hearing we have had on antisemitism in the past few years, and what has happened? Are things better? No. Antisemitism is on the rise, and tensions and divisions have increased.

As the mother of Jewish children, I know and understand that we can and must do more to protect Jewish students and Jewish Americans who are threatened, harassed, and attacked because of who they are. Once again, I do not see the work of this Committee as productive in accomplishing this stated goal.

Today's hearing and multiple past hearings have been used to attack schools and their leaders and educators, rather than to have a substantive discussion about how to curb antisemitism. Some on this Committee recently belittled and shamed the now former President of Northwestern University, Michael Schill, a descendant of Holocaust survivors.

This was personal, beyond policy differences. They gloated when he resigned, excuse me, and that does not stop the spread of antisemitism. One of our strongest tools is the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education. OCR is dedicated to investigating and resolving civil rights violations, including antisemitic instances at schools and universities.

The Trump administration fired almost half of OCR's staff and closed 7 of their 12 regional offices. Instead of offering real solutions, Republicans employ antisemitism as an excuse to turn our Nation's civil rights laws upside down and undermine public education.

We have seen this most prominently with higher education, and it is clear the Committee is now seeking to do the same thing to our local public, elementary, middle, and high schools.

The reality is that the Trump administration and congressional Republicans are using the real plight of Jewish students experiencing antisemitism to destabilize institutions they do not approve

of, whether institutions of higher education or teachers' unions. If you wonder why, here is a quote from the Academy Magazine last spring.

"Donald Trump is coming for America's universities and higher education workers for the same reason that Benito Mussolini demanded loyalty oaths in 1931, and Viktor Orban launched a 'vicious smear campaign' against Hungary's premiere university in 2019."

Our commitment to open inquiry over propaganda to persuasion over coercion and to democracy over dictatorship provides a check on authoritarian rule. I will add that all of this is happening while Republicans in Congress continue to refuse to address the antisemitic cancer that is metastasizing in their own party, including in the Trump White House, and against the backdrop of the promotion of white Christian nationalists into key government roles.

I have consistently called out the multiple Trump White House officials with ties to antisemitic extremists, but my colleagues have not, including the liaison to the Department of Homeland Security, the Communications Director for the Office of Management and Budget, the Deputy Press Secretary of the Department of Defense who posted Nazi slogans on her social media accounts, and promoted the antisemitic great replacement conspiracy theory.

The leader of President Trump's Antisemitism Task Force agreed that the President could "revoke someone's Jew card" and shared a post on social media from the former leader of a white supremacist group organization that called for the "Nazification of America."

The current White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, Stephen Miller, is known as a racist and a white nationalist. The Rabbinical Assembly called for his firing during the first Trump administration because of his white supremacist views, and so did 25 Jewish Members of Congress who wrote these hateful views, have no place in our government, much less steps from the Oval Office.

At this time of rising antisemitism, xenophobia, racism and white supremacy, we must forcefully call out and refuse to accept intolerance or hate anywhere within our government. Now Stephen Miller has far reaching influence in the White House.

In an interview President Trump said that it would be a downgrade if he appointed Stephen Miller as National Security Advisor, instead saying that Stephen is much higher on the totem pole than that.

Mr. Chairman, you just criticized the trafficking of antisemitic tropes, and you said to use every tool possible. What will truly help Jewish students, and Jewish Americans will be to determine why the Trump administration has been infiltrated by white nationalists and antisemites.

To ascertain their reasoning for dismantling the Office of Civil Rights, defunding universities and undermining public schools will hurt students, Jewish and other, instead of providing them a safe place to learn. If this Committee truly cares about Jewish students and fighting antisemitism, we do have an obligation.

We have an obligation to, as the Chairman said, use every tool possible, and to exert our full authority. Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

I move that the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education subpoena Stephen N. Miller, White House Deputy Chief of Staff to Policy, to come before this Committee as a witness, no later than 30 days from the date of adoption of this motion to answer for the Trump administration's antisemitic actions, and to answer for defunding the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, which will exacerbate anti-semitism at our Nation's schools.

Chairman KILEY. The gentlelady has made a motion to authorize a subpoena in accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(k)(6) of the Rules of the House of Representatives. That motion will be held in abeyance, and we will continue.

Ms. BONAMICI. I look forward to the discussion on the motion, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Bonamici follows:]



OPENING STATEMENT

House Committee on Education and Workforce
Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01)
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
"From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools"
2175 Rayburn House Office Building
Wednesday, September 10, 2025 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses.

We can all agree that schools are responsible for creating safe learning environments for students, teachers, and faculty free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. There is no question that antisemitic acts of harassment and intimidation have increased since October 7, 2023, and as I've said repeatedly in this committee, we must do more. But this is now the eleventh hearing on antisemitism we have had in the past few years. And what has happened? Are things better? No. Antisemitism is on the rise, and tensions and divisions have increased.

We can and must do more to protect Jewish students and Jewish Americans who are threatened, harassed, and attacked because of who they are. But once again, I do not see the work of this Committee as productive in accomplishing the stated goal. Today's hearing and multiple past hearings have been used to attack schools and their leaders and educators rather than to have a substantive discussion about how to curb antisemitism. Some on this committee belittled and shamed the now former President of Northwestern University, Michael Schill, a descendant of Holocaust survivors, and gloated when he resigned. That does not stop the spread of antisemitism.

One of our strongest tools is the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the Department of Education. OCR is dedicated to investigating and resolving civil rights violations, including antisemitic incidents, at schools and universities. But the Trump Administration fired almost half of OCR's staff and closed seven of its twelve regional offices.

Instead of offering any real solutions, Republicans use antisemitism as an excuse to turn our nation's civil rights laws upside down and undermine public education. We have seen this most prominently with higher education, and it is clear the committee is now seeking to do the same thing to our local public elementary, middle, and high schools.

The reality is that the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans are using the real plight of Jewish students experiencing antisemitism to destabilize institutions they don't approve of, whether institutions of higher education or teachers' unions.

And if you wonder why, here's a quote from the Academe magazine last spring, 'Donald Trump is coming for America's universities and higher education workers for the same reason that Benito Mussolini demanded loyalty oaths in 1931 and Viktor Orbán launched a 'vicious smear campaign' against Hungary's premier university in 2019: Our commitment to open inquiry over propaganda, to persuasion over coercion, to democracy over dictatorship provides a check on authoritarian rule.'

And I will add that all of this is happening while Republicans in Congress continue to refuse to address the antisemitic cancer that is metastasizing in their own party, including in the Trump White House, and against the backdrop of the promotion of White Christian Nationalists into key government roles.

I have consistently called out the multiple Trump White House officials with ties to antisemitic extremists, which my colleagues have not, including the liaison to the Department of Homeland Security, the communications director for the Office of Management and Budget, and the deputy press secretary of the Department of Defense who posted Nazi slogans on her social media accounts and promoted the antisemitic 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory.

The leader of President Trump's antisemitism task force agreed that the president could 'revoke someone's Jew card' and shared a post on social media from the former leader of a white supremacist organization that called for the 'Nazification of America.'

The current White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, Stephen Miller, is known as a racist and white nationalist. The Rabbinical Assembly called for his firing during the first Trump Administration because of his white supremacist views. So did 25 Jewish Members of Congress, who wrote, "These hateful views have no place in our government, much less just steps from the Oval Office. At this time of rising antisemitism, xenophobia, racism, and white supremacy, we must forcefully call out and refuse to accept intolerance or hate anywhere within our government."

And now Stephen Miller has far-reaching influence in the White House. In an interview, President Trump said that it would be a downgrade if he appointed Stephen Miller as national security adviser, instead saying that 'Stephen is much higher on the totem pole than that.' Mr. Chairman, you just criticized the trafficking of antisemitic tropes, and you said to use 'every tool possible.'

What will truly help Jewish students – and Jewish Americans – would be to determine why the Trump Administration has been infiltrated by white nationalists and antisemites, and to ascertain their reasoning for dismantling the Office of Civil Rights. Defunding universities and undermining public schools will hurt students, Jewish and others, instead of providing them a safe place to learn. If this committee truly cares about Jewish students and fighting antisemitism, we do have an obligation – we have an obligation, as the Chairman said, to use 'every tool possible' and to exert our full authority.

So therefore, I move that the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education subpoena Stephen N. Miller, White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, to come before this committee as a witness no later than thirty calendar days from the adoption of this motion, to answer for the Trump Administration's antisemitic actions, and to answer for the defunding the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, which will exacerbate antisemitism at our nation's schools.

If my colleagues truly care about rooting out antisemitism, they will surely support this motion.

I look forward to the discussion on the motion, and I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. I will now introduce our witnesses. Our first witness is—sorry, actually, before I do that, pursuant to Committee Rule 8(c), all members who wish to insert written statements into the record may do so by submitting them to the Committee Clerk electronically in Microsoft Word format by 5 p.m., 14 days after this hearing.

Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow for the statements and other extraneous material noted during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

I note that some of our colleagues who are not permanent members of this Subcommittee may be joining us at this hearing. I will now introduce our witnesses. Our first witness is Ms. Nicole Neily, the President and Founder of Defending Education in Washington, DC.

Our second witness is Brandy Shufutinsky, the Director of Education and National Security at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington, DC. Our third witness is Rabbi Jill Jacobs, the CEO of T'ruah, The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights in New York, New York.

Our fourth witness is Ms. Rachel Lerman, the Vice Chair and Director of Appeals and Critical Motions at the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law in Los Angeles, California.

We thank the witnesses for being here today, and we look forward to your testimony. Pursuant to Committee Rules, I would ask that you each limit your oral presentation to a 3-minute summary of your written statement, as Committee members have many questions for you, the clock will count down from 3 minutes.

However, pursuant to Committee Rule 8(d) and Committee practice, we will not cut you off from your testimony until you reach the 5-minute mark. I would also like to remind the witnesses to be aware of their responsibility to provide accurate information to the Subcommittee. I will first recognize Ms. Neily for your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF MS. NICOLE NEILY, PRESIDENT AND
FOUNDER, DEFENDING EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ms. NEILY. Chairman Kiley, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me. We all saw what happened at universities following October 7th.

Less well known though is how K to 12 schools across the country have faced similar problems. Discrimination and harassment based on national origin or shared ancestry is never acceptable, but when directed at minor children who are unable to defend themselves, it is particularly vile.

Frighteningly, our country's learners are now being taught the world's oldest hatred by the very people entrusted to shape young minds. Many teachers today are activists. In most states, aspiring teachers must obtain credentials through education schools before entering a classroom.

However, America's schools of education now instruct teachers to view the world through an oppressor/oppressed matrix, in which inconvenient minorities like Jews and Asians are categorized as oppressors. That teaching is a political act, and that the job is to cultivate social justice activists and change agents.

It is little wonder that our children are being used as foot soldiers to avenge perceived historical injustices. Unions are manipulating teachers. Activists have spent the last decade infiltrating the Nation's two largest teachers' unions to enlist them in the fight against Israel, an effort that has yielded significant dividends.

Unions have served as a superhighway to disseminate Jew hatred for years, with support for antisemitic resolutions, coordinated through special interest caucuses like Educators for Palestine. In July, NEA members voted to sever ties with the Anti-Defamation

League at their annual meeting, only walking back the vote following massive backlash.

This is an issue not only at the national level, but also State and local. Back in 2021, unions in LA and San Francisco both voted on BDS resolutions. More recently, the Massachusetts Teachers Association has obsessed over Israel, voting on several anti-Israel resolutions, hosting multiple webinars on the topic, and promoting biased resources.

Activist networks create an echo chamber. Classroom anti-semitism is reinforced by outside activist networks, like the Arab Resource Organizing Center or AROC, which currently has a memorandum of understanding with San Francisco Unified to provide workshops in classrooms focused on cultural empowerment.

AROC regularly leads disruptive pro-Palestine protests, shutting down the Bay Bridge in 2023 and occupying Senator Alex Padilla's office 2 weeks ago. Groups like BLM at School and the Middle Eastern Children's Alliance provide teachers with lessons and activities that can be incorporated into the school day.

Accordingly, teachers spread biased information. In classrooms, an alarming number of teachers have exploited their authority over students to teach a one-sided version of the conflict to captive audiences of minors, demonizing Israel and pressuring student newspapers to even alter coverage of the war.

Others have tried to influence coworkers, lobbying peers to donate to Hamas linked charities and confronting colleagues with different views.

Administrative inaction encourages bad behavior. Sadly, anti-Jewish incidents have not been adjudicated with the same determination as similar acts committed against other ethnic groups, sending a clear message to students and families that not all individuals are valued equally.

Districts avoided making public statements after 10/7, unlike the way they did after the death of George Floyd and the Atlanta spa shooting. Other districts simply swept problems under the rug. In California's Sequoia's Union District, the school dismissed swastikas at a school as mere Buddhist religious symbols.

Pro-Palestinian walkouts, frequently facilitated by administrators were tolerated at a time when walkouts on other issues would be punished, demonstrating a clear viewpoint discrimination issue.

K to 12 antisemitism is now a self-perpetuating ecosystem, and pupils are paying the price. Although it will not be easy to address this problem, identifying the root causes and vectors is a critical first step because American children deserve an education free from bias.

Jewish students deserve an education free from harassment so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it interferes with their learning. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Neily follows:]



Testimony of Nicole Neily
President, Parents Defending Education
Before the House Education & Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education
September 10, 2025

“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools”

Chairman Kiley, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished members of the subcommittee: thank you for inviting me.

My name is Nicole Neily, and I’m the president and founder of Defending Education. I’m also the executive director of PDE Action.

Much attention has been paid to universities in the wake of October 7th; less well-known, however, is the fact that K-12 schools across the country have faced similar problems. Discrimination and harassment based on national origin or shared ancestry is never acceptable – but when directed at minor children with a limited ability to defend themselves, such behavior is particularly vile.

Yet frighteningly, our country’s learners are now being taught the world’s oldest hatred – by the very people who parents have entrusted to shape the minds of their loved ones.

Today’s teachers are activists.

In most states, aspiring teachers must obtain credentials through education schools before entering the classroom. However, many of America’s schools of education now instruct teachers to view the world through an oppressor-oppressed matrix in which inconvenient minorities like Jews and Asians are categorized as “oppressors,” that “teaching is a political act,” and that the job is to “cultivate social justice activists and change agents.”¹ Universities’ penchant for considering activism in faculty hiring decisions² has only worsened this situation. It’s little wonder that our country’s children are being used as foot soldiers to avenge perceived historical injustices.

¹ Defending Education, “CorruptED,” August 8, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/investigations/corrupted/>

² John Sailer, “How Universities Get Away With Hiring Radicals,” City Journal, February 20, 2025. <https://www.city-journal.org/article/universities-fellow-to-faculty-programs-activists>

Unions are manipulating teachers.

Activists have spent the last decade infiltrating the nation's two largest teachers' unions to enlist them in the fight against Israel – an effort that has yielded significant dividends. Unions have functioned as a superhighway to disseminate Jew-hatred for years, with support for anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian resolutions coordinated through special interest caucuses like the NEA's "Educators for Palestine" and "AFT4Palestine." In July, NEA members voted to sever ties with the Anti-Defamation League at their annual meeting, only walking back the vote following widespread public outcry.³

This is an issue at not only the national level, but also in state and local affiliates as well. Back in 2021, unions in Los Angeles⁴ and San Francisco⁵ both voted on BDS resolutions; more recently, the Massachusetts Teachers Association has obsessed⁶ over Israel, voting on several anti-Israel resolutions,^{7,8,9} hosting multiple webinars vilifying Israel,^{10,11,12} and

³ Russell Contreras, "Teachers' union NEA members endorse cutting ties with ADL," Axios, July 8, 2025.

<https://www.axios.com/2025/07/08/gaza-war-adl-teachers-union-nea-vote>

⁴ Anti-Defamation League, "L.A. teachers union to consider BDS resolution that has divided LAUSD community," July 12, 2021. <https://la.adl.org/news/l-a-teachers-union-to-consider-bds-resolution-that-has-divided-laUSD-community/>

⁵ Gabriel Greschler, "San Francisco teachers group becomes first US K-12 union to endorse BDS movement," Times of Israel, May 27, 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/san-francisco-teachers-group-becomes-first-us-k-12-union-to-endorse-bds-movement/>

⁶ American Jewish Committee, "Politicizing K-12 Classrooms: Ideology, Prejudice, & the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)," March 13, 2025. <https://www.ajc.org/newengland/report/politicizing-k-12-classrooms>

⁷ Massachusetts Teachers Association, "Motions," December 9, 2023. <https://www.massteacher.org/mta-membership/meeting-agendas-and-alerts/ec-and-board-motions>

⁸ Massachusetts Teachers Association, "NBI #19," Annual Meeting of Delegates, April 26-27, 2024.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-N2sbMwtNcHlCMgsJssx1MxV7lsBb_zC/view

⁹ Massachusetts Teachers Association, "NBI #05," Board of Directors Meeting, June 6, 2024.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-RPfpI9R-3FD2JyOfMk5tc_Nvu_Akvfl/view

¹⁰ Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association hosts 'antiracism' event in support of Palestinians; board member accuses Israel of 'genocide,' 'apartheid,' and 'ethnic cleansing'; claims that a way to bring peace is to 'end' Israel," March 20, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-board-member-accuses-israel-of-genocide-apartheid-and-ethnic-cleansing-claims-that-a-way-to-bring-peace-is-to-end-israel/>

¹¹ Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) hosts blatantly partisan webinar; accuses 'right wing' people of attempting 'to define antizionism as antisemitism and to exclude histories of Israel/Palestine from textbooks and curricula'; states that 'many Christian Zionists are antisemites,'" July 12, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-mta-hosts-blatantly-partisan-webinar-accuses-right-wing-people-of-attempting-to-define-antizionism-as-antisemitism-and-to-exclude-histories-of-israel-palest/>

¹² Defending Education, "Massachusetts Teachers Association partnered with anti-Israel organization Massachusetts Peace Action to host webinar; webinar included anti-Israel sentiment and political activism," November 4, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/massachusetts-teachers-association-partnered-with-anti-israel-organization-massachusetts-peace-action-to-host-webinar-webinar-included-anti-israel-sentiment-and-political-activism/>

promoting one-sided resources.¹³ And following 10/7, the Oakland Education Association hosted a now-infamous unauthorized “Teach-In for Gaza.”¹⁴

Activist networks create an echo chamber.

Classroom antisemitism is reinforced by outside activist networks like the Arab Resource Organizing Center (AROC), which currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with San Francisco Unified School District¹⁵ to provide “workshops in classrooms” focused on “cultural empowerment.” AROC has been a regular participant in disruptive pro-Palestine protests over the last few years, shutting down the Bay Bridge¹⁶ in 2023 and occupying Senator Alex Padilla’s office two weeks ago.¹⁷¹⁸ In addition, groups like BLM at School¹⁹ and the Middle Eastern Children’s Alliance²⁰ provide teachers with lessons and activities that can be incorporated into the school day. The alleged value of these resources is repeated by other entities like the Zinn Education Project,²¹ creating the impression that these materials have been vetted and widely adopted by fellow teachers.

¹³ Jaryn Crouson, “EXCLUSIVE: Teachers Association Promotes ‘Antisemitic’ Student Training Material Calling Israelis ‘Zionist Bullies,’” Daily Caller, February 18, 2025. <https://dailycaller.com/2025/02/18/exclusive-teachers-association-promotes-antisemitic-student-training-material-calling-israelis-zionist-bullies/>

¹⁴ Defending Education, “Oakland Unified School District emails reveal ‘Teach-in for Gaza’ materials featured pro-Hamas, anti-Israel content,” October 7, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/oakland-unified-school-district-emails-reveal-teach-in-for-gaza-materials-featured-pro-hamas-anti-israel-content/>

¹⁵ San Francisco Unified School District, “Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Authorization to Enter Into MOU with Community Based Organizations,” Board Minutes, August 8, 2023. <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CU2NLP607BD5>

¹⁶ KQED News Staff, “Bay Bridge Reopens After Protesters Calling for Gaza Cease-Fire Shut Down Westbound Lanes,” KQED, November 16, 2023. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11967536/protesters-calling-for-gaza-ceasefire-block-bay-bridges-westbound-lanes>

¹⁷ Stu Smith, “BREAKING: Arrests underway at Senator Alex Padilla’s San Francisco office after radical activists stormed and occupied the space,” August 27, 2025. <https://x.com/thestustustudio/status/1960859677140328452>

¹⁸ Jerry Wu, “138 Gaza war protesters arrested after they storm Sen. Padilla’s S.F. office,” San Francisco Chronicle, August 27, 2025. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/protesters-storm-sen-padilla-s-s-f-office-21016997.php>

¹⁹ Kristine Watrobski, “‘BLM at School’ group that blamed Israel for terrorist invasion supported by teachers’ unions in past,” ABC33/40, October 23, 2023. <https://abc3340.com/news/nation-world/blm-at-school-group-that-blamed-israel-for-terrorist-invasion-supported-by-teachers-unions-american-federation-of-teachers-aft-national-education-association-nea-black-lives-matter-at-school-randi-weingarten-becky-pringle-crisis-in-the-classroom>

²⁰ StandWithUs, “The ‘Teach Palestine’ Curriculum: Political Indoctrination Disguised as Education,” August 1, 2025. <https://standwithus.com/library/factsheets/the-teach-palestine-curriculum/>

²¹ Zinn Education Project, “Teaching About Palestine-Israel and the Unfolding Genocide in Gaza,” January 10, 2025. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/teaching-palestine-israel>

Accordingly, teachers spread biased information.

In classrooms, an alarming number of teachers have exploited their authority over students to teach a one-sided version of the conflict to captive audiences of minors,²² demonize Israel,²³ and pressure student newspapers to alter coverage of the war.^{24,25} Still others have tried to influence coworkers, lobbying peers to donate to Hamas-linked charities²⁶ and confronting colleagues who dare present an opposing viewpoint of the conflict.²⁷

Administrative malaise encourages bad behavior.

Sadly, anti-Jewish incidents haven't been adjudicated with the same determination as similar acts committed against other ethnic groups – sending a clear message to students and families that not all individuals are valued equally.

Many districts avoided making public statements after 10/7 unlike the way they did after the death of George Floyd, the Atlanta spa shooting, and the Kyle Rittenhouse verdict. Other districts simply swept problems under the rug; in California's Sequoia Union High School District, the school dismissed swastikas at a school as mere "Buddhist religious symbols."²⁸

²² Nicholas Mazzoni, "Sequoia district community split over controversial Israel-Hamas lesson," The Almanac, January 19, 2024. <https://www.almanacnews.com/education/2024/01/19/sequoia-district-community-split-over-controversial-israel-hamas-lesson/>

²³ Deirdre Bardolf, "NYC elementary teachers draw from anti-Israel propaganda to twist 'Wheels on the Bus' to celebrate the eradication of Jewish state," New York Post, January 27, 2024. <https://nypost.com/2024/01/27/metro/nyc-teachers-twist-wheels-on-the-bus-to-celebrate-israel-hate/>

²⁴ Defending Education, "Henrico County Teacher Frames 10/7 Attack on Israel as 'Hamas Resistance,' Insists School Newspaper Not Print Student Article about Impact on Community," March 18, 2024.

<https://defendinged.org/incidents/henrico-county-teacher-frames-10-7-attack-on-israel-as-hamas-resistance-insists-school-newspaper-not-print-student-article-about-impact-on-community/>

²⁵ Defending Education, "New Trier Township High School District 203 equity liaison signed up for training sessions on 'exploring justice for Palestine' and 'settler colonialism'; journalism students were encouraged to use sources funded by the government of Qatar," September 30, 2024.

<https://defendinged.org/incidents/new-trier-township-high-school-district-203-equity-liaison-signed-up-for-training-sessions-on-exploring-justice-for-palestine-and-settler-colonialism-journalism-students-were-encouraged-to-us/>

²⁶ James Reint, "Seattle teacher EXPOSED for raising money for radical Palestinian cleric who denies Hamas' Oct 7 carnage and says sex slaves are 'permissible,'" Daily Mail, March 8, 2024.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13173565/Seattle-teacher-money-radical-Palestinian-cleric-Hamas-Oct-7-sex-slaves.html>

²⁷ Defending Education, "Arlington Public Schools English Teacher Agitates in District and Classroom about Gaza War; Assigns Biased Projects to Students; Accuses Israel of Settler-Colonialism and Genocide; Notes She Donates to Hamas-linked Charity," September 25, 2024. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/arlington-public-schools-english-teacher-agitates-in-district-and-classroom-about-gaza-war-assigns-biased-projects-to-students-accuses-israel-of-settler-colonialism-and-genocide-notes-she-donates-t/>

²⁸ Sue Dremann, "Nazi swastikas or anime? Symbols found at Woodside High School prompt investigation," Palo Alto Online, November 6, 2023. <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2023/11/06/nazi-swastikas-or-anime-symbols-found-at-woodside-high-school-prompt-investigation/>

Pro-Palestinian walkouts – frequently facilitated²⁹ by administrators³⁰ themselves – were tolerated at a time when walkouts on other issues would be punished, demonstrating clear viewpoint discrimination.

The time to act is now.

K-12 antisemitism is now a self-perpetuating ecosystem – and pupils are paying the price. Although it won't be easy to address this problem, identifying the root causes and vectors is a critical first step – because American children deserve an education free from bias, and Jewish students deserve an education free from harassment so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it interferes with their learning. Thank you.

²⁹ The National Desk, “Maryland school faces scrutiny over ignored records request on anti-Israel walkout,” June 7, 2024. <https://thenationaldesk.com/top-videos/maryland-school-faces-scrutiny-over-ignored-records-request-on-anti-israel-walkout-parents-defending-education-maryland-jewish-alliance-northwood-high-school>

³⁰ Defending Education, “James W. Robinson Secondary School principal described student protest against Israel as a ‘Humanitarian Walkout in solidarity with Palestine’; explains that students will be excused if their parents feel they should stay at home,” December 20, 2023. <https://defendinged.org/incidents/james-w-robinson-secondary-school-principal-described-student-protest-against-israel-as-a-humanitarian-walkout-in-solidarity-with-palestine-explains-that-students-will-be-excused-if-their-parent/>

Chairman KILEY. Thank you very much. I will next recognize Dr. Shufutinsky for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF DR. BRANDY SHUFUTINSKY, DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Chairman Kiley, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Bonamici, members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies Program, thank you. On behalf of the Foundation for Democracies Program and Education and National Security, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The sharp rise of antisemitism in our Nation's universities and K through 12 schools, those sparked by the terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, is part of an upsurge that has been many years in coming. Elected officials and community leaders have started to address the problem in educational settings and materials, but there is considerable amount of work to still be done.

FDD's Education and National Security Program is researching root causes, which include domestic malignant actors and foreign funding. We have started to uncover some disturbing findings. There are multiple ways that anti-Jewish and anti-American ideology is becoming institutionalized in K through 12 education, including teacher training programs, foreign funded materials, radical union members, and curriculum development organizations.

FDD has found foreign funding going directly to developing curriculum and K through 12 teacher salaries in multiple states. Multiple public-school districts receive funds from Qatari Foundation International, an instrument of the Qatari Royal Family that is somehow able to operate as a 501 (c)(3) in the United States, outside of Foreign Agent Registration Act regulations.

Outside organizations frequently partner with school districts to provide teacher training and curriculum development. This has opened the door for malignant domestic actors, such as the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, known by its acronym AROC. In 2023, AROC not only provided teacher training, but also direct services to students in San Francisco's public schools.

On October 7th, on its Instagram page, this organization endorsed the kidnapping, rape, torture, and murder of 1,200 Israelis, calling for a protest in front of the Israeli Embassy on October 8th. Within 2 weeks, AROC had produced a tool kit guide for K through 12 students on how to conduct student walkouts.

AROC is but one of many malignant domestic actors that have ties to U.S. designated foreign terrorist organizations that are developing curriculum for children as young as kindergarten. Our research has also found universities to be a source that spreads anti-Jewish biased materials into K through 12 schools because they train teachers and develop programs and curriculum.

For example, the University of California at Santa Cruz works closely with the Liberated Ethnic Studies Coalition, a group that celebrated October 7th, to introduce anti-Jewish curriculum into California schools through the new ethnic studies mandate. The connections between universities in K through 12 school districts must not be ignored.

FDD has uncovered evidence at the Nation's largest teachers unions, such as the United Teachers Los Angeles, are perpetuating antizionism and antisemitism in our schools. Across the Nation, groups that are hostile to the Jewish State, and even to the Jewish people, have found multiple avenues of influence through which they can quietly shape our education system.

The most pressing need right now is for transparency, so that parents and their elected representatives can see what is taught in children's classrooms, who is providing it, and who is paying for it. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Shufutinsky follows:]

TESTIMONY: FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES

House Committee on Education and Workforce

Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Understanding the Root Causes of Antisemitism in K-12 Education

BRANDY SHUFUTINSKY

Director, Education and National Security Program

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Washington, DC
September 10, 2025



www.fdd.org

Understanding the Root Causes of Antisemitism in K-12 Education

Chairman Riley, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Bonamici, members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' (FDD's) program on Education and National Security, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

There has been a surge of antisemitism in our nation's schools, both at the university and K-12 levels. The terrorist attacks waged against Israel on October 7, 2023, sparked much of what Jewish and Zionist students and educators are facing on campuses. However, anti-Jewish bigotry has been on an upward trend in educational spaces for several years prior.

Elected officials and community leaders have started to address the problem in educational settings and materials, but there is a considerable amount of work to be done to counter this intentional phenomenon.

FDD's Education and National Security program is researching its root causes, which include domestic malign actors and foreign funding. We have started to uncover some disturbing findings.

There are multiple ways anti-Jewish ideology is becoming institutionalized in K-12 education, including teacher training programs, foreign-funded learning materials, radical union members, and curriculum development organizations.

FDD has found foreign funding going directly to developing curriculum and funding K-12 teachers' salaries in multiple states. Multiple public school districts receive funds from Qatari Foundation International, an instrument of the Qatari royal family that is somehow able to operate as a 501(c)(3) in the United States outside of Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) regulations.

Our research has also found university education departments to be a source that spreads anti-Jewish biased materials into K-12 schools. The connections between university education departments and K-12 school districts must not be ignored.

Some of the leading state university systems in the United States have been actively and directly connected to the antisemitic materials being taught in the K-12 system. Approximately three-quarters of California's public school teachers are graduates of a University of California program,¹ with additional teachers coming from the California State University system. The City University of New York system provides one-third of New York City's new teachers.² In Illinois,

¹ "Fact Sheet: California K-12 teachers educated at the University of California," *University of California, Institutional Research and Academic Planning*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/uc-educated-k-12-teachers.pdf>)

² "Admissions," *City University of New York*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.cuny.edu/admissions/undergraduate/programs/education>)

almost one in six teachers is a graduate of Illinois State University, the leading teacher provider in the Midwest.³

FDD has uncovered evidence that the nation's largest teachers' unions, such as United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), for example, are perpetuating anti-Zionism and antisemitism in Los Angeles schools by endorsing antisemitic training and antisemitic organizations

Across the nation, groups that are hostile to the Jewish state and even to the Jewish people have found multiple avenues of influence through which they can shape our education system. They often work quietly, benefiting from the widespread assumption that American schools would never allow bigotry to permeate their curricula. The most pressing need right now is for transparency, so that parents and their elected representatives can see what is taught in their children's classrooms and who is paying for it.

Domestic Malign Actors

Many parents believe that curriculum and lesson plans are standardized by state or federal governments. This is not true. Although state- and district-level policies guide teaching standards, teachers in K-12 schools have great flexibility to create the lessons they teach to their students. They often rely on outside resources, choosing learning materials, books, and video clips, to build their own curricula.

Outside organizations frequently provide professional development and free or low-cost curricula that teachers adopt. Partnerships are common between public school districts and community organizations. These partnerships often bring resources, tools, and services into schools. They also serve as a method for encouraging positive relationships between schools and local community members. Unfortunately, these partnerships can have unintended consequences, such as politicizing the classroom or ushering antisemitism into our K-12 systems.

In recent years, bad actors have taken advantage of this school-community dynamic by designing and promoting learning materials that fuel anti-Jewish bigotry. California's 2021 legislation requiring high school students to complete one ethnic studies course prior to graduation is a case in point. Many school districts already offered elective courses introducing students to the history and culture of America's racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. However, organizations sharing a critical theory agenda pushed for a new required course to tell the stories of select American minorities through oppressed/oppressor narratives developed by faculty in ethnic studies departments in the University of California system and elsewhere. The 2021 legislation did not clearly require a new ethnic studies course based on these narratives; however, some school districts interpreted this new legislation as either a requirement or an invitation to create such a course. Within a short time, several community organizations exploited the opportunity

³ "Annual Report: 2018," *Illinois State University College of Education*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/annual-report/2018%20College%20of%20Education%20Annual%20Report.pdf>)

and began receiving six-figure contracts to develop school and/or professional development curricula that presented an anti-Jewish bias and rewritten history. These organizations include Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO) and the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA), which I will later describe.

Additionally, school districts have turned to community organizations to provide culturally responsive anti-racist programs. Some of these organizations, such as Woke Kindergarten and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC), also bring antisemitic perspectives into the K-12 environment.

Community organizations have also partnered with school districts to provide for other needs as standards evolve to reflect perceived social values or new curricular goals.

Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)

On October 7, 2023, as Hamas and other Gazans were kidnapping, raping, torturing, and murdering Israelis, an AROC post on Instagram stated, “Palestine is rising! Gaza is rising!” — in effect, an endorsement of the massacre.⁴



AROC is a San Francisco-based community organization with the following stated mission:

“We organize to fight for racial and economic justice and the dignity and liberation of our Arab, and Muslim communities ... We see our struggles here as a domestic manifestation of global militarism and racial capitalism, and as the root causes of the political, social and economic instability of our homelands. In that spirit, we see the liberation of our people as inextricably tied to the liberation of all oppressed people.”⁶

⁴ Aroc updates, *Instagram*, October 7, 2023.

(https://www.instagram.com/p/CyHUMSOHtGe/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “About,” *Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)*, accessed September 8, 2025.

(<https://www.araborganizing.org/about/>)

[illegible]

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

STUDENT WALKOUT FOR GAZA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH

High school youth call on students across the country to join them on Wednesday, October 18th to walkout to stop the genocide in Gaza and demand that local leaders protect Palestinian, Arab, Muslim and all students against racist attacks.

No to War! Dignity for all youth and students!

To learn more, or join the day of action
t.nact.info@araborganizing.org

AROC
ARAB ORGANIZING COORDINATOR
ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR RACIAL ORIENTATION

⁷ “National Student Walkout for Gaza: Wednesday, October 18, 2023,” *Arab Resource & Organizing Center*, accessed September 8, 2025, (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s5qeE6HeVXjiNiWuA9iR591vOn3oIdpcSAhlmOCGa8/edit?tab=t.0>)

⁸ Arcoupdates, *Instagram*, October 16, 2023, (<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cyc6icBOWyB>)

The Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO)⁹ is a nonprofit organization that provides professional development for teachers and administrators and develops K-12 curriculum. According to a recent federal tax filing, XITO has provided “professional development to over 3,000 K-12 educators across the country.”¹⁰

XITO regularly offers workshops that accuse Jews of taking part in a “settler colonial movement” — in essence, denying the historic relationship of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, a key premise of those who seek to dismantle the Jewish state.



XITO partners with other community groups, such as the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA).¹¹ Together, they presented “Settler Colonialism From Turtle Island to Palestine” as a workshop for ethnic studies.¹²

Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA)

A recent report published by the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) highlighted a connection between the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), makers of the “Teach Palestine Project,” and the Union of Health Work Committees (UHCW) in Gaza, which is closely connected to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).¹³

The PFLP is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization.¹⁴ Connections between the terror group and UHCW came to light after the 2019 murder of 17-year-old Israeli Rina Shnerb —

⁹ “About,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/about>)

¹⁰ 2022 Form 990, *Center for Community Education*, November 30, 2023. (<https://app.irs.gov/efile/view-990/378392/2023>)

¹¹ “Gaza Emergency,” *Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org/>)

¹² “Past Institutes,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/all-institutes>)

¹³ “Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA) Counter-Terrorism Brief,” *Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)*, April 7, 2025. (<https://networkcontagion.us/reports/4-7-25-middle-east-childrens-alliance-meca-counter-terrorism-brief>)

¹⁴ U.S. State Department, Bureau of Counterterrorism, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>)

Israeli authorities charged several UHWC employees with fraud and other illicit financial activity on behalf of the PFLP.¹⁵ According to the watchdog group NGO Monitor, a 1993 USAID-engaged audit identified UHWC as an affiliate of the PFLP.¹⁶

The main link between MECA and the UHWC is Mona el-Farra, MECA's director of Gaza programming and a former deputy director of the UHWC.¹⁷

MECA is open about the fact that it has sent money directly to UHWC, and claims the money was for "humanitarian purposes."¹⁸ According to an article el-Farra published in November 2023, she is a current member of UHWC, not just a former deputy director. The article, titled "From Gaza with rage," condemned Israel repeatedly without mentioning Hamas' crimes.¹⁹

According to another report from NCRI, New York City public school teachers have also used Teach Palestine content in their classrooms, as their contract gives them discretion to do so. The NCRI report also found that a caucus within the United Federation of Teachers, a union representing over 200,000 active and retired teachers, recommended resources from Teach Palestine and Rethinking Schools for classroom use.²⁰

¹⁵ "Al Awda Health And Community Association," *Front Line Defenders*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/organization/al-awda-health-and-community-association>); Matthew Levitt, "A Blurred Line Between Civil Society and Terrorism," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, November 2021, No. 112. ([https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/pdf/PolicyNote112Levittv2_0.pdf](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Policy%20Note112Levittv2_0.pdf))

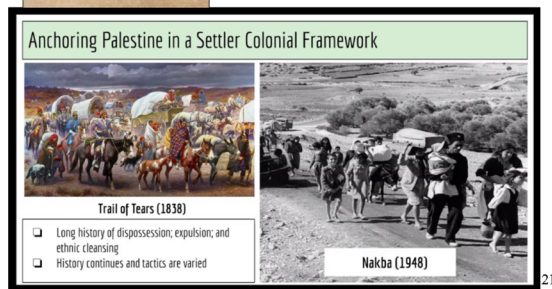
¹⁶ "AWDA (formerly Union of Health Work Committees – UHWC), *NGO Monitor*, May 19, 2025. (<https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/union-health-workers-committee>)

¹⁷ "Gaza Emergency," Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA), accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org>)

¹⁸ "Medical Aid Arrives in Gaza," *Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.mecaforpeace.org/meca-projects/medical-aid-arrives-in-gaza>)

¹⁹ Dr. Mona El-Farra, "From Gaza With Rage," *Eurasia Review*, November 17, 2023. (<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17112023-from-gaza-with-rage-oped>)

²⁰ "Entryism Exposed," *Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)*, October 2024. (<https://networkcontagion.us/wp-content/uploads/Entryism-20241015-V1.pdf>)



Woke Kindergarten

Although California's ethnic studies legislation is aimed at high schools, anti-Jewish activism is touching children in their early elementary school years. Programs like Woke Kindergarten target 5-year-old students with a cartoon character named "Lil' Comrade" and materials like the So You Want a Free Palestine? A Resistance Guide for Kids.²² Additionally, Woke Kindergarten has worked with school districts across the country, providing training and curriculum development.

²¹ "Past Institutes," *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/all-institutes>)

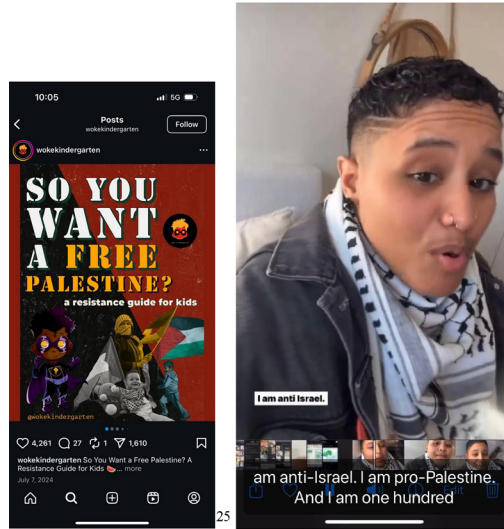
²² "Home," *Woke Kindergarten*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.wokekindergarten.org>); Wokekindergarten, *Instagram*, July 7, 2024. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C9JXyPqsqki/?igsh=OTZhMjZxc3JsaWpw>)

Brandy Shufutinsky

September 10, 2025

Recently, Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) awarded Woke Kindergarten a \$250,000 three-year contract.²³

After the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, the executive director of Woke Kindergarten, Akeia Gross, posted a video on social media, stating, “I am anti-Israel.... Israel has no right to exist. I believe the United States has no right to exist.” HUSD cancelled its contract with Woke Kindergarten a few months later, yet the district superintendent insisted that such opinions did not hinder the program’s implementation in Hayward schools. It has been reported that Gross is currently teaching in a New York City kindergarten.²⁴



²³ Madilynne Medina, “East Bay school terminates \$250K contract with controversial anti-racist program,” *SFGate*, February 15, 2024. (<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/hayward-school-woke-kindergarten-ended-contract-18670432.php>)

²⁴ “‘Woke Kindergarten’ activist now teaching in NYC Kindergarten,” *K12 Trackers*, August 31, 2025. (<https://k12trackers.substack.com/p/woke-kindergarten-activist-now-teaching>)

²⁵ Wokekindergarten, *Instagram*, July 7, 2024. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C9JXyPqsqki/?igsh=OTZhMjZxc3JsaWpw>)

Brandy Shufutinsky

September 10, 2025



PARCEO

PARCEO was established in 2011 as a research, resource, and education institute that collaborates with community organizations and educational institutions. One of PARCEO's recent endeavors was the creation of the Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation.²⁶ Resources on the PARCEO website include a video presentation by Lara Kiswani, executive director of AROC, which celebrated the "rising" of October 7.²⁷

Using its curriculum, PARCEO has held training sessions for educators in multiple school districts, including the San Francisco Unified School District, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and New York City.²⁸

After antisemitic incidents in San Francisco schools, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) was brought into the district to provide mandatory training to the school community. However, fringe pro-Hamas groups, like the misnamed Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), objected to AJC support for the Jewish state while praising PARCEO.²⁹ Public radio reported that, "The training sessions led by the American Jewish Committee, initially scheduled for last month, were canceled because parents and community groups expressed concern about the organization's pro-Israel position."³⁰

²⁶ "Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation," *PARCEO*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org>)

²⁷ "Handouts & Resources," *PARCEO* (<https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/copy-of-resources>)

²⁸ Dave Huber, "School district offers 'alternate' antisemitism training b/c original defends Israel's right to exist," *The College Fix*, October 19, 2024. (<https://www.thecollegefix.com/school-district-offers-alternate-antisemitism-training-b-c-original-defends-israels-right-to-exist/>); Educatenotindoctrinate, *Instagram*, February 11, 2025. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DF9Ts75RmfO>)

²⁹ "The Root of Violence Is Oppression," *Jewish Voice for Peace*. (<https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/2023/10/07/statement23-10-07/>)

³⁰ Riley Cooke, "SFUSD Antisemitism Training Sparks Controversy as Some Educators Opt for Alternative," *KQED*, October 10, 2024. (<https://www.kqed.org/news/12008739/sfusd-antisemitism-training-sparks-controversy-as-some-educators-opt-for-alternative>)

Supported by the local teachers' union, several teachers boycotted the mandatory AJC training and attended the one facilitated by PARCEO.³¹ Seth Morrison, a JVP spokesperson, attacked AJC for weaponizing the concept of antisemitism.³²

University Departmental Influence on K-12

There is a clear connection between university campuses and what is taught in neighboring K-12 school districts. Many school districts partner with local colleges and universities, relying on resources developed by academic institutions to bolster classroom materials.

As school districts move away from traditional textbook-based curricula, curriculum developers often partner with universities and academics to develop web-based learning resources. This makes it possible for curricula to undergo edits without having to reissue entire textbooks.

In early 2025, it was reported³³ that antisemitic curricula developed by Brown University's Choices Program were distributed to over 8,000 K-12 school districts across all 50 states.³⁴ The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism Policy (ISGAP) reported that the Qatar Foundation International (QFI) collaborated with the Choices Program, which, through the years, has drastically changed the tone of the curriculum and restricted access to it by placing it on a password-protected platform.³⁵ This raises three major issues that are fueling anti-Jewish bigotry in K-12 schools, including (1) a foreign power influencing what is being taught in American K-12 classrooms, (2) a lack of transparency in what is being taught, and (3) universities having a significant impact on K-12 education.

The University of California, Santa Cruz

The University of California, Santa Cruz's (UCSC's) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department (CRES) promotes the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (LESMC) on their website.³⁶

³¹ Dave Huber, "School district offers 'alternate' antisemitism training b/c original defends Israel's right to exist," *The College Fix*, October 19, 2024. (<https://www.thecollegefix.com/school-district-offers-alternate-antisemitism-training-b-c-original-defends-israels-right-to-exist>)

³² Riley Cooke, "SFUSD Antisemitism Training Sparks Controversy as Some Educators Opt for Alternative," *KQED*, October 10, 2024. (<https://www.kqed.org/news/12008739/sfUSD-antisemitism-training-sparks-controversy-as-some-educators-opt-for-alternative>)

³³ David Israel, "New Report Uncovers Qatari Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in US K-12 Education," *Jewish Press*, March 13, 2025. (<https://www.jewishpress.com/news/middle-east/qatar/new-report-uncovers-qatari-influence-and-anti-israel-bias-in-us-k-12-education/2025/03/13>)

³⁴ "Foreign Influence and Anti-Israel Bias in K-12 Classrooms," *The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism & Policy*, March 2025. (https://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/K12_Report_Final_20250310.pdf)

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Critical Race & Ethnic Studies," *University of California, Santa Cruz*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://cres.ucsc.edu>); "Home," *Liberated Ethnic Studies: Model Curriculum Consortium*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org>)



Members of the LESMC include the authors of the original draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which promotes anti-Israel ideology, targeting Jewish identity.³⁷ The Liberated Ethnic Studies Coalition celebrated the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, posting the "Free Palestine" graphic below on their social media.



These same activists celebrated the terrorist attack with another social media post, stating, "Inevitably, oppressed people everywhere will seek — and gain — their freedom. We all deserve liberation, safety, and equality. The only way to get there is by uprooting the sources of the violence, beginning with our own government's complicity."³⁹

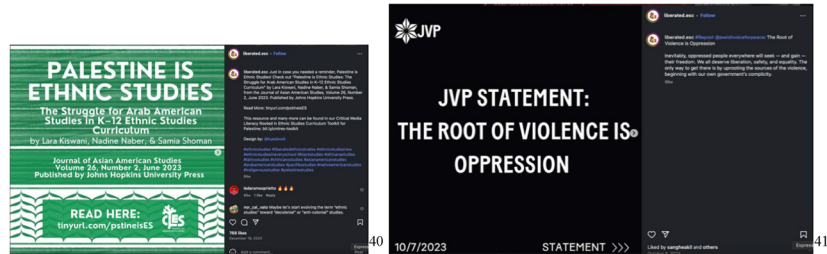
³⁷ John Fensterwald, "'Liberated' ethnic studies courses challenged amid allegations of antisemitism," *EdSource*, August 30, 2024. (<https://edsources.org/2024/liberated-ethnic-studies-course-challenged-amid-allegations-of-antisemitism/718347>)

³⁸ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, October 8, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyJr8wVAXUX>)

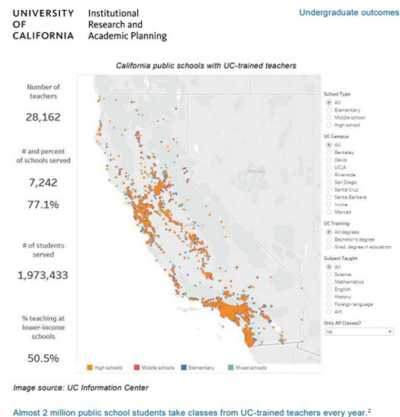
³⁹ Ibid.

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[UCSC is the recipient of a grant](#) that will fund new graduates as they begin their teaching careers in Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Salinas Union High School District, and Santa Cruz City Schools.⁴²



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UCLA Teacher Certificate in Ethnic Studies — Rethinking Schools: Teaching Palestine

When considering the root causes of antisemitism in K-12 education, one must consider the teacher education programs that equip educators with pedagogical frameworks, teaching resources, and guidance on managing classrooms.

⁴⁰ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, December 18, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/C1AW6B2g5Yy>)

⁴¹ Liberated.esc, *Instagram*, October 8, 2023. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyJar-qPdbK>)

⁴² Allison Arteaga Soergel, "For future teachers, state funding puts dreams within reach," *University of California, Santa Cruz*, May 30, 2025. (<https://news.ucsc.edu/2025/05/for-future-teachers-state-funding-puts-dreams-within-reach>)

⁴³ "Fact Sheet: California K-12 teachers educated at the University of California," *University of California, Institutional Research and Academic Planning*. (<https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/uc-educated-k-12-teachers.pdf>)

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The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) produces the largest number of California public school teachers, with approximately 76 percent of all public school teachers across the state receiving an education from one of its programs.⁴⁴

Number of teachers and schools with post-1999 UC training, by UC campus

	Berkeley	Davis	UCLA	Riverside	San Diego	Santa Cruz	Santa Barbara	Irvine	Merced
Number of teachers	2,788	4,215	5,214	3,412	2,453	2,825	3,816	3,330	175
Number of schools	1,692	2,459	2,680	1,915	1,704	1,870	2,590	2,151	169
% teachers <50 mi. from campus	65%	45%	76%	73%	46%	51%	20%	74%	40%

UC-trained teachers work in 7,200 California public schools, or 3 out of 4 schools in the state.

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UCLA's K-12 Ethnic Studies Certificate program is using Teaching Palestine, published by Rethinking Schools, as a resource for the UCLA K-12 Ethnic Studies Certificate program.⁴⁶



⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "UCLA Ethnic Studies Certificate Program For TK-12 Teachers, *UCLA Institute of American Cultures*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://www.teachethnicstudies.org>); "Teaching Palestine," *rethinking schools*, accessed September 7, 2025. (<https://rethinkingschools.org/books/teaching-palestine>)

⁴⁷ Zinneducationproject, *Instagram*, August 8, 2025. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DNGO38DANIh>)

According to a report published by the North American Values Institute (NAVI), Teaching Palestine presents prejudicial views of Israel and Jewish history. The authors claim, “We are not biased,” yet one then declares they are “against the state of Israel.”⁴⁸

The resources used in Teaching Palestine not only promote a biased view of Israel but also spread one-sided ideas about U.S. history, as indicated by the cartoon below.



Note: PDFs of graphic organizers, articles, and other materials described in this unit are in the “Resources” column of the Borders and Walls Unit Outline at teachpalestine.org.

Rethinking Schools: Teaching Palestine

As the House Education and Workforce Committee widens its investigation into rampant antisemitism on UC campuses, attention should be paid to the influence of the University of California and other state universities on K-12 schools.⁴⁹

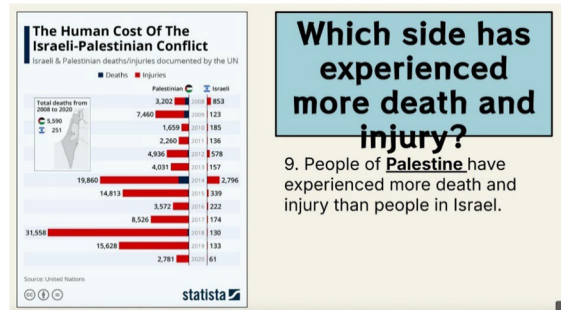
Sequoia-Union High School District

During the 2023-24 academic year, an ethnic studies teacher from the Sequoia-Union High School District in Northern California caused a firestorm when one of their ethnic studies lessons

⁴⁸ “Backgrounder: Rethinking Schools’ Teaching Palestine,” *North American Values Institute*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://45557309.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/45557309/NAVI%20Resources/Backgrounder.%20Rethinking%20Schools%E2%80%99%20Teaching%20Palestine.pdf>)

⁴⁹ Jaweed Kaleem, “GOP widens UC antisemitism investigations, hitting UCLA, UC San Francisco medical schools,” *The Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 2025. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/gop-widens-uc-antisemitism-investigations-hitting-ucla-uc-san-francisco-medical-schools/ar-AA1Ldegp?ocid=BingNewsSerp>)

used a video clip created by TRT World, the Turkish state broadcaster.⁵⁰ The clip whitewashed Hamas terrorism while claiming the group only seeks statehood for the West Bank and Gaza, rather than the destruction of the Jewish state.



Not only did the ethnic studies lesson use antisemitic tropes to justify the Hamas-led October 7 terrorist attack, but it also framed Jewish self-determination in their homeland as a land grab, rewriting history and denying Jewish ties to their indigenous and historic homeland.

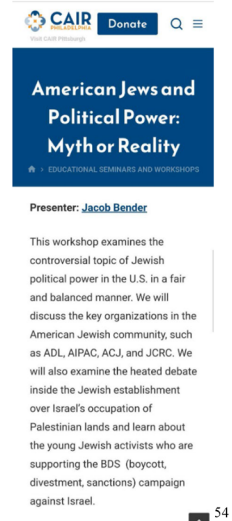


School District of Philadelphia

The Philadelphia branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) recently announced a partnership with Philadelphia-area K-12 schools as part of a campaign to make

⁵⁰ Nicholas Mazzoni, "Sequoia district community split over controversial Israel-Hamas lesson," *The Almanac*, January 19, 2024, (<https://www.almanacnews.com/education/2024/01/19/sequoia-district-community-split-over-controversial-israel-hamas-lesson/>); TRT World, "How did Israel become a country?" *YouTube*, 2017, (<https://youtu.be/nufBpHmWhiQ?si=4Oj71n0ko6iq9eFC>)

schools more inclusive.⁵¹ CAIR is staunchly anti-Zionist, and its executive director, Nihad Awad, described how “happy” he felt to see the people of Gaza “victorious” on October 7.⁵² The group openly spreads anti-Jewish rhetoric, including through an educational workshop titled “American Jews and Political Power: Myth or Reality.”⁵³



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The U.S. Department of Education launched a federal civil rights investigation in 2024 after receiving complaints alleging antisemitism in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The investigation was launched after district administrators failed to adequately respond to anti-Jewish incidents perpetrated by students and teachers, including reports of district employees using their personal social media accounts to fuel anti-Jewish activism and harass parents.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cairphilly, *Instagram*, August 25, 2025.

(https://www.instagram.com/p/DNypMzvXDGA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

⁵² MEMRI, *X*, December 7, 2023. (<https://x.com/MEMRIReports/status/1732712958281629864>)

⁵³ Jacob Bender, “American Jews and Political Power: Myth or Reality,” *CAIR Philadelphia*, Screenshot by The Free Beacon. (<https://freebeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/n6rmq95v9elf1.jpeg>)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ David Swindle, “U.S. teacher 'reassigned offsite' while school district investigates alleged Jew-hatred,” *National Post*, September 7, 2024. (<https://nationalpost.com/news/us-teacher-reassigned-offsite-after-alleged-jew-hatred>); Dana Carter, *Facebook*, October 16, 2023. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GCKLGNdD1/>); “Philadelphia school district reaches agreement after Title VI investigation,” *Jewish News Syndicate*, December 20, 2024. (<https://www.jns.org/philadelphia-school-district-reaches-agreement-after-title-vi-investigation/>)



The antisemitism experienced by Jewish and Zionist students, parents, and teachers in Philadelphia public schools exemplifies how both internal and external entities fuel anti-Jewish bigotry. Ismael Jimenez, who is responsible for overseeing social studies curricula for SDP, excused Hamas' role in kidnapping innocent Israelis during the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, stating, "When we look at October 7th, this didn't happen out of the blue, right? This is generations, right, of folks who feel like their voice has been denied."⁵⁷

This same individual is involved with the Racial Justice and Organizing Committee (RJOC), a community organization that offers teach-ins for local educators and administrators. RJOC members who also serve as Philadelphia classroom teachers engaged in anti-Israel demonstrations justifying the October 7 massacre, blaming it on colonization.⁵⁸ and went on to develop Teaching Palestine-Israel from the Perspective of Civil Rights and Black Power Activists.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Dana Carter, Facebook, October 16, 2023. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GCKLGNdD1/>)

⁵⁷ "Ismael Jimenez," LinkedIn. (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ishx2022/>); Alana Goodman, "Jewish Groups Call Out Philly School District After Administrator Blames Israel for Oct. 7," *The Washington Free Beacon*, July 11, 2025. (<https://freebeacon.com/campus/jewish-groups-call-out-philly-school-district-after-administrator-blames-israel-for-oct-7/>)

⁵⁸ "About Us," *Racial Justice Organizing*. (<https://sites.google.com/view/racialjusticeorganizing/about>); Adam Sanchez, "Defenders of Israel Attempt to Silence Anti-Racist Educators in Philadelphia," *rethinking schools*. (<https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/defenders-of-israel-attempt-to-silence-anti-racist-educators-in-philadelphia/>); Pennfsjp, Instagram, May 30, 2024. (<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7m0eEsJmGv/?igsh=MTR1ZjQvYTJlc3B1Mw==>)

⁵⁹ Hannah Gann, Nick Palazzolo, Keziah Ridgeway, and Adam Sanchez, "Teaching Palestine-Israel from the Perspective of Civil Rights and Black Power Activists," *Zinn Education Project*, 2024. (<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/teaching-palestine-israel-black-power/>)

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When Jewish parents raised their concerns about rampant antisemitism in the district to the governor, they were met with inaction.⁶¹

Similar patterns have emerged in districts across the United States — activist teachers access antisemitic learning materials from community organizations and bring those materials into classrooms with little to no oversight. Those materials offer justifications for their anti-Jewish lens, teaching children anti-Jewish tropes as facts, and encourage them to engage in antisemitic activism. The lines between learning and justice become indistinguishable, making classrooms less about learning and more about activism that targets Jews and Israel.

⁶⁰ Racial Justice Organizing Committee, *Facebook*, August 6, 2025.

(<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1MxPy3g8PE>); Racial Justice Organizing Committee, *Facebook*, August 6, 2025. (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1MxPy3g8PE>)

⁶¹ Alana Goodman, "'Quite Shocking to Us': Local Parents Fighting 'Cesspool' of Anti-Semitism in Philly Schools Say Josh Shapiro's Office Stopped Meeting With Them," *The Washington Free Beacon*, July 7, 2025.

(<https://freebeacon.com/campus/quite-shocking-to-us-local-parents-fighting-cesspool-of-anti-semitism-in-philly-schools-say-josh-shapiros-office-stopped-meeting-with-them/>)

Dublin Unified presented the following slides as part of their Ethnic Studies course.

Reviewing Critical Concepts

Identity Intersectionality Privilege	Institutional Power Individual Power Collective Power	Oppression Institutional Oppression Interpersonal Oppression Internalized Oppression
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Given the current events happening, we are going to explore some of these concepts in the context of what is happening in Israel & Gaza.

Contact Congress

There are several calls to action right now that will guide you through the process of contacting your reps in Congress to urge them to take a stand against the United States' military funding and supplying of weapons to Israel.

Both of the below campaigns provide scripts and call prompts to easily connect you with your House Reps. and Senators:

Jewish Voice for Peace: bit.ly/stopfuelingviolence

U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR): act.uscpr.org/is/callforgaza

The Influence of Unions

The National Education Association's (NEA) Representative Assembly voted to sever ties between the NEA and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization that fights antisemitism.⁶² The NEA is the largest labor union in the United States, representing almost 3 million members. The proposal was reversed by NEA's Executive Board, but not before it earned widespread attention.

The ADL vote was a symptom of deeper dysfunction, with union leaders and activists putting anti-Israel activism ahead of education. A key development that has not received enough attention is the ties between the NEA and the General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT). In 2023, NEA President Becky Pringle visited teachers and union leaders in Israel and the Palestinian Arab territories. During this trip, Pringle met with the GUPT general secretary, Saed Erziqat, who openly calls for "continuous escalation" of violent attacks and has met with the secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization.⁶³

⁶² Becky Pringle, "2025 Representative Assembly Update," *National Education Association*, July 18, 2025. (<https://www.nea.org/about-nea/leaders/president/from-our-president/2025-representative-assembly-update>)

⁶³ Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-o00eqhnm>); "PFLP-GC terror group says leader was arrested by Syrian authorities," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), May 3, 2025. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/pflp-gc-terror-group-says-leader-was-arrested-by-syrian-authorities/>)



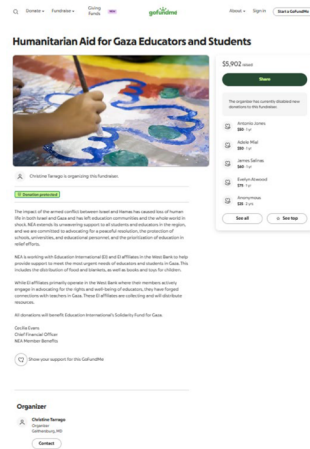
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After her visit, a NEA executive launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for its Palestinian Arab union affiliates, including the GUPT.⁶⁵ The United Federation of Teachers in NY, United Teachers Los Angeles, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association are other examples of teachers' unions that have promoted antisemitism in their K-12 systems.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-o00eqhnm>)

⁶⁵ Christine Tarrago, "Humanitarian Aid for Gaza Educators and Students," GoFundMe, December 6, 2023. (<https://www.gofundme.com/humanitarian-aid-for-gaza-educators-and-students>); "Solidarity with teachers and students in Palestine," Education International, November 20, 2023. (<https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/28305:solidarity-with-teachers-and-students-in-palestine>); Nic North, "Striking teachers union's links to pro-terror group," *The Jewish Chronicle* (UK), February 2, 2023. (<https://www.thejc.com/news/striking-teachers-unions-links-to-pro-terror-group-o00eqhnm>)

⁶⁶ Luke Tress, "Jewish educators in NYC say they're leaving teacher union due to antisemitism," MSN, August 29, 2025. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/jewish-educators-in-nyc-say-they-re-leaving-teacher-union-due-to-antisemitism/ar-AA1Lqym9?ocid=BingNewsSerp>); Aaron Bandler, "Lawsuit: Jewish Teachers Object to UTLA Dues Over Union's Antisemitism," *Jewish Journal*, October 16, 2024. (<https://jewishjournal.com/news/375911/lawsuit-jewish-teachers-object-to-utla-dues-over-unions-antisemitism/>); Kristina Rex, "Massachusetts teachers' union under fire for alleged antisemitic educational materials," *CBS News*, February 18, 2025. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-teachers-association-alleged-antisemitism/>)



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Foreign Funding

Foreign funding is helping to develop curricular materials and hold professional development workshops for educators and administrators. Qatar Foundation International (QFI), the U.S.-based wing of the Qatar Foundation, which is controlled by the Qatari royal family, funds Arabic language and culture teachers and curricula in numerous elementary, middle, and high schools.⁶⁸

FDD has evidence of grant contracts, curricula, and teaching materials used in QFI-funded K-12 programs. QFI itself reported in 2020 that two schools within the DCPS school system participated in its Grants to Schools program.⁶⁹

P.S. 261 is a Brooklyn elementary school that has been getting QFI funds since at least 2019. The Arabic teacher at P.S. 261 was awarded the QFI Arabic Teacher Excellence Award for 2023 and attracted national headlines after using a map of the Middle East that labeled Israel as Palestine.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Christine Tarrago, “Humanitarian Aid for Gaza Educators and Students,” *GoFundMe*, December 6, 2023.

⁶⁸ "Community," Qatar Foundation International. (<https://www.qf.org.qa/community/qatar-foundation-international>)

⁶⁹ “Grants to Schools,” *Qatar Foundation International*, Screenshot by Wayback Machine, November 2, 2019. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200925000129/https://www.qfi.org/opportunities/grants-to-schools>)

⁷⁰ “2023 Arabic Teacher Excellence Award Recipients,” *Qatar Foundation International*. (<https://www.qfi.org/news/2023-arabic-teacher-excellence-award-recipients>)

Another recipient of the QFI Arabic Teacher Excellence Award for 2023, Fadi Abughoush, is an Arabic language and culture teacher at a public high school in Chicago.⁷¹ Abughoush has worked with the U.S. State Department student exchange program, working with students domestically and in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Jordan. He also posted extreme views on social media, including images showing President Joe Biden covered in blood and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemingly eating a baby — which is little more than an updated antisemitic blood libel. The same teacher also shared a post praising slain Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.



Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA)

ACLA was incorporated in Toronto in July 2021. Jerry Khouri, Dania Majid, and Ameena Sultan are listed as ACLA directors, with both Khouri and Majid sitting on the steering committee of Hearing Palestine, a self-described “intellectual hub” at the University of Toronto.⁷² ACLA and Hearing Palestine serve as additional examples of the crossover between community organizations and schools that fuel anti-Jewish biases.

The government of Canada awarded ACLA \$99,950 (CAD) in grant funds as part of Canada’s Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program. This award runs from January 2025 to March 2026.⁷³

⁷¹ “Abughoush,” Chicago Arabic Teachers Council. (<https://voices.uchicago.edu/catc/abughoush>)

⁷² “Jerry Khouri,” Pathway Group. (<https://pathwaygroup.com/team/jerry-khouri>); “Dania Majid,” OpenGovCA. (<https://opengovca.com/director/dania-majid>); “Ameena Sultan,” OpenGovCA, accessed September 7, 2025. (<https://opengovca.com/director/ameena-sultan>); “News,” *Hearing Palestine*, accessed September 8, 2025. (<https://palestinestudies.artsci.utoronto.ca>)

⁷³ “Grants and Contributions,” *Government of Canada*. (<https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/record/pch.016-2024-2025-Q4-1371509.current>)

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Title:	Understanding Anti-Palestinian Racism: Educational Resources and Training for Inclusive Practices
Agreement Number:	1371509
Agreement Value:	\$99,950.00
Agreement Date:	Jan 1, 2025 - Mar 31, 2026
Description:	Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program - CAHAP - Projects
Organization:	Canadian Heritage
Location:	Toronto, Ontario, CA MSC 2B8
Reference Number:	016-2024-2025-Q4-1371509
Agreement Type:	Contribution
Report Type:	Grants and Contributions
Recipient's Operating Name:	ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Recipient's Legal Name:	ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Program:	Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program - CAHAP - Projects

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In 2023, ACLA received \$2,000 (CAD) from the Enhancement of Official Languages Program — Promotion of Linguistic Duality, to fund the French translation of ACLA's report, titled "Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framings and Manifestations."⁷⁵

The ACLA anti-Palestinian racism initiative demonstrates how a program funded by a foreign government can generate publications that fuel anti-Israel activism in U.S. schools. As described below, ACLA's work has become a key source for U.S.-based activists.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Grants and Contributions," *Government of Canada*. (<https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/record/pch.016-2023-2024-Q3-1361738.current>)



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The Institute for Understanding Anti-Palestinian Racism (IUAPR)

Lama Rimawi and Jess Ghannam formed the Institute for Understanding Anti-Palestinian Racism (IUAPR) in recent years to advance the concept of anti-Palestinian racism through research, education, and advocacy.⁷⁷ The use of the concept has spread to K-12 school districts, universities, teachers' unions, activist organizations, and even the halls of Congress ever since the publication of the 2022 ACLA report.⁷⁸

The IUAPR partners with community organizations to hold trainings and teach-ins on anti-Palestinian racism. In October 2024, the San Francisco Unified School District held a mandatory

⁷⁶ "Context and Connection: The Struggle Against Anti-Palestinian Racism," *Massachusetts Teachers Association Anti-Racism Task Force*.

(<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&p=792528c8b1bef8421ac8aced739ab6fbcf331b5dbe2fcd46e57b780bbc4614cbJmltdHM9MTc1Njc3MTlwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=03162543-92c4-6ae3-2a5a-30e4938a6b46&psq=mta+anti+racism+task+force+anti+palestinian+racism&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9tYXNzdGVhY2hlcj5vcmcvLS9tZWRRpYS9tYXNzdGVhY2hlcj9maWxlcj90cGwvbXRhLWVvZC1yYWNpYVWwZGlzY3JpbWluYXRpb24tcGFzZXN0aW5lLnBkZj9sYT1lbiZoYXNoPThERUQ0MzRCRjY0Q0JEQjI1ODNDNUM2MTYzMjNEREEzOTICRUJGNUMU>)

⁷⁷ "Lama Rimawi," *Mesa Refuge*. (<https://mesarefuge.org/people/lama-rimawi/>); ⁷⁷ IUAPR's Anti-Palestinian Racism Research Group, "New Survey Reveals Harmful Effects of Discrimination Against Palestinians and Allies," *Medium*, April 18, 2024. (<https://medium.com/@apresearchgroup/new-survey-reveals-harmful-effects-of-discrimination-against-palestinians-and-allies-5620cd484417>); "Why is this important?" *The Institute For The Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism*. (<https://antipalestinianracism.org/#importance>)

⁷⁸ "San Diego State University Senate Resolution Condemning anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim Racism," *San Diego State University Senate*. (https://senate.sdsu.edu/06_policy-file/2024-03-05_resolution_condemning_anti_palestinian_anti_arab_anti_muslim_racism.pdf); Mika Hackner, "Anti-Palestinian Racism Is Coming Soon to a School Near You," *Jewish Journal*, July 3, 2024. (<https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/opinion/372753/anti-palestinian-racism-is-coming-soon-to-a-school-near-you/?ref=quillite.com>)

professional development program for Balboa High School⁷⁹ staff, titled “Honoring Our Shared Humanity: Understanding and Combatting Islamophobia and its Intersections with Anti-Arab and Anti-Palestinian Bigotry.” The program was facilitated by Maha Elgenaidi, founder and executive director of the Islamic Network Group, and Dr. Lama Rimawi, pediatrician and president and founding member of the IUAPR.⁸⁰

Islamic Network Group (ING)

The Islamic Network Group (ING) has been operating for over 30 years, providing professional development training and educational sessions for educators, students, and professionals across the United States. ING produces curriculum for K-12 teachers to use in their classrooms and reports that their materials are being accessed by teachers in all 50 states and abroad.⁸¹

ING is a well-established community organization that has standing relationships with several K-12 school districts. Now that it is openly collaborating with the IUAPR, it is better able to push anti-Jewish sentiments into classrooms across the United States.

Conclusion

Community organizations, university departments, teachers’ unions, foreign funding, and foreign organizations are fueling antisemitism in K-12 schools. Without transparency at all levels of education, American classrooms are becoming breeding grounds for anti-Jewish bigotry.

President Trump’s recent executive order, “[Transparency Regarding Foreign Influence At American Universities](#),⁸²” is a step in the right direction, and it should be followed by a similar requirement for all educational institutions, including K-12 schools and community colleges.

Since they are responsible for educating children, K-12 school districts should be required to place all curricula and learning materials on publicly accessible platforms. This would allow parents, caregivers, and community members to review what their children are being taught and who provides the materials. According to a recent report, 23 states already provide some form of

⁷⁹ “Balboa High School,” *San Francisco Public Schools*. (<https://www.sfusd.edu/school/balboa-high-school>)

⁸⁰ “Honoring Our Shared Humanity: Understanding Islamophobia,” *Islamic Network Group*. (<https://ing.org/events/honoring-our-shared-humanity-understanding-islamophobia-and-its-intersections-with-anti-arab-and-anti-palestinian-racisms/>); “Events,” *Jewish Voice for Peace*. (<https://www.jvphealth.org/events/saturday-august-24-at-10-am-pdt-1-pm-edt-understanding-and-countering-anti-palestinian-racism>)

⁸¹ “Director’s Report: 2023,” *Islamic Network Group*. (https://ing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023_brochure.pdf)

⁸² U.S. Executive Order 14282, “Transparency Regarding Foreign Influence At American Universities,” April 23, 2025. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/transparency-regarding-foreign-influence-at-american-universities/>)

curriculum transparency.⁸³ Transparency could also serve as a deterrent for bad actors who seek to exploit the flexibility of the K-12 school system.

Recommendations for Congress:

State and Federal Foreign Influence Legislation: Several states have already passed foreign influence legislation that would require nonprofits receiving a majority of their funding from a foreign principal to register with the state's attorney general. Education nonprofits can register at the state or federal level. Some organizations have used this loophole to find states with less stringent foreign influence reporting requirements. Congress should work with states to expand these requirements and provide federal resources for states to report which countries are seeking to establish nonprofit entities and the kinds of activities they are engaging in.

Changes to "Academic Exemption" of FARA: Nonprofit entities engaged in educational programming are generally exempt from FARA registration and disclosure requirements. While the definition of academic activities has shifted over time, Congress should mandate that certain activities be covered under FARA regulations. One of those activities should be the development of K-12 educational materials and curriculum. If a U.S. entity is acting on behalf of a foreign principal to develop teaching materials used in U.S. schools, that entity or person should be required to register under FARA and provide information on these activities.

Changes to Foreign Giving to Nonprofits in the U.S.: Foreign governments are currently able to give money to foundations and other nonprofit entities in the U.S. with little oversight. These nonprofits are able to be established as 501(c)(4) groups under the U.S. tax code and engage in political activities in the U.S. Therefore, Congress should take steps to ensure that these 501(c)(4) organizations, primarily funded by foreign governments, are not engaging in advocacy or political activities geared towards education policy in the U.S. This is one of the direct pathways for foreign governments to influence the U.S. political system and for nonprofits accepting foreign money to influence K-12 education.

Oversight of Foreign Curriculum Use: Nonprofit entities in the U.S. are providing curriculum and training for schools to use at the K-12 level. These curricula are being implemented and used as teaching guides with little understanding of the entities that developed them and almost no oversight by local school boards. To the extent possible, Congress should investigate entities providing curriculum and ascertain whether foreign entities are influencing the substance of the material. Reports continue to show that foreign governments utilizing education nonprofits are seeking to influence the opinions of K-12 students in the U.S. while smothering any criticism of those foreign governments. Congress should work with states to identify organizations providing foreign-influenced curriculum and set strict limits on how it can be used at the K-12 level.

Monitoring Foreign Teacher Exchanges: Foreign governments continue to provide teacher training and trips to influence public and private school employees in the U.S. These trips often

⁸³ Sarah Schwartz, "Inside the Effort to Shed Light on Districts' Curriculum Choices," *EducationWeek*, November 26, 2024. (<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/inside-the-effort-to-shed-light-on-districts-curriculum-choices/2024/11>)

Brandy Shufutinsky

September 10, 2025

are described as cultural exchanges and an opportunity for further teacher development. Largely, these trips are meant to influence the teachers and the students they teach to have a favorable view of the sponsoring countries and refrain from engaging in criticism of those host countries. Congress should mandate reporting on all teacher exchange programs for schools that accept federal funding and work with the State Department to analyze the training content and the foreign contacts that are maintained by teachers after they return.

Additional Investigations by Congress of Connections Between Higher Education and K-12 Education: FDD and other organizations have created significant reporting and analysis of nonprofits, student organizations, unions, and faculty associations in higher education. Foreign influence campaigns have permeated all of these groups, but less is known about how these entities are also influencing K-12 education. Congress should mandate a task force from the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to investigate ties between institutions of higher learning and primary education to determine the vulnerabilities of these systems. A federal government-led effort would have the ability to collect more information and compel records to be made public for entities influencing the K-12 space that have yet to be identified. The task force could also include the Internal Revenue Service to examine the legal structures of nonprofits and foundations engaged in foreign influence operations in the K-12 space.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman KILEY. Thanks very much. I will next recognize Rabbi Jacobs for your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF RABBI JILL JACOBS, CEO, T'RUAH: THE
RABBINIC CALL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you, Chairman Kiley and Ranking Member Bonamici, for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am Rabbi Jill Jacobs, the CEO of T'ruah, The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, which represents more than 2,300 rabbis and cantors who serve Jewish communities in 47 states.

We work to advance democracy and human rights. I am also a graduate of public schools and the parent of two public school students. Rabbis are on the front lines of fighting antisemitism in schools, both supporting families and bringing issues to school officials.

They know the pain of Jewish children who have encountered swastikas graffitied on school property and more. Classmates who are performing Nazi salutes, and they have heard their peers mocking the murders of Israeli Jews.

Most school professionals are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of Jewish students, but antisemitism permeates our society today, just as it has in so many places for more than 2,000 years.

Schools, as well as workplaces, political arenas, and professional associations are not immune. The response must be education, not punishment. My message is simple, antisemitism in schools is serious. We have a responsibility to ensure that Jewish students, and all students, are safe.

Unfortunately, Congress and this administration are taking a dangerous and wrongheaded approach that subordinates the needs of Jewish students to a political agenda.

Half a year into this administration, the evidence is clear that our government is more focused on defunding public education, weakening labor unions, and philanthropies, and cracking down on immigrants than on keeping Jewish children or adults safe.

The Jewish community has spoken loud and clear. In April, a survey of U.S. Jews showed that the majority disapprove of the administration's approach to antisemitism. Our community is paying that this administration is cynically using our fears as justification for dismantling the very Democratic institutions and protections that have kept Jews safe.

Federal action this year mirrors Project Esther, a plan developed by the Heritage Foundation, without participation by Jewish organizations or antisemitism experts, which wrongly frames the core institutions of liberal democracy as a threat to Jews and to American civilization.

If we really want to put a student's safety first, we need to invest in the following. First, education. We cannot just punish or sanction our way out of this problem. We need schools to be better equipped to teach about and respond to antisemitism.

Vilifying our teachers, our school systems and teachers' unions, or cutting public education funding does not do anything to help Jewish children or teachers.

Second, prevention. Congress should urge the administration to restore the Hate Crime Prevention and Response Program it authorized. This administration has eliminated virtually every pre-

vention tool, including 46 million dollars in hate crime prevention grants.

The nonprofit security grants program is important, but our children need a better plan for their security than bulletproof glass and barricades.

Third, democracy. Jews are terrified about the erosion of our constitutional rights, including freedom of speech, worship and association and due process. These are the rights that have allowed us to flourish and to be safe in the United States.

Fourth, inclusion and equity. Jews need programs to promote inclusion and respect for all groups. The assault on diversity, equity and inclusion ultimately does not increase Jewish safety, especially not for Jews who are also people of color, disabled or transgender.

These programs must better serve Jews, not be eliminated.

Fifth, protection for all students. The administration's singular focus on antisemitism to the exclusion of other forms of bigotry singles out Jewish students. Some have expressed fear that they will be scapegoated for harsh measures taken in their name.

Finally, I implore you to lead by example and speak out against antisemitism. This administration and Members of Congress must take the same stand on antisemitism that they are asking of schools, universities, unions and other entities.

An administration truly dedicated to Jewish protection would not be inhabited by cabinet members and staff who openly espouse antisemitic and other bigoted beliefs, some of whom have ties to neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations.

Nor would an administration committed to fighting antisemitism have pardoned the January 6th insurrectionists, many of whom promoted antisemitic conspiracies. An administration committed to fighting antisemitism would not have dismantled the Office for Civil Rights, the only office with the expertise and mandate to investigate instances of antisemitism, and other bias in schools and universities.

Nor would such an administration be breaking down the separation of church and State and encouraging the imposition of Christianity in schools. We need solutions that protect Jewish students, and the Democratic Institutions that make it possible for Jews and other minorities to flourish in our country.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Jacobs follows:]

Testimony of Rabbi Jill Jacobs
Before the
House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary,
and Secondary Education
September 10, 2025
"From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools"

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Kiley and Ranking Member Bonamici for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am Rabbi Jill Jacobs, CEO of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights which represents 2,300 rabbis and cantors across the United States and Canada. T'ruah brings the Torah's ideals of human dignity (*tzelem elohim*), equality (*shiv'yon*), and justice (*tzedek*) to life by empowering rabbis and cantors to be moral voices and to lead Jewish communities in advancing democracy and human rights for all people. Our rabbis come from all of the major Jewish denominations, and collectively, they serve hundreds of thousands of Jews across 47 states. They work in synagogues, day schools, college campuses, Jewish Community Centers, hospitals, and more.

I am also a graduate of public schools, the parent of public school students, and the granddaughter of a public high school principal. I know from my own family's history, and from Jewish history how crucial public schools were in helping Jewish immigrants to integrate into America, and to join the middle class. To this day, public schools are essential in providing children of all races, ethnicities, religions, and national backgrounds with the education, skills, and relationships they need to flourish in this country.

Throughout my career, I have written and spoken publicly about antisemitism—its long and ugly history and contemporary manifestations—in order to provide more people with the tools to understand, recognize, and stop antisemitism in their own communities. This work has included creating resources and training for schools, nonprofits, universities, and government agencies. As the CEO of T'ruah, the focus of my work has been on better equipping rabbis to support members of their own communities who are experiencing antisemitism, and to help others in their broader communities to recognize and address antisemitism when it arises.

When it comes to antisemitism, rabbis are on the front lines. Every day, I hear from rabbis facing antisemitism: graffiti on synagogue doors, hate-filled flyers dropped in the driveways of their congregants, bomb threats, and, increasingly, violence. When a Jewish child encounters antisemitism at school, their family is going to report it not only to the school, but also to their rabbi. In giving pastoral care to children and their parents, rabbis experience firsthand the way that antisemitism in schools harms Jewish families—and the compounding negative effects when schools don't handle antisemitic incidents swiftly and decisively.

Rabbis do more than provide pastoral care after antisemitism happens. They also build their communities' resilience in the face of rising antisemitism. They help their congregants recognize, understand, and respond to antisemitism in ways that help prevent it from happening again. They grow networks of solidarity through relationships with local clergy of other faiths. They frequently are the ones who bring issues directly to school officials and elected officials to ensure that the concerns of Jewish families are taken seriously, and they help to educate about Jewish history, culture, and practice, as well as about antisemitism, in schools and local communities.

Antisemitism: On the Rise in Schools and Beyond

I want to start by saying that antisemitism is real. And unfortunately, it is growing. Every Jewish community in the United States fears being targeted by antisemitic violence. As rabbis prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services in the next few weeks, they must consider not only how to inspire their communities through prayers and sermons, but also how to ensure that their congregants can gather to pray safely.

Just in the past few months, we have seen horrific antisemitic attacks in the United States, including the tragic murders of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky at the Capital Jewish Museum right here in Washington, DC, and of Karen Diamond in the firebombing of a gathering in support of Israeli hostages in Boulder, CO, which also injured many other participants, and the attack on Governor Josh Shapiro's home on Seder night. And we have also seen arrests of people allegedly plotting violent attacks on Jewish communities elsewhere in the U.S., in Canada, and in Europe.

Disturbingly, this 2,000 year old hatred has also found its way into our public schools. Not one of T'ruah's members became a rabbi or a cantor imagining that Jewish children in 2025 would attend schools with students—a small minority of students, but still—students who make Nazi salutes, who glorify Nazi symbols, or who justify or even celebrate the deaths of Jews.

Imagine the pain of Jewish parents dropping off their children at school, knowing that they may see swastikas graffitied on school property, encounter classmates performing Nazi salutes, or be texted quizzes called "Zionist or Nazi?" Imagine seeing your child tuck their Jewish star necklace into their shirt after you drop them off at school in the morning, for fear of being singled out for being Jewish. Sadly, this is the reality for some Jewish parents today.

Antisemitism, just like all forms of bigotry, should have no place anywhere, but especially not in public schools. As I mentioned, I grew up going to public schools, and I am a parent of two children in public school, so this is personal for me.

Most schools work hard to ensure that Jewish students and students of all backgrounds receive an education free from bigotry and harassment. But just like we find across every professional sector, including among elected leaders and politicians, there are gaps in some teachers' and administrators' understanding of how antisemitism shows up in schools and how it needs to be addressed. I have seen this myself in speaking at orientation sessions for new teachers, as well as by speaking with rabbis and parents. In schools, and other workplaces, some have failed to understand, to take seriously, or to address real instances of antisemitism. I have heard stories about schools turning a blind eye to the seriousness of swastikas drawn in middle school bathrooms, of Jewish children not being allowed alternate dates for tests given on Jewish holidays, of school projects that glorify Hitler, of the public mocking of Israeli deaths, and of demands that Jewish students and teachers disavow any connection to Israel or Israelis.

When antisemitism is not being taken seriously enough, we need to work with institutions, whether they are school districts, universities, professional associations, or political parties, to use the tools we have to deepen understanding and bring more people into the work of fighting antisemitism. Many misperceptions persist about Jews and Judaism, and education is sorely needed both about Jewish history and practice and about the origins, history, and manifestations of antisemitism.

That's why, a few years ago, T'ruah heavily invested in helping clergy use their influence, leadership skills, and expertise to educate schools and community partners about antisemitism and to do so in a way that makes communities stronger instead of fearful, mistrustful and divided. And it's why we have trained thousands of people, including educational leaders, in how to recognize and respond to antisemitism. Because if we fight antisemitism in ways that only divide Jews and their neighbors, we are only isolating Jews in ways that sow greater division and that ultimately make Jews less safe.

That's why T'ruah has published [A Very Brief Guide to Antisemitism](#) which I appended to my testimony. This pocket-sized accessible explainer has reached thousands of people and been used by students, university administrators, and elected officials in multiple cities, including here in Congress, who have found it helpful in navigating the difficult terrain around antisemitism. Whether in the halls of Congress or in schools, if we genuinely seek safety, inclusion, and respect for Jews, the response to these gaps in understanding must be education, not punishment.

Where Antisemitism and Political Debate about Israel Overlap

There has been extensive discussion among experts and advocates about how to discern when debates about Israeli policy veer into antisemitism.

In 2024, T'ruah published an updated version of our antisemitism guide, which tackles some of these thorny questions about when criticism of Israel crosses the line into antisemitism, in order to address some of the incidents that have arisen since October 7, 2023. I interrogate real-world examples more closely in a resource created for T'ruah called [Criticism of Israel and Antisemitism: How to Tell Where One Ends and the Other Begins](#).

To be sure, Israel, as a country and a member of the United Nations, can and should be criticized when it violates the international laws to which every nation is obligated. That can include criticism of the Israeli government, Israeli policies, Israeli officials, and the IDF, including regarding conduct during the current war in Gaza. But when people justify or celebrate the deaths of Israeli Jews or use antisemitic tropes to describe Israel and Israeli Jews, that's antisemitism. When anger about Israeli government policy spills over into harassment or violence directed at Jews in the United States, or any other country, that's antisemitism.

There is widespread misunderstanding in this country about the nature of Jews and of antisemitism. It is often not understood, for example, that Jews are not simply a religious group, but a *people*, with a history, a set of ritual and cultural practices, a sacred language and multiple vernaculars, and a homeland. That means that American Jews feel a kinship and responsibility for other Jews across the world, including the half of the Jewish people who live in Israel. And the vast majority of Jews see their concern for Israel and Israelis — including the hostages taken by Hamas — as an expression of their Judaism and Jewish identity.

While T'ruah is active in educating Americans about how antisemitism can seep into discussions and debates, I'd like to be clear that T'ruah very much opposes the codifying of any definition of antisemitism—or any other bigotry—into law. It's not at all essential to increasing the protection of Jews, and it has been a very divisive, counterproductive, and unhelpful distraction. Experts who investigate bigotry, such as the now diminished Office for Civil Rights (OCR), examine the facts of each case, and do not rely merely on single definitions—not of antisemitism, not of racism, not of homophobia, or of any other form of bigotry. Many investigators and adjudicators have utilized T'ruah's guide and other resources to recognize antisemitism and implement policies. They don't need the guidance itself to be frozen or codified into policy.

So I've come to you today with a clear message.

Antisemitism in schools is serious and dangerous. It is so serious that we can't afford to lose sight of the urgent priority to choose remedies that will most immediately help Jewish students.

Our government has embarked on a dangerous, wrongheaded approach that drags the safety of Jewish children into the storm of our culture wars and ultimately subordinates their needs to other political agendas.

No doubt many good people in this room are as enraged about antisemitic incidents in schools as I am and eager to help students. But the current policy responses are taking our country down a path that does more harm than good to Jews, to all students, and to the social fabric that keeps students and families safe. Half a year into this administration, every aspect of the response has made clear that our government is more focused on justifying defunding public education, weakening labor unions, and cracking down on immigrants and foreign visitors than on keeping Jewish children or adults safe.

There is still time to heed the outcry from so many in the Jewish community and in our country and hear their plea to choose better solutions. As a mother, as a rabbi, and as a Jewish community leader fighting antisemitism, I worry about the current federal response. I see a fight against antisemitism that is subordinating the goal of Jewish safety to another political program. Our children deserve better.

We have already seen the ways in which this administration has cynically preyed on the very real fears of the Jewish community in order to defund higher education in ways that make Jews no safer. These include stripping funding from cancer research, attempting to block foreign students—including Israeli students—from studying in the United

States, and making demands of university departments that will weaken the ability of professors to guide their students in thoughtful, informed explorations of history and politics.

As Rabbi David Saperstein said in his testimony before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: "...if we want in the long run to prevail in the goal of this [antisemitism] hearing we must preserve and strengthen the public school system of America—with 83% of our students, as well as a sizable proportion of Jewish students attending. If the public school system of America doesn't make it, then neither will America nor the Jewish community. Addressing the rescue of public education in America must remain a priority of our community, particularly at a time when teachers and principals are feeling under serious attack."

Jewish Safety Depends on a Pluralistic Democracy

Today, the very real threat of antisemitism is being abused in the most depraved possible way: to dismantle the very democratic institutions and protections that have kept Jews safe. It is these democratic institutions that have created the conditions for Jews to flourish in this country after millennia of marginalization, scapegoating, and abuse in so many other places and times.

The administration's campaign to center the threat of antisemitism as a catalyst to weaken democracy is taken right out of Project Esther, a plan developed by the Heritage Foundation without participation by Jewish organizations, without significant input by Jews, and without the insights of antisemitism scholars.

This plan weaves together a disparate group of civil society sectors and organizations into what it paints as "terrorist supporters," making a spurious, counterfactual case that they comprise a "highly organized, global Hamas Support Network" of civil society nonprofits.

The narrative demonizes diversity, equity, and inclusion by wrongly claiming that these initiatives are inherently antisemitic and anti-Israel. That is a dangerous, misleading, and blatant effort to posit institutions of liberal thought and democracy as a threat to Jews and to American civilization. Project Esther claims diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are trying to "lay siege to our education system, political processes, and government." In fact, diversity initiatives are intended to ensure that all students, including Jews, can be safe and flourish in diverse environments. I've appended to my

statement a link to [a backgrounder on Project Esther](#) prepared by T'ruah in partnership with The Nexus Project.

Jewish safety has always been tied to the strength of democratic institutions and the rule of law. It is America's liberal democracy, including First Amendment protections, that have allowed Jews to flourish in the United States. Jews have suffered disproportionately from policies that have restricted speech in the United States, from the Espionage Act of 1917, which threatened to effectively shut down the Jewish Daily Forward over its opposition to the U.S. entering World War I, to McCarthyism, which broadly painted Jews as disloyal communists.

As [60 of the country's leading civil rights organizations](#), including T'ruah, recently affirmed in a joint statement: "we must ensure that the legitimate fear[s] in the Jewish community—are not exploited to justify inhumane policies or to target those who peacefully exercise their First Amendment rights."

Earlier this spring T'ruah and our partners at J Street released a letter signed by myself and over [550 leading American rabbis and cantors](#) calling for an end to the administration's cynical use of antisemitism as a wedge issue to attack democratic norms and institutions. As we wrote, "History has shown that the safety and flourishing of American Jews are tied directly to the health of our democracy... American Jews have always stood for democracy, free speech, and justice—not just because these values are moral, but because they are essential to our safety and our future." T'ruah rabbis in cities and states across the country have led similar letters in every region of the U.S.

An Approach that Fits the Nature, Magnitude and Urgency of the Problem

If we truly prioritize the immediate need to make students safer, our solutions must reflect that. Below are key principles and guideposts that reflect the experiences of American Jews and the leaders and practitioners focused on their wellbeing.

1. We can't just punish or sanction our way out of this problem. We need schools to be better equipped, not less.

Antisemitism is a feature of American history and permeates our society today, just as it has in so many places for more than 2,000 years. Schools, workplaces, political arenas, and professional associations of any kind are not immune. However, they aren't creating

antisemitism, and there is no such thing as a clearly antisemitic school or union or university.

Schools, teachers, and teachers' unions can and should be part of the solution, in order to ensure that Jewish children can feel safe attending public schools, and that Jewish teachers and administrators can feel safe working in these schools. Schools, school districts, and teachers unions already partner with local and national Jewish communities and organizations to train staff about antisemitism, to bring quality resources on Jewish history, Jewish culture, Jewish practice, and antisemitism into schools, and to foster productive partnerships between schools and local Jewish leaders and communities.

We need more capacity for that, not less. And where the government resources fall short, faith communities and nonprofits are already picking up the slack. I know that T'ruah's 2,300 Jewish clergy welcome opportunities to help schools in their own communities to support Jewish students and faculty.

Jewish community partnership in this effort is essential. But this responsibility should not fall to Jewish nonprofits on their own. If the safety of Jewish students is a priority, let our government invest in the partners and tools that we need to be safe instead of pulling back funds it may be reluctant to spend for other reasons.

2. Prevent Incidents from Happening in the First Place

What's happening to Jewish students and other students targeted by bigotry is infuriating. And when our society and our systems fail to protect them to the fullest extent possible, it's natural to want there to be consequences. But there is simply no remedy more effective than preventing the incident to begin with.

It's critical that Congress has been provided hundreds of millions of dollars for the Nonprofit Security Grants Program for Jewish and other community institutions. And it's essential to ensure that these grants do not come with strings attached that would force our communities to abandon our basic commitments to inclusion and equity as well as to the safety of immigrants. But our communities need a better plan for a secure future than just bullet proof glass and barricades.

And, yet, Congress rarely even talks about, much less invests in, prevention. Calls to fight antisemitism ring hollow when the administration has eliminated almost all the

prevention tools at their disposal. This includes a total of \$46 million in hate crime prevention grants and grants related to helping communities counter violent extremism.

For example, the precursor to antisemitic discrimination and harassment in schools is bullying. Research has shown that when parents, schools, and other adults resolve to prevent bullying, before bigotry turns into harassment, students are safer. What is Congress' investment in bullying prevention? The federal government has a toolkit, most of it archived or suspended, like the website stopbullying.gov. The core [definition](#) and research that drove federal anti-bullying education and prevention was actually developed by the CDC, because the institution that is meant to be a guardian of our children's health once understood bullying prevention is essential to children's wellbeing.

That is just one of the prevention functions gutted as we allow our broken politics to implode almost every public system designed to protect our youth, including from the harm of antisemitism.

3. Eroding Democracy Endangers Jews

We must reject the falsehood that Jews can be protected by abrogating any rights or freedoms. History has made clear that Jews are better off when democratic norms and institutions and protections of individual and collective rights are strong.

As worried as many Jews are about rising antisemitism, most are even more afraid of the erosion of their constitutional rights—rights we have long relied on to keep us safe. In April, a survey of U.S. Jews revealed that the vast [majority do not approve of the administration's approach to antisemitism](#).

Educational institutions are crucial to democracy. Schools are America's strongholds of critical inquiry and free speech, and civic education—teaching our children to be citizens of a great participatory democracy and to freely interrogate ideas. Vilifying our teachers,

school systems and the associations and unions that support them doesn't make any Jew safer.

4. Jews Need Policy and Programs Promoting Inclusion, Equity, and Respect

Jews cannot be safe in a country that is unsafe for other minorities. The assault on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ultimately doesn't increase Jewish safety. Those programs must better serve Jews, not be eliminated.

Jewish Americans are anything but immune from harm caused by the administration's attack on diversity programs. Beyond the fact that many Jews are also transgender, people of color, immigrants, and disabled, many of the new orders directly affect Jewish communities. These include an Executive Order on "[Eradicating anti-Christian Bias.](#)" which points at an intention to weaken the Separation of Church and State in ways that will inevitably result in particular forms of Christianity being imposed on students and a [Pentagon memo](#) pausing commemorations of Holocaust Memorial Day, along with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and other events tied to non-white Christian groups. And, as was the case in President Trump's first administration, implicit endorsement of white nationalists, some of whom have used violence against Jewish and other minority communities, is dangerous.

5. Reject Solutions that Isolate Jews or Invite Scapegoating

Jews need allies in other communities to thrive. We hear constantly how a lack of allyship is affecting Jews' wellbeing.

The administration's singular focus on antisemitism—to the exclusion of other forms of bigotry—singles out Jewish students and can even make them feel less safe. Some Jewish students have expressed fear they will be scapegoated for harsh measures taken in their name. For example, defunding medical research does nothing to keep Jews safe, but it is inevitable that some observers will come to blame the lack of medical research funding on the Jewish community, in whose name this administration purports to act.

Today, others may be playing the role of the scapegoat in America: immigrants, foreign students, LGBTQ people. But scapegoating is a toxic impulse that harms all of us. The impulse to demonize, scapegoat, and foment fear of segments of our community will not stop with one group—it never does.

6. Jewish Safety Requires Social Solidarity and Togetherness

We cannot effectively bar discrimination against Jews unless the mechanisms to counter discrimination are robust enough to address discrimination against all protected groups. Both ethically, and, as a practical matter, they are linked. For example, Department of Education Title VI investigations of antisemitism have often uncovered gaps in the protections of other students targeted by bigotry as well. This is why a number of OCR resolution agreements with schools address not only antisemitic

harassment but also address other forms of harassment. The reality is that no one's children are safe unless everyone's children are safe.

One reason that the White House National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism was so widely embraced across political divides, including within the Jewish community, is because the strategy embraced the Jewish community's experience that social solidarity is a key component of ensuring their safety.

I was honored to be one of the over 1,000 Jewish communal leaders, experts and practitioners involved in consulting with the Biden administration to craft a comprehensive White House National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. This strategy, crafted before October 7, was the first of this kind by any White House. It addressed antisemitism at every level of government and society, and offered the most comprehensive body of specific recommendations in America's history for ensuring that schools, workplaces, and other environments were safe places for Jewish students.

We deeply regret that Congressional majority leadership and the administration have ignored or dismissed this comprehensive strategy out of hand. Project Esther describes it as "appear[ing] to have more to do with furthering the progressive left's obsession with LGBTQ+ and all other minorities than it has to do with anything substantive in countering antisemitism."

My role, and the role of all Jewish leaders, is to work with every political leader to engage them in whatever parts of their policy platforms leave room for cooperation and shared interests. So it's with a heavy heart that I note that, in the past 8 months, the administration has abandoned the 2023 White House National Strategy's concrete recommendations based on evidence and practical experience, developed in partnership with Jewish community leaders. In exchange, our community is being offered inflammatory rhetoric and the attempted evisceration of the institutions we need most.

In our time of need, we are being held hostage to a political agenda that isn't about us, and we are being treated as pawns in a broader effort to dismantle the liberal democracy that has made the United States strong and that has allowed people of all backgrounds to flourish here.

7. Prevent Potential Assailants from Obtaining Firearms

While most of the antisemitic incidents that have taken place in schools and other Jewish communities have not involved firearms, guns provide the means for

hate-motivated individuals to turn their bias into murder. In fact, data suggests that over [25,000 hate crimes per year involve a firearm](#). This includes the murders of Jews worshipping in Pittsburgh, PA, in 2018 and in Poway, CA, in 2019, at a kosher grocery store in Jersey City in 2019, and outside the Capital Jewish Museum here in DC earlier this year.

We have also seen armed assailants murder members of Black, Asian, LGBTQ, Muslim, Sikh, Latino, and other immigrant communities. According to the [National Crime Victimization Survey](#), each year more than 10,000 people are victims of hate crimes involving guns. In 2020, then FBI Director Chris Wray [testified](#) before the Senate Homeland Security Committee that violent extremists motivated by racial or religious hatred make up a significant portion of the FBI's domestic terrorism investigations, and that the majority of those attacks are motivated by violent white supremacist ideologies.

While gun violence prevention is outside of the jurisdiction of this committee, it is important to note more broadly that gun safety laws, which this administration has actively weakened, could reduce the incidence of deadly hate crimes. These should include robust background checks and the closing of loopholes in federal law, including one that allows thousands of people each year who are legally prohibited from possessing firearms to purchase such weapons before the completion of their background checks. In 28 states, people convicted of violent hate crime misdemeanors are still eligible to purchase firearms.

9. A Plea to the U.S. Government: Lead by Example

If we are to advance the solutions that can most help students, we desperately need the government to lead by example. Our government cannot credibly conduct oversight of the harm of antisemitism in institutions under its jurisdiction until the administration and Members of Congress themselves resolve to take the same stands on antisemitism that they are asking of schools, universities, unions, and other entities.

Just as we acknowledge the power and influence of a teacher's words or selection of texts in a classroom, our government's voice and its selection of personnel set the moral tone for our country.

When the 2023 White House National Strategy activated every government agency in mobilizing a society-wide rejection of antisemitism, agencies from the Veterans Administration to the Department of Agriculture were engaging veterans and farm communities in learning about and speaking out against antisemitism. Now Jews must watch as there is utter silence and tacit approval for the most base antisemitism

embraced, tolerated, and sometimes even signaled by members of the administration who have not been removed from their positions or have even been promoted.

An administration truly dedicated to Jewish protection would not be inhabited by [Cabinet members](#) and staff who openly espouse antisemitic and other bigoted beliefs or pardon members of antisemitic militia groups among the [Jan. 6 insurrectionists](#). Administration appointments of supporters of antisemitic conspiracy theories, white supremacy, and Christian nationalism are no anomaly or oversight. It is a pattern:

- Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Joe Kent [has ties](#) to neo-Nazis and white nationalists. In 2022, Kent accused Jewish American pro-Israel advocates of dual loyalty, noting the candidate “owes a foreign country, not her constituents.” Invoking an antisemitic trope about Jewish control of U.S. politics, Kent wrote that “...taking their money puts their interests ahead of ours.”
- [DOD press secretary Kingsley Wilson](#) is a prolific purveyor of antisemitic conspiracy theories yet has been promoted twice, even as the Jewish community and the media have exposed her antisemitism.
- Ed Martin, whose [praise for notorious antisemites](#) was publicly aired during his nomination to be a U.S. Attorney, now serves as the Department of Justice Pardon Attorney.

What used to be taboos against Nazism are being broken all over this administration. That’s why it’s so disheartening that the President has never been called to account for dining with the antisemite Nick Fuentes, who has declared “I love Hitler” in front of audiences and said “Talmudic Jews need to either leave the country or be converted” and who speaks about the “bastardized Jewish subversion of the American creed.”

Accusing Jews of being disloyal is an age-old antisemitic trope. That’s why Jews were so shocked when, in 2024, then-candidate Trump suggested that, if he lost the election, it would be because of the Jews. In October 2022, he warned American Jews to “get their act together” and show more appreciation for his policies toward Israel. He has called Jewish voters who didn’t vote for him “greatly disloyal” and has declared that “any Jewish person that votes for Democrats hates their religion.” I can tell you as a rabbi that Judaism does not dictate which party to vote for but does offer detailed instructions for establishing a just society that aims to protect the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of every single one of its members.

Project 2025, which multiple members of this administration played a strong role in crafting, breaks down the separation of Church and State that has been fundamental to this country since its founding, and that has allowed Jews and members of other minority religious groups to flourish here. This plan privileges Christian students and teachers in ways that will make schools less comfortable for Jewish and other non-Christian students. We have already seen this administration support the increased infiltration of Christian practice into schools, including through prayer, Christian Bible study, and the display of the Christian version of the Ten Commandments.

Based on the model of Project 2025, many states have already instituted book bans, some of which ban books on the Holocaust, as well as books that honor the heritage of other minority groups.

In January, the Pentagon's intelligence arm (DIA) indefinitely paused the observation of Holocaust Remembrance Day, along with other observances like Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to comply with the administration's executive directive ending federal programs on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the military.

The Hebrew Bible offers strong guidance for what it means to be a just and wise leader. When the people first approach the Prophet Samuel to ask for a king, the prophet warns them of the danger that a king will only amass power and wealth for himself rather than tend to the needs of the people. King David, the most storied king of Jewish history, proves his fitness for the position by serving as a shepherd and caring for vulnerable creatures. As king, he is said to do *mishpat utzedakah*—to act with justice and righteousness. We ask nothing less from our leaders in Congress today.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the U.S. National Strategy. Congress has the benefit of a comprehensive roadmap for countering antisemitism. The [National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) offers over 100 specific recommendations and was developed with input from over a thousand ideologically diverse Jewish community leaders and experts. At the time of its release, in May 2023, the National Strategy was welcomed by Jewish leaders across the ideological spectrum and by elected officials from both parties. It should not be cast aside simply because it came about during a different administration. Doing so only sets back the cause of Jewish students' safety.

Here are some key recommendations, many of which stem from areas covered by the 2023 White House National Strategy. These are recommendations for Congress generally, and not necessarily within the jurisdiction of this committee.

1. **Speak out against antisemitism even when it's uncomfortable.** Your words matter. The most immediate and powerful tool you have is your microphone to set a moral tone. If we are asking schools, unions, and movements to call out antisemitism and fight it in their own institutions, we expect our government leaders to have the same moral courage.
2. **Restore government tools and resources.** The Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#), the office specifically charged with investigating bias complaints in school and monitoring schools' compliance, has been eviscerated. It has lost the funding and capacity necessary to conduct thorough investigations and monitor compliance of schools. By shuttering regional offices, slashing budgets and reducing experienced personnel, our government has lost critical resources, expertise, and experience just when it is most needed.
3. **Restore support for hate crimes and violence prevention.** This year's federal budget includes not one dollar of funding for hate crime prevention. While hate crimes against Jews have increased more than 90% over the last decade, the administration has cut dozens of grants for hate crime prevention, overriding the explicit intent of Congress, which passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which included the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE Act. The funding cuts implemented by this administration encompass virtually every existing program to support improved hate crime prevention, education and awareness, response, reporting, as well as hate crimes victim support.
4. **Recognize that fighting one kind of hate alone is neither moral nor effective.** Acknowledge that rising antisemitism is part of a broader rise in hate targeting other groups. Addressing these hatreds requires a broad, inclusive effort across society.
5. **Invest in and strengthen education instead of sanctioning it.** We simply cannot punish our way out of the gaps in awareness about Jewish identity, Jewish experiences, and antisemitism. For Jewish community organizations like T'ruah, the ability to work with school districts and labor unions is the most immediate and effective way to open hearts and minds and to raise awareness about antisemitism in a measurable way. I know of no other way we could reach millions of educators without organizations like the American Federation of Teachers or the National Education Association promoting resources and educating teachers. That has a more immediate material impact on Jewish students in schools than punitive action against their school district or their

teacher's own union.

6. **Equip young people to engage with new ideas and learn together across differences.** We as a society are polarized and ill-equipped to communicate with each other to problem solve, deliberate issues and to know each other. We have to do more to give students the skills to discuss issues across disagreement and to open their minds and hearts to a different narrative or idea. In this effort, we've been gratified by how many schools and unions like NEA and AFT have promoted T'ruah's own guide and other resources and tools from groups like Facing History and Ourselves, including tools for difficult conversations about Israel's war with Hamas. Teaching students to engage in conversation about Israel's war in ways that reject antisemitic rhetoric and stereotypes, or any policy issue, should be a core part of civic education.
7. **Cease using Jewish safety as a pretext for the detention, abduction or denial of due process to foreign students, and stop fueling the xenophobic demonizing of immigrants, which is an affront to Jewish interests and values.** It is quite simply an affront to our values, our faith, and our own history as people who found safe haven in this country as immigrants and refugees. Listen to the voices of hundreds of Jewish clergy across the country who have spoken clearly in [opposition](#) to the indefinite suspension of refugee admissions, to the arrest of foreign students, and to the [ICE raids](#) destroying their communities.

It's difficult and uncomfortable for the Jewish community, or any minority who needs protection, to come out against our government's stated attempt to help make us safe. It's not what any Jewish leader ever expected to do. As palpable and serious as our fear of antisemitic discrimination and even violence is, our fear of losing the blanket of protections that democracy has afforded us is just as strong.

We need solutions that actually protect Jewish students while strengthening the institutions that have allowed American Jews and so many communities to flourish in our country—like public education. Thank you for your attention to this critical task of ensuring that no student misses out on all that their education can give them because of unchecked antisemitism or any form of identity-based discrimination or harassment.

APPENDIX. Additional Background and Resources

Resources from T'ruah and Rabbi Jill Jacobs

- About [T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights](#)
- T'ruah's "[A Very Brief Guide to Antisemitism](#)", published January 2022, updated 2024
- "[Criticism of Israel and Antisemitism: How to Tell Where One Ends and the Other Begins](#)" by Rabbi Jill Jacobs, 2024
- "[Trump is using antisemitism as pretext to attack higher education, undermine democracy](#)" by Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Boston Globe, March 21, 2025
- "[How to tell when criticism of Israel is actually anti-Semitism](#)" by Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Washington Post, May 18, 2018
- Video: [Rabbi Jill Jacobs on Countering Antisemitism for the United Nations' #NoToHate Series](#), June 6, 2025
- "['Project Esther': Exploiting Jewish Fear to Advance Dangerous Policy](#)," T'ruah and The Nexus Project, March 2025

T'ruah and Jewish Community Statements

- [Rabbis Respond to Trump Administration Executive Order on Antisemitism](#), January 30, 2025
- [Rabbis Reject President Trump's Use of Antisemitism As Wedge to Dismantle Democracy](#), April 8, 2025
- [Hundreds of Rabbis Condemn President Trump's Exploitation of Genuine Fears of Antisemitism](#), April 28, 2025
- [Rejecting the False Choice between Jewish Safety and Democracy](#), April 15, 2025

- [T'ruah and nearly 40 Jewish groups' joint statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#), February 7, 2025
- [Statement from over 100 Jewish organizations](#) on Recent Attacks on Democratic Norms and Values, February 7, 2025

Additional Resources

- [Jewish Senators Letter to President Trump on the Weaponization of Antisemitism](#), April 24, 2025
- [What Does Dismantling the Education Department Mean for Jewish Safety and Democracy?](#), Jewish Council for Public Affairs Fact Sheet on Jewish Safety and the Department of Education, March 20, 2025
- [President Trump Is Not a King: Congress Must Stop His Attack on Education](#), National Council of Jewish Women, March 20, 2025
- [Why Trump's attack on democracy is as deep a Jewish concern as antisemitism or Israel](#) by Dr. Yehuda Kurtzer, President of Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, March 3, 2025

Chairman KILEY. Thank you very much, and last, Ms. Lerman, you are recognized for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MS. RACHEL LERMAN, VICE CHAIR AND DIRECTOR, APPEALS AND CRITICAL MOTIONS, THE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER LAW, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Ms. LERMAN. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Kiley, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the House Education and Workforce Committee. I am honored to appear before you to address the rising antisemitism in our K through 12 schools. I am the Vice Chair of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, which I joined as a full-time lawyer after almost three decades in private practice as an Appellate lawyer.

I am testifying on behalf of the Brandeis Center to tell you that real children in K-12 schools are being harassed, excluded and silenced, just for being Jewish, or because they are perceived think they are Jewish. This has to stop.

A lot of attention has been focused on antisemitism in higher ed, as you mentioned. I am here to tell you that the problem in K-12 is even larger. Thanks to antisemitic messaging by teachers and third-party contractors like AROC and Liberated Ethnic Studies Coalition, Jewish students in K-12 schools are being bullied and shunned by their peers, solely because of their Jewish heritage, and their connection to Israel, the homeland of the Jewish people. No child should have to hide their identity or endure harassment because of their identity in an American school.

As you know, Title VI protects Jewish students who are targeted on the basis of their Jewish ethnic identity in both college and in K-12. Executive Order for combating antisemitism that was issued in 2019, E.O. 138899 confirms this, it also requires agencies that apply Title VI to consider the IHRA definition of antisemitism when they analyze allegations of antisemitism.

IHRA is clear that criticism of government policies, Israel's government policies, just like that leveled at any other country is not antisemitic, but demonizing the Jewish State, saying it has no right to exist, or using a double standard might well be. Let me say a word about teachers unions, which play a very significant role in bringing antisemitic and anti-Israel content into the classroom.

The unions indoctrinate schoolteachers, inviting them to participate in events, celebrating the October 7 massacre, celebrating. One teacher that I work with resigned from the union after receiving this bulletin, which went to all teachers in San Francisco, and he has since been attacked by the union as a result.

According to the union, sorry, teachers who resign from the union are disloyal to their colleagues and are freeloading. Unions in California and Massachusetts, among others, create and provide teachers with instructional materials that teach hate. For example, teachers are instructed to tell young children that a group of bullies called Zionists stole Palestinian land by force. They even provide coloring books telling very young children to draw Zionist leaders taking money to harm Palestinians.

The message is clear, Zionists are evil, and Jews who do not renounce their religious or ethnic allegiance to the State of Israel are also evil, so it is no surprise the Jewish teachers and students are shunned by their peers, or that Jewish students are bullied to the point that their families are moving them out of their public schools.

I urge this Committee and Congress to act decisively to ensure that are civil rights laws are enforced, that schools are held ac-

countable, and that every child in America is able to learn in an environment free from fear and hostility. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lerman follows:]

TESTIMONY OF L. RACHEL LERMAN
VICE CHAIR AND DIRECTOR OF APPEALS & CRITICAL MOTIONS
THE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER LAW
“FROM PLAYGROUND TO CLASSROOM: THE SPREAD OF ANTISEMITISM IN K-12
SCHOOLS” TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

CHAIRMAN WALBERG, RANKING MEMBER SCOTT, AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE:

I am honored to appear before you today to address the rise of anti-Semitism in our K–12 schools.

My name is L. Rachel Lerman and I serve as Vice Chair and Director of Appeals & Critical Motions at the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, a national civil-rights organization dedicated to combating anti-Semitism and advancing justice for all. I joined the Brandeis Center as a full-time attorney in 2021, after serving over 25 years in private practice, where I focused on state and federal appeals as a partner at Akin Gump and other leading firms.

The Brandeis Center works through litigation, policy advocacy, and education to see that Jewish students and employees are protected by the civil rights laws in universities, workplaces, and increasingly, in K-12 classrooms. In our daily work, we hear directly from Jewish students, parents, teachers, and staff across the country who are confronting discrimination and exclusion. Their experiences make clear that the crisis of anti-Semitism in K-12 schools is not confined to one district or one region, but is a widespread and growing problem that demands national attention.

I am testifying today on behalf of the Brandeis Center to share some of the stories that drive our legal work. Real children in K-12 schools are being harassed, excluded, and silenced simply for being Jewish—or because they are perceived to be Jewish. This needs to stop.

Anti-Semitism in K-12 Schools

Anti-Semitism is not new and has been steadily rising in recent years. Since the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks in 2023, the United States has witnessed an alarming surge in anti-Semitism. On a global scale, researchers recorded 6,326 anti-Semitic incidents in 2024 alone—a staggering 107.7% increase over the previous year.¹ This hatred has infiltrated every sector of American life. A national study commissioned by the Combat Antisemitism Movement found that 3.5 million American Jews (nearly two-thirds of the Jewish population) have experienced anti-Semitism since October 7th, with 6% reporting that they feel less safe as a result.² Recent FBI data confirm the trend: anti-Semitic hate crimes in the United States reached a record 1,938 incidents in 2024, the highest ever recorded since the FBI began tracking this category.³ These crimes made up 69% of all religion-based hate crimes, despite Jews comprising only about 2% of the national population.

¹ Combat Antisemitism Movement, “Global Antisemitism Incidents Rise 107.7 % in 2024, Fueled by Far-Left Surge, CAM Annual Data Study Reveals,” *Combat Antisemitism Movement*, April 29, 2025, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://combatantisemitism.org/studies-reports/global-antisemitism-incidents-rise-107-7-in-2024-fueled-by-far-left-surge-cam-annual-data-study-reveals/>

² Combat Antisemitism Movement, “3.5 Million American Jews Have Experienced Antisemitism Since October 7, New Survey Reveals,” *Combat Antisemitism Movement*, October 7, 2024, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://combatantisemitism.org/press-release/3-5-million-american-jews-have-experienced-antisemitism-since-october-7-new-survey-reveals/>

³ Combat Antisemitism Movement, “FBI: Antisemitic Hate Crimes in US Hit Record High in 2024,” *Combat Antisemitism Movement*, August 6, 2025, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://combatantisemitism.org/cam-news/fbi-antisemitic-hate-crimes-in-us-hit-record-high-in-2024/>

A lot of attention has been focused on anti-Semitism in higher education. It's important to understand that K–12 schools have also become incubators of hostility, often under the banner of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) or “liberated” ethnic studies, which tend to divide students into victims and oppressors. Even though Jews are less than 2% of the U.S. population and have faced persecution throughout history, these programs label them as oppressors and even “white supremacists,” regardless of the color of their skin. One dark-skinned Jewish student with whom we worked was told that her color “would not save her.” Instead of being seen as individuals with their own character traits and history, Jewish students are judged by their ancestry, their Jewish heritage and family background, and their connection to Israel, the historic homeland of the Jewish people.

The recasting of Jews as oppressors draws on old anti-Jewish tropes presented in the guise of anti-Zionist rhetoric. The word “Zionist” is often used as a proxy for “Jew,” and slogans denouncing Zionists as colonial invaders and racialized oppressors are aimed at marginalizing Jewish students—and do marginalize Jewish students. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has long pointed out that contemporary anti-Semitism has assumed various disguised forms, and is sometimes “camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism.”⁴ Some K-12 educators praise the October 7 terrorist attacks or justify them as resistance, teaching students of all ages to embrace these concepts. Drawing on teaching materials distributed by teachers' unions, some teachers tell children that Israel has no right to exist, that its Jewish residents should be expelled from the land, and that Jewish students in America should be shunned unless they affirmatively deny their deep religious and ethnic ties to the land of Israel.⁵ In 2024, a teacher's union in San Francisco invited all its members to an event celebrating the one-year anniversary of October 7, lauding the massacre as a positive example of “resistance.”

This poisonous climate echoes a dangerous historical precedent. In pre-Holocaust Germany, schools systematically taught children to view Jews as dangerous outsiders and oppressors of society. That indoctrination normalized prejudice, desensitized youth, and laid the groundwork for persecution. Today, by casting Jewish children as privileged oppressors, some American classrooms are reviving the same patterns of vilification—embedding bias into education and teaching children to see their Jewish peers not as equals, but as enemies.

⁴ Findings and Recommendations of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Regarding Campus Anti-Semitism.” U.S.C.C.R., Apr. 3, 2006, available at <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/050306FRUSCCRRCAS.pdf>.

⁵ Steinbuch, Yaron. 2024. “Seattle Teacher Who Said It's ‘Offensive’ to Identify as Straight Now Suspended for Comments on Hamas Terror Attacks.” *New York Post*, April 19, 2024. <https://nypost.com/2024/04/19/us-news/controversial-seattle-teacher-placed-on-leave-for-comments-about-hamas-attack/>.

Application of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to Federally Funded K-12 Schools

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person shall, “on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Over time, federal enforcement agencies, including the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), have made clear that “national origin” extends to discrimination based on shared ancestry, covering ethno-religious groups such as Jews, Sikhs, and Muslims.⁶

Under this interpretation, sometimes called the *Marcus Doctrine* after Kenneth L. Marcus, who headed OCR during two administrations and who founded and chairs the Brandeis Center, Title VI prohibits schools that receive federal funding from allowing students or staff to discriminate against or harass Jewish students (or students perceived to be Jewish) on the basis of their shared ancestry, namely, their 3,000 year old connection to the land of Israel. Of course, Title VI also covers Israeli students on the basis of national origin.

The Department of Education has confirmed that Title VI protections extend to Jews targeted on the basis of “shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.” According to Executive Order (EO) 13899, which has been incorporated into OCR’s current policy guidance, Title VI must be enforced “against prohibited forms of discrimination rooted in anti-Semitism as vigorously as against all other forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VI.”⁷

When a student suffers harassment that is so severe or pervasive it hinders him or her from gaining access to all of the educational and social opportunities that their school provides, the school has an affirmative obligation to step in, end the harassment, and prevent a hostile environment from developing or continuing. If a hostile environment has already developed, the school is required to dismantle it and prevent it from recurring.

OCR recently explained in a Dear Colleague Letter that a hostile environment exists when “unwelcome conduct based on race, color, or national origin that, based on the totality of circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person’s ability to participate in or benefit from a school’s education program or activity.”⁸ A Title VI violation may be found when “(1) a hostile environment based on race, color, or national origin exists; (2) the school had actual or constructive notice of the hostile environment; and (3) the school failed to take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. 2023. *Fact Sheet: Protecting Students from Discrimination Based on Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics*. January 2023. Accessed August 28, 2025. <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/ocr-factsheet-shared-ancestry-2023-33851.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. 2004. *Dear Colleague Letter: Title VI and Title IX Religious Discrimination in Schools and Colleges*, September 13, 2004. Accessed August 28, 2025. <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/letter-title-vi-and-title-ix-religious-discrimination-schools-and-colleges-2004-35132.pdf>.

⁷ EO 13899 remains in effect: the Department of Education affirmed its commitment to the EO in its 2023 factsheet on discrimination based on shared ancestry. The Department did so again in May 2023 when it directed school administrators to review the Questions and Answers on [EO] 13899 in OCR guidance issued alongside the White House National Strategy on Countering Anti-Semitism.

⁸ See Dear Colleague Letter, “Protecting Students from Discrimination, such as Harassment, Based on Race, Color, or National Origin, Including Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics,” Catharin Lhamon (May 7, 2024), at <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-202405-shared-ancestry.pdf>.

(i) end the harassment, (ii) eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and (iii) prevent the harassment from recurring.”⁹

Under EO 13899, executive departments and agencies charged with enforcing Title VI must consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism (the IHRA Definition)¹⁰ when investigating allegations of anti-Semitism.¹¹ This definition, which echoes the 2010 State Department Definition of Antisemitism, states up front that criticism of the government of Israel or its policies similar to criticism leveled at any other country does not constitute anti-Semitism. But when Israel is demonized, delegitimized, or subjected to a standard different than that applied to any other country, the speaker is likely promoting anti-Semitism. No one should be punished for speech alone, of course, and IHRA does not suggest that anti-Semitic speech should be punished. Instead, IHRA assists officials and administrators in understanding that misconduct accompanied by anti-Semitic speech is likely anti-Semitic.

As OCR has recognized, schools have a number of tools for responding to a hostile environment without restricting any First Amendment rights.¹² A school can, for example, “communicate its opposition to stereotypical, derogatory opinions; provide counseling and support for students affected by harassment; or take steps to establish a welcoming and respectful school campus, which could include making clear that the school values, and is determined to fully include in the campus community, students of all races, colors, and national origins.”¹³

When it comes to free speech, courts give elementary and secondary school administrators more flexibility than their college counterparts to ensure an appropriate learning environment considering students’ age and maturity. Public school teachers’ speech rights are limited as a matter of law. They simply cannot “deliver any message to anyone anytime they wish,” as the U.S. Supreme Court put it in *Kennedy v. Bremerton Sch. Dist.*, 597 U.S. 507 (2022). As the Court explained, when public school teachers are acting as teachers, whether they are in the classroom or the schoolyard, on social media or leading students on a walk-out, they do not speak for themselves: they are government employees “speaking on the government’s behalf to convey its intended message.” Schools thus have the right and responsibility to regulate teachers’ speech to protect students from discrimination and indoctrination.

Public elementary and secondary schools can also regulate student speech when it “could substantially disrupt or interfere with the work of the school or other students’ rights.”¹⁴

The recent Trump Executive Order on K–12 indoctrination reinforces these legal obligations.¹⁵ It also pledges to ensure that recipients of federal funds comply with civil rights protections for students and with parental-right-to-know provisions.

Illustrative Incidents and Patterns

⁹ *Id.*, p. 4.

¹⁰ <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

¹¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/12/16/2019-27217/combating-anti-semitism>.

¹² See fn. 8, *supra*, at p. 3 (footnotes omitted).

¹³ *Ibid.* (footnotes omitted).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (footnotes omitted).

¹⁵ EO 14190 (Jan. 29, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/03/2025-02232/ending-radical-indoctrination-in-k-12-schooling>.

The corrosive impact of these ideologies is not hypothetical. We have seen concrete examples across the country that reveal how deeply anti-Semitic content has entered the classroom. Here are just a few of many hundreds of examples parents have shared of anti-Semitism in K-12 public schools.

In Berkeley, California, shortly after October 7, a second-grade teacher wrote in her own hand “Stop bombing babies” and told her students to copy the phrase and others like it onto sticky notes, which were then placed outside the classroom of the school’s only Jewish teacher.¹⁶

A ninth grader in the same district, who identifies as both Black and Jewish, told his mother he was uncomfortable when an art teacher posted and shared pictures vilifying Israel in the weeks following October 7. One picture showed a fist tearing through an image of a Jewish Star of David. When his mother reported this to the school, they “resolved” the issue by putting the Jewish student in the library until a new class could be found for him. The student decided to identify only as Black after he was attacked online for supporting “genocide.”

A high school student in Fremont, California, was rebuked for singing a love song in her native Hebrew at a talent show, even though other students sang songs in their own native languages. An administrator told her she was in “big trouble,” leaving her to wonder every day when the axe might fall.

In Santa Ana, California, the school district formed a committee that included board members to create ethnic-studies courses, many of which were laced with anti-Semitic content. After the Brandeis Center and its partners brought suit, discovery revealed shocking exchanges about how to “address the Jewish Question,” intentional scheduling of meetings on Passover to exclude Jewish participants, and disparagement of a Jewish educator as a “f---ing baby” with a “colonized Jewish mind.” That district ultimately resolved litigation by agreeing to remove anti-Jewish materials and work with Jewish organizations to develop unbiased lessons.¹⁷

While there are many more examples from California, the problem is not limited to that state.

The Brandeis Center has, for example, challenged discrimination in a North Carolina middle school. There, a non-Jewish student who wore an Israeli baseball shirt to school, and was thus perceived to be Jewish, endured more than two years of harassment by peers, who subjected him to repeated anti-Semitic slurs and exclusionary treatment in the classroom and in school sports activities.¹⁸ Despite the family’s repeated complaints, school administrators minimized the incidents, failed to discipline the perpetrators, and at times treated the victim as the problem. The hostile environment became so severe that the student’s family finally moved him to another school. In response to a complaint filed by the Brandeis Center, OCR concluded that the district had subjected the student to a hostile environment in violation of Title VI and entered into a

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, *Santa Ana Unified School District and Brandeis Center Announce Resolution of Civil Rights Complaint*, press release, February 20, 2025, <https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SAUSD-Press-Release-2.20.25.pdf>

¹⁸ Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, “Letter to the Office for Civil Rights Regarding the Community School of Davidson,” redacted, August 11, 2023, PDF, Brandeis Center, accessed August 28, 2025, <https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/8-11-23-Letter-to-OCR-re-Community-School-of-Davidson-redacted-Redacted.pdf>

resolution agreement requiring the school to revise its policies, provide staff training, and take corrective steps to ensure equal educational access for Jewish students and students perceived to be Jewish.¹⁹

The Brandeis Center also filed a complaint in Virginia, after three Jewish children were expelled because their parents complained about the school's unwillingness to respond to anti-Semitic harassment of their youngest (11-year-old) daughter.²⁰ The school had allowed anti-Semitism to take root in the child's class, and shared a social studies project depicting the attributes of a "strong historical leader that bore the face of Hitler. After the image was shared, the 11-year-old was subject to persistent and severe anti-Semitic harassment. When the parents notified the school's owner and headmaster that their daughter was being harassed and bullied because she was Jewish, they were told their daughter should "toughen up." Two days later, he notified the parents that all three children were expelled effective immediately, days before their mid-semester report cards, and long after the application periods for other local schools had passed.

Teachers' Unions and Third-Party Contractors Spread Anti-Semitism

Teachers' Unions

Teachers' unions in California, Massachusetts, and New York, among other states, have played a significant role in introducing anti-Semitic and anti-Israel content into the classroom. Union-endorsed materials have played a major role in spreading these ideologies. An unapproved curriculum titled "Teach Palestine," promoted by teachers' unions in Oakland, instructs young children that "a group of bullies called Zionists... stole [our land] by force."²¹ It asks students to draw "Zionist leaders... receiving money" to sustain an "unfair" system and presents the children's book *I is for Intifada* to kindergarteners through third graders as an example of "standing up for what's right." High school students encounter lessons accusing Israel of "rainbow-washing." In Massachusetts, the state teachers' association circulated a poster on "Israel and Occupied Palestine" as a suggested classroom resource.

In California, the teachers' union has done everything in its power to block bills that would prevent teachers from introducing anti-Semitic and anti-Israel content into ethnic studies courses that may be legally required for graduation.

Many unions have resisted training on anti-Semitism. But they are often eager to foment it. Just last week, the Oakland teachers' union (OEA) announced it would vote this week (September 8) on a resolution urging teachers not to use any ADL materials. This resolution targets the NEA's rescission of its decision not to use ADL materials, "caving into pressure from the pro-Israel lobby." To "educate" its members about the NEA's decision to continue using ADL materials, the OEA will "conduct a two-month long educational campaign involving teachers and community members about [NEA's] vote and the history of the ADL and its current activities

¹⁹ Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, *Resolution Agreement with Community School of Davidson*, May 30, 2024, PDF, accessed August 28, 2025, <https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/LDB-Davidson-RA-5.30.24-FINAL.pdf>

²⁰ Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, *Title VI Complaint Against Nysmith School for the Gifted* (filed June 2025), <https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Nysmith-Complaint.pdf>.

²¹ Oakland Unified "Teach Palestine" curriculum: <https://brandeiscenter.egnyte.com/dl/VqLqj1Y1Zp>

against teachers and community organizations who are critical of the US-financed Israeli war against Palestine and the ongoing genocide in Gaza.”

When Jewish teachers complain to their unions about the hostile atmosphere created by the union’s anti-Israel hate messaging, they are told that the union has the right to support Hamas as part of its political activism. When teachers try to leave the union, they are shamed as freeloaders disloyal to their colleagues.

Third-party contractors

Two kinds of third-party contractors are at issue here: “liberated” style ethnic studies organizations that sell courses and train teachers; and groups like the Arab Resource Organizing Center (AROC), which contracts with San Francisco Unified School District among others.

Ethnic Studies. In 2021, California’s Governor Newsom passed into law a bill called AB101, which requires public school high school students to take an ethnic studies course in order to graduate. The law passed after two versions of the Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum were rejected by the governor because they contained so much biased and anti-Semitic material. As legislature stated in the statute codifying AB101, the biased materials excised from the Model Curriculum should not be used in any ethnic studies course. But groups promoting “liberated” ethnic studies were determined to include these materials, and having been selling their version of ethnic studies along with teacher training to public schools throughout California. While the status of AB101 remain uncertain due to funding shortages, schools continue to purchase materials and services from “liberated” groups.

AROC. This group, which is openly dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish State of Israel, contracts with schools in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland to promote “community building” and support for Arab and other students. AROC does not hide its agenda. On October 7, 2023, as Hamas was carrying out its brutal massacre, AROC posted on [Instagram](#) that “Palestine is rising! Gaza is rising!”

In the same month, AROC [published a statement](#) “hold[ing] the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence we’ve witnessed across historic Palestine...Recent events did not occur in a vacuum but as a result of unrelenting colonial aggression.” The statement further called “to boycott Israel. We call on institutions to divest from Israel. We call on the US government to sanction Israel and end the billions in military aid.”

In May 2024, AROC was a “convening organization” of the [People’s Conference for Palestine](#), featuring speakers affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. At the event, AROC executive director Lara Kiswani [encouraged activists](#) to “overcome Zionism.” She also claimed that “the only thing that can stop this is a flood,” in reference to Hamas’ name for its October 7, 2023, massacre of Israeli citizens as Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. She continued: “this is what the resistance intended, that the flood would become floods throughout the entire region.”

In December 2023, parents reported that AROC was unlawfully entering schools to organize pro-Palestine student walkouts. AROC did not deny this; indeed it, it stated that “AROC absolutely

supported the students who decided to walk out... We are appalled by the racist attacks they have faced since speaking out against genocide.”²²

Recommendations

To confront this crisis, we ask government authorities to take decisive action at the federal, state, and local level. The following steps are essential to ensure that Jewish students are fully protected under the law and that our schools remain safe places for learning, not breeding grounds for hate.

First, federal law must be enforced. The Department of Education should investigate districts that permit or promote anti-Semitic practices and, where necessary, halt federal funding until compliance is assured.

Second, teacher-driven materials must be scrutinized. Unapproved and anti-Semitic curricula promoted by teachers’ unions, such as “Teach Palestine,” should be prohibited from the classroom.

Third, a monitor should be appointed to vet government-funded resources. A transparent approval process must be required for textbooks, lesson plans contracted by third-party vendors, and other instructional materials. Exploiting school resources to indoctrinate students, misuse data, or exclude parents should be barred unless materials comply with strict anti-bias standards.

Fourth, curricular integrity must be ensured. Anti-Semitic content, correct false maps and slides, and design courses with meaningful Jewish community input — just as Santa Ana eventually agreed to do under settlement.

Fifth, schools should celebrate Jewish American contributions. Schools should adopt curricula that highlight Jewish American history, culture, and achievements, fostering pride in the countless contributions Jewish Americans have made to the United States and the world. Teaching this positive history helps counter stereotypes and ensures Jewish identity is seen in its full richness, not through a distorted lens of bias.

Finally, parents have the right to know what their children are being taught. Districts that stonewall or conceal classroom materials are not only eroding trust but also violating federal and state requirements.

Final Thoughts

In closing, the rise of anti-Semitism in our K–12 schools is not a distant or abstract problem; it is happening here and now, with devastating consequences for Jewish children and their families and allies. No student should ever have to conceal their identity, endure slurs and harassment, or transfer schools simply to feel safe in an American classroom. I urge this Committee and Congress to act decisively to ensure that our civil-rights laws are enforced, that schools are held accountable, and that every child is able to learn in an environment free from fear and hostility.

²² <https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/arab-resource-and-organizing-center-aroc/>

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue and for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you very much for your testimony. Under Committee Rule 9, we will now question witnesses under the 5-minute rule. I will first recognize the Chairman of the Full Committee, Mr. Walberg of Michigan for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the panel for being here. Let me make a couple comments initially as

coming from what I have heard. I respect highly, and appreciate my Democrat colleagues, or Democratic colleagues is the proper term. I understand that the rhetoric at times is talking a game that they are expected to talk by sadly, the radical base.

During this past—their past opportunity in the majority, these issues that they are expressing concern that we are not dealing with, and yes we are, were not addressed, including the feckless Office of Civil Rights, who were not doing their job. Probably could have continued to do what they have not done, except for the fact that October 7th exposed the antisemitic wrought within our graves of academe, our higher education institutions.

COVID helped to expose multiple concerns in our K–12 classrooms, as parents for the first time in many cases, got a chance to see what was happening or not happening in their school classrooms. The luxury of having served on this Committee now into my 17th year allows me to look back historically and say this is why it has finally come to a head, and we have to deal with this.

The first aspect is exposing what is going on. We can take action, and we will continue. As our Committee dives deeper into oversight of antisemitism in K–12 schools, it would be helpful to get a clearer picture of the most problematic districts in this space.

Ms. Lerman, in your view, which school districts are the worst actors when it comes to failing to address, or even encouraging antisemitism?

Ms. LERMAN. I will turn on my machine. Let me preface by saying that I live in Los Angeles and am most aware of what is happening in California. The Brandeis Center is centered in Washington, DC, and has offices in New York, but I am seeing in California, particularly in the Bay area in San Francisco, and Oakland, and Berkeley, some really alarming things.

I am aware of schools in Massachusetts and Philadelphia that are also experiencing similar things, and we have are taking action in New York against Origins School, which also has very severe problems.

Mr. WALBERG. Okay. Dr. Shufutinsky and Ms. Neily, given the work you have done all across the country, are there any school districts you would add and highlight to this list?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Yes, San Diego, Philadelphia, New York City Public Schools, Chicago.

Mr. WALBERG. Ms. Neily.

Ms. NEILY. Montgomery County, Maryland and Fairfax County Public Schools come to mind in the immediate region.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you. Our Committee has conducted extensive oversight into antisemitism in higher education. Ms. Neily, can you please describe whether universities are contributing to antisemitism in the K–12 space specifically, and if so, how?

Ms. NEILY. University created curriculums are problematic because they give the premature of legitimacy. As Chairman Kiley knows, you have looked extensively into the Brown University's Choices Program. That is assumed to be beyond reproach because of Brown University's reputation itself, but that program was underwritten by the Qatar Foundation and is full of historical distortions about the State of Israel.

That is only one of many, but universities are giving the impression that these programs are completely legitimate and acceptable.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you. Dr. Shufutinsky, and Ms. Lerman, do you want to add anything about how antisemitism in higher education is contributing to the wrought developing in public schools in K-12?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Yes. I can give a really good example. University of California Santa Cruz has a critical race and ethnics studies department. It is a direct funnel of their graduates into the K to 12 public school system, and because of the mandate, the requirement for students in California to take an ethnics studies class to graduate, it is making these teachers, these new graduates, the leaders in these K through 12 classrooms. When we look at the curriculum that they are creating, it is not just anti-Israel and anti-Jewish, it is anti-American, and it is calling for students to commit to engaging in activism, rather than scholarship.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, and Ms. Lerman, I am sure you had more, but my time is expired, and I have got to abide by the rules. I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Ranking Member Bonamici of Oregon is recognized.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Rabbi Jacobs, you said in your testimony that if we fight antisemitism in ways that only divide Jews and their neighbors, we are only isolating Jews in ways that sew greater division, and that ultimately make Jews less safe.

Is the Trump administration's approach the best way to reduce antisemitism in schools? If not, what would be more effective?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. Jews have found success and have flourished and found safety in this country because it is a liberal democracy with strong protections for the rights of both individuals and groups, including religious groups and different ethnic groups.

Something that I have heard very often from students is that the Trump administration's hyperfocus on antisemitism is actually marginalizing Jewish students, and that many Jewish students are afraid that the attacks, for example on universities, the defunding of medical research in the name of fighting antisemitism, which does nothing of course to fight antisemitism, only serves to further marginalize Jewish students.

What we need is a comprehensive approach that is going to protect the rights of all students. Unfortunately, instead the Trump administration is trying to dismantle democracy, and as we have already heard, including eviscerating the Office for Civil Rights, which is the office that has both the mandate, and also the expertise to address instances of antisemitism and other bias.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. Just a couple days ago a U.S. Senator, a Republican, U.S. Senator said America is a white homeland. Rabbi, are the policies of the Trump administration and statements like that, the policies like mass deportation, repealing environmental protections, promoting white Christian nationalist ideas, and individuals, are those consistent with Jewish values?

Rabbi JACOBS. These policies are absolutely not consistent with Jewish values. Judaism has thousands-year-old history that is based around figuring out how to create a system and a society

that is just for everybody. Unfortunately, the Trump administration's attacks on immigrants, gutting of social services, means that this country is no longer able to serve the needs of everybody, and we find that many members of our own society are being marginalized.

The Jewish community has been very outspoken for many, many years, hundreds of years defending the rights of immigrants, defending the rights of those who are in need, defending of course public education.

Ms. BONAMICI. Rabbi, we know that this country was founded on freedom of religion, so when we see this administration flaunting the U.S. Constitution, we see people being picked up without due process off the streets. What message does that send to the Jewish community?

Rabbi JACOBS. This sends a message that the administration is not actually concerned with what the Jewish community is saying that it wants, and what Jewish leaders are asking for, including this administration's attack on the separation of church and State will certainly result in the imposition of a certain type of Christianity in schools in a way that only makes Jewish students less safe.

We heard this even earlier this week in the President's remarks at the Museum of the Bible, saying that he wants to bring more religion into school, which certainly will be Christianity, and that of course makes Jewish students, and students—other students who are not Christian, less safe in their schools.

Ms. BONAMICI. Absolutely. In the remaining time, Rabbi, will you please tell us about Project Esther, which you mentioned in your written testimony? Who wrote it and what are the consequences if its policies are implemented?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. Project Esther is a plan that was written by the Heritage Foundation, without participation of Jewish organizations, or of experts on antisemitism, and it purports to be about addressing antisemitism, but actually it casts many, or most of the institutions of liberal democracy as antisemitic and sets out a plan for dismantling them.

Bizarrely, it even criticizes the Jewish community for its approach to antisemitism, and its supposed complacency on antisemitism. Instead of addressing the issues that the Jewish community is actually bringing to the table, Project Esther is all about dismantling democracy, and unfortunately, this administration seems to be following that plan laid out by the Heritage Foundation, rather than what Jewish leaders and Jewish communities are asking for.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. Rabbi, we have seen, particularly in this administration, a lot of disparaging remarks, a lot of hate speech. How does that affect the Jewish community when we see a Presidential administration dividing rather than, you said, prioritizing education to address antisemitism?

Rabbi JACOBS. It certainly sends a message that this administration is not interested in the safety of Jews, or of other communities. Certainly, when there is people in the administration who have ties to Neo-Nazis and white supremacists, that does not make the Jewish community feel any safer.

Ms. BONAMICI. Understand, and I have a pretty long list of those, but I did not read them off in my statement. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Mr. Harris from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of you on the panel for being a part of this today. A very important, important theme that we are talking about. Let me just say Ms. Neily, in your view, which local or national unions have been the most problematic in terms of spreading antisemitic course content, and indoctrinating teachers?

Ms. NEILY. Oh, we are going to need more than 5 minutes. I would start with the NEA. As we talked about their annual meeting this summer, aside from their EDL vote, they were mocking, threatening, and harassing Jewish delegates. They denied a speaker the opportunity to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Jewish Affairs Caucus.

Actually laughed and clapped when the death of a Holocaust survivor in Boulder was mentioned. Going back as far as 2018, annual meeting resolutions condemned U.S. aid to Israel, talking about apartheid atrocities and gross violations of human rights. Their handbook talks about using digital communications to educate members on antizionism and antisemitism and has downplayed the Holocaust targeting of Jews, framing it as just a bigger struggle.

That is really, you know, dehumanizing that. Then of course the Educators for Palestine Caucus, but the UFT in New York is also awful. The Portland Association of Teachers, I mean we could be here all day, sir.

Mr. HARRIS. Well, listen, I agree with you, and the largest teachers union in the country, the NEA, that you referenced right off the bat, is for some reason aligning itself with this hateful ideology. You referenced this summer at their annual conference they voted to cut ties with the Anti-Defamation League's education materials, antisemitism, and the Holocaust.

You referenced the 2025 handbook omitted Jews in this description of the Holocaust, and referred instead, and I want to just add a little bit to what you said by quoting, "More than 12 million victims of the Holocaust from different faiths, ethnicities, races, political beliefs, genders, and gender identification, ability/disabilities and other targeted characteristics."

You work with parents across the country. Do parents feel comfortable knowing that a union representing their children's teachers is promoting this antisemitic view of history?

Ms. NEILY. Absolutely not. I think that is why we are seeing in places like Oakland, after the Oakland education had their unsanctioned teach in about right, following October 7th, we saw about 30 families leave the district. We are seeing students and families opt out of the public school system because they are scared, because they feel unprotected, and they feel that their teachers are inserting their opinions and this ideology into classrooms where it has no place.

Mr. HARRIS. Well, and as you may know, the NEA has a Federal charter, and given these antisemitic sentiments, not to mention their other indiscretions to oppose parental rights, support CRT, keep kids out of school, would you say they are upholding the mis-

sion in their Federal charter when I again quote, "To elevate the character and advance the interests of the profession of teaching?"

Ms. NEILY. Absolutely not. I think a Federal charter is something that is a big deal, it is sacred. With great power comes great responsibility, and on every level they have let down families, students, and stakeholders in the education system.

Mr. HARRIS. Safe to assume that you think the NEA should not continue to have this explicit endorsement from Congress?

Ms. NEILY. I do not sir, no.

Mr. HARRIS. I agree, and that is why I introduced the NEA Charter Repeal Act, and why I hope to see it move forward in this Congress. I want to move real quickly in the few moments I have left to Ms. Shufutinsky. We have seen local teachers unions across the country distribute antisemitic instructional material to their members.

In Oregon, for example, a union provided a lesson plan that stated, "Israel would be a country where rules were mostly fair for Jewish people with white skin." Meanwhile, the Massachusetts teacher union distributed material that included a picture of a dollar bill shaped into a Star of David. In your experience, are unions developing this material on their own, or are they receiving these type of materials from outside sources?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Both. We are seeing union members, some of these caucuses like Ms. Neily mentioned, the Educators Caucus for Palestine, and some of the teachers unions, developing curricula, but we are also seeing unions receive curricular materials from outside sources.

Mr. HARRIS. Excellent. Well, thank you. Thank you again for all of your expertise, and the input that you have shared, and with that Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Chairman KILEY. Representative Hayes of Connecticut is recognized.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you. I just have to compose myself because the National Education Association is made up of three million teachers, including myself, and everything that was just said is blatantly untrue. Rabbi Jacobs, thank you for coming again before Congress.

I do not know if you were able to watch yesterday's hearing in the HELP Subcommittee on a very similar topic. We are on the 11th hearing on this topic. The Chairman of the Full Committee made some quite pointed remarks about AFT President Randi Weingarten.

I believe that Chairman Walberg said that Randi, who is Jewish, and married to a Rabbi, something along the lines of, "Has not said anything, anything, about antisemitism." She is the President of the American Federation of Teachers, and she quickly responded with at least ten examples of her very public work to combat antisemitism.

As an expert in this area, can you explain how false charges or smears of antisemitism undermine the difficult work we are all trying to do to combat the resurgence of this ancient problem?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. I did see that instance that you mentioned, and this was extremely offensive that there would be an accusation, a false accusation against a Jewish leader, a Jewish

woman leader, who has a very long history, as you mentioned, of speaking out against antisemitism.

This is just a case in point of why so many in the Jewish community feel short-changed by the response this administration, which often uses antisemitism and the real fears of the Jewish community, as a way to attack political opponents, as opposed to actually listening to what the Jewish community is asking for, and dealing with the concrete instances of antisemitism on the ground.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you. I think you lead me into my next question because once again, we are having our 11th hearing on antisemitism on the left. As Ranking Member Bonamici, and you yourself mentioned in your opening remarks, we have done nothing about documented examples of antisemitic behavior on the right.

Can you talk a little on the right, particularly within the Trump administration, can you talk a little bit about what happens when politicians use antisemitism as a partisan political tool, as opposed to doing the actual work to help people?

Rabbi JACOBS. Absolutely. Antisemitism has existed for more than 2,000 years, and it exists in every space, whether schools or workplaces, or even the halls of Congress. It is crucial that all of us address antisemitism where we see it, whether within our own political camp, or beyond.

I have certainly, in my work, spent a lot of time addressing antisemitism, both on the right, and also in progressive spaces. I would expect the same from this administration. As was mentioned, unfortunately, there are people who are in the positions of power in this administration who have ties to Neo-Nazis, who have promulgated antisemitic stereotypes, of course, the pardoning of the January 6th insurrectionists, many of whom also push forward antisemitic stereotypes, makes it very dangerous for Jews.

We have also seen, as I mentioned, the really—the decimation of the Office for Civil Rights. We have seen that under Presidents of both parties. The Office for Civil Rights, and the Department of Education, and the Department of Justice have had success in addressing and resolving complaints of antisemitism, or other bias, but they can only do that with funding.

We need to restore the funding to the Office for Civil Rights, bring back their experts, bring back their regional offices, so that they can actually concretely address the issues that Jewish students are bringing, rather than what the administration is doing, which is trying to use antisemitism to dismantle democracy.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you. Getting back to the topic of this hearing, because I see that it is a back door attempt to attack public education, to attack the Department of Education, and to attack labor unions.

As an expert in this field, I am a teacher. If a teacher is confronted with antisemitic acts on the playground or in the classroom, are there best practices that they can turn to for how to address this, and make sure that their students feel safe, and that they improve understanding within their classrooms?

Rabbi JACOBS. The first recourse always has to be education, so education for students, education for teachers, and for administrators. When instead, the response, as we have seen in this administration, is punitive, and trying to strip funding from universities,

and from K to 12 education, that does not help any students. That does not help any teachers better serve their students.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you. I will recognize myself for 5 minutes. Rabbi Jacobs, I appreciate you being here today to testify. You have leveled some accusations against this Committee that I just wanted to clarify. You said that we are demonizing teachers unions.

It is true that the NEA recently voted to boycott the Anti-Defamation League. Do you agree with that decision to boycott the Anti-Defamation League?

Rabbi JACOBS. I do not agree with that decision. We have heard a lot of vilification here of teachers' unions, of teachers, and of administrators, and that is not helpful.

Chairman KILEY. The NEA did vote to boycott the ADL, correct?

Rabbi JACOBS. The NEA and other organizations engaged with many different types of material. I will say that Truah's booklet on antisemitism is part of materials that are on the NEA website, but ultimately, it is the school districts, not the unions that are deciding on their curriculum.

Chairman KILEY. Sure, but just to clarify, you do disagree with the decision the NEA made to boycott the ADL, correct?

Rabbi JACOBS. I disagree with that decision.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you.

Rabbi JACOBS. The question is how to move on from there, and I believe that we need to invest in education at the local level, and beyond.

Chairman KILEY. Sure. I understand that. I am just saying, be careful please with the accusations that we are demonizing this group, and when you actually agree with us about what they are doing is a very bad thing. You also noted that we have you criticized us for a hyper focus on antisemitism.

Do you know roughly what percent of the American population is Jewish?

Rabbi JACOBS. It is about 2 percent.

Chairman KILEY. Do you know last year what percent of religious based hate crimes were directed against Jewish individuals?

Rabbi JACOBS. The majority of hate crimes are against Jewish individuals, that has been true for a long time.

Chairman KILEY. 69 percent, so 2 percent of the population, 69 percent of the hate crimes, so do you think that I hyper focus on antisemitism, is that the right way to characterize our work?

Rabbi JACOBS. Well, I will say that the vast majority of hate crimes, particularly violent hate crimes against Jews and against other communities are committed by people on the far right, and I do not see that this is—

Chairman KILEY. I do not care who it is committed by, I think it is terrible whoever commits these crimes, and so I think that deriding us for focusing on the issue, I mean Ms. Lerman, I think I have got that statistic from your testimony. Is that right? 69 percent of religious based hate crimes?

Ms. LERMAN. That is right, that is what—

Chairman KILEY. Mic?

Ms. LERMAN. That is what has been reported by the ADL and the AJC.

Chairman KILEY. I mean do you think that the problem is that we have too much of a focus on antisemitism given those facts?

Ms. LERMAN. No. I think you absolutely need to focus on this problem, which has become very large, and I do not really care whether it is from the right or from the left. There are some on both sides, but there is no point like arguing which is worse, so we just need to address the problem.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you very much. I could not agree more. Dr. Shufutinsky, you have mentioned the liberated ethnic studies curricula that is going around, especially in California. Can you tell us a little bit more about what that is?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Sure. It is a version of ethnic studies that is actually rooted in the foundation of ethnic studies, which insists on putting people in either the oppressor category, or the oppression category, depending on a couple of things, real or perceive success and skin color.

Chairman KILEY. Yes, and we actually had the superintendent of Berkeley Unified here last year, whose district has adopted that curriculum, and there was an example from a classroom where she defending saying that, "From the river to the sea," is a valid perspective that is being presented.

I was actually in the State Legislature in California when the legislature voted to mandate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement, and then at the same time, the Department of Education produced a model curriculum that was liberated ethnic studies. It was so bad, it was so blatantly antisemitic, that the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, which was about a dozen Democrat lawmakers actually, wrote a letter saying that this State approved curriculum, "echoed the propaganda of the Nazi regime."

I mean this is their words, their actual words. What does that tell you that a State adopted curriculum, that would have been a graduation requirement for every California student is likened to Nazi propaganda by leading Democrats in the State even?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. I think it shows how pervasive antisemitism and anti-Jewish bigotry is in education, but I also want to say one other thing. It also shows the bait and switch. When people hear the words "ethnic studies," they think it is the study of different ethnic groups. It is not.

Most decent people would agree that students should be learning about all of the different communities that make up the fabric of our country. That is not what the discipline of ethnic studies is, which is why we saw the blatant antisemitism, and still see it in multiple versions of ethnic studies curricula across the country.

Chairman KILEY. It is a huge problem, and just to give the end of this story, or at least where we are at right now, they did come up with a revised remodeled curriculum in California because even the Governor had to say the original was offensive in so many ways and would never see the light of day.

Then the group that came up with the original version split off, and they are the ones that are now offering this liberated version. Even the revised version has huge problems from the perspective of antisemitism. I raised these on the floor of the assembly at the

time, but it has still passed, and now there has since been an effort to try to address those before this graduation requirement takes effect. There is huge lobbying against this by the very types of groups that we are talking about today.

Unfortunately, I think that it is going to be necessary for our Committee to do some real investigations and further oversight into what is happening precisely at schools like this, and with a curriculum like this in California and across the country.

Ms. Lee of Pennsylvania is recognized.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We should just get straight into it. This is yet another hearing for the Republicans to continue their attacks on against education and organized labor. It is about promoting rising anti-intellectualism, and anti-worker sentiment at the same time because authoritarians cannot thrive in a well-educated country or well organized one.

We know Republicans do not care about indoctrination. Every move this administration and its extreme conservative allies make points to the contrary. The so-called parents' right movement, which is nothing more than an attempt to suppress topics that conservatives do not like, or that make them uncomfortable is just an attempt to further indoctrinate students who they are upset might be exposed to a full review, or opportunity through education.

We know this is not about protecting marginalized students, including Jewish students. Republicans are dismantling the Department of Education, including the Office for Civil Rights, and censoring valuable lessons and subjects by banning books, including books about the Holocaust, or Anne Frank, and the original sins of this country: the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people and the enslavement of African people. In the second week in office, Trump issues an executive order to end so-called radical indoctrination in K to 12 schooling. The executive order states that parents trust America's school to instill a patriotic admiration for our incredible nation.

What he is really doing is sanitizing history. Not only is patriotic admiration not quite the purpose of K to 12 education, but we cannot take our lead on patriotism from the same people who would rather our entire nation fail or go down, to acknowledge our country's true history and the legacy of its actions.

Rabbi Jacobs, in your testimony you highlight the importance of safety, inclusion, and respect in schools. Do you think the Trump administration's plans for education, including teaching patriotism and banning books, will make our Jewish students, or any other students feel safer or more included are respected?

Rabbi JACOBS. The Trump administration's approach certainly does not make Jewish students or other students feel seen and respected and feel a sense of belonging in their classrooms. It is really important for both Jewish students, and for other students to be able to see themselves reflected in the curriculum, so that includes having books with Jewish characters in the classroom.

It includes teaching about the Jewish experience, both in the context of American history, and in the context of world history, and it includes having a curriculum that shows a broad perspective, in which every student can see their story reflected.

Unfortunately, as you have mentioned, we have seen many states adopt the Project 2025 approach, and start to ban books, which as you have said, have included books about the Holocaust, including the Diary of Anne Frank.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. It is going to be really hard to do that while this administration continues to attack and erode diversity, equity, inclusion programs. For instance, we know that this administration has essentially threatened to cut Federal funding for any schools that do not prioritize their own students, what they know works, the health and safety of those students, over the needs or the whims of rising authoritarian.

These programs work. I have talked to teachers who care, they have taken great strides in closing equity gaps, or education gaps by including students culturally in the curriculum, making them feel included in their school's culture. It works. Let us not forget it was teachers' unions who led the fight resulting in a Trump appointed Judge ruling against the administration to preserve a school's ability to protect civil rights, the student's civil rights.

Public schools have been able to withstand some of the unrelenting attacks from this administration because their labor is organized. Villainizing teachers hurts them, but it also hurts their children that we sent into their classrooms every day. We ask teachers to educate diverse groups of students about the most foundational skills, and reading and math, and also, yes, the most harrowing instances of inhumanity in our world's history, and during children's most formative years.

The training and care that goes into developing the skills is not something we could replace with a whitewashed history video from PragerU. Really quickly, Rabbi Jacobs, in your testimony you shared your organization's work to educate schools and community partners in a way that makes communities stronger instead of fearful.

Do you think this administration's approach fosters a strong sense of community in the classroom?

Rabbi JACOBS. Absolutely not. You mentioned the attacks on DEI. Jewish students actually need diversity, equity, inclusion programs. Jewish students sometimes need accommodations, whether it is kosher food, or being able to make up a test that was given on a holiday, and they need to see their own stories, as I mentioned, being told in the classroom, and in books in the classroom.

When there is DEI programs that do not sufficiently include the Jewish experience, then that has to be addressed, and it has to be addressed in partnership with schools and with school districts. Just abolishing the whole idea of diversity and a belonging of every student, hurts Jewish students, as well as all students.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I appreciate your testimony today and I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Representative Owens of Utah is recognized.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you, Chairman Kiley, for holding this very important hearing today on antisemitism. It is unfortunate we have been forced to have to go to the same inquiry for the last 2 years, which includes private and government sector unions, higher education, teachers, and college accreditation, and now K through 12.

We need to ask ourselves why are we talking about kindergarten in this regard? Well, it is because if the goal of evil is to perpetuate the spread of hate, there is no better place to start than with our young, our most innocent and most pliable. Antisemitism is a terrible cancer, that not only threatens the well-being of Jewish students, but also the emotional and spiritual health of every other student affected by it.

Children are not born to judge each other based on race, creed, color or culture. This happens only when hatred is taught to children by angry, hate filled, Godless adults. I watched this in my youth, and Jim Crow South, a Nation Growing, working to become a more perfect union.

Here we are in 2025, once again, seeing the divisiveness being taught throughout our entire educational pipeline. I am here to report this will end on our watch. This Committee is taking the stance against ideologues who work to infect our children with the evil cancer of hate.

There is no place in our classrooms, and those who teach it will soon find themselves no longer compensated by the American taxpayer. Ms. Neily, your organization, Defending Education, released a report on teachers' colleges, last year that described colleges of education as pipelines of turning teachers into activists.

Can you kind of give us a little more examples of what that looks like?

Ms. NEILY. Sure. Teachers today in teachers colleges are not learning how to be better educators, how to teach phonics. Instead, they are learning to view the world through oppressor/oppressed matrix. As I said in my opening statement, groups like Jews, or Asians, or even males are considered oppressors.

We are put into these big groups. There is no respect for the dignity of an individual, of somebody's circumstances that brought them to where they are, and so things like that, when teachers that are going into the classroom, having learned those things, they spread those ideas on.

These are teachers colleges that are at State schools, they are private schools, and the fact that our teacher licensing pipeline mandates that you must have a teaching degree from these schools, a master's degree, a Ph.D., means that you have to marinate in these ideas, steeped in critical race theory, queer theory, anti-whiteness, privileged, things like that.

That of course you are going to come out of the other end if you have been in that program for four, or six, or 8 years. A complete and utter believer, and I think that is deeply dangerous.

Mr. OWENS. You are describing DEI, okay, imagine the framework, okay. Ms. Lerman, you mentioned in your written testimony Brandeis Center brought a lawsuit against a school district in Santa Ana, California for creating ethnic studies, which included antisemitic content.

Can you share some of those—that information that was built in the course of this lawsuit?

Ms. LERMAN. This was a procedural lawsuit, but in the process of getting discovery, we found members of the Committee that approved these curricula saying, well, how do we handle the Jewish problem? We saw them agreeing that it would be a good idea to

hold sessions on Passover, so that the Jewish members would not attend.

We saw one of the Jewish teachers who was on the Committee called an f---ing baby and a colonized mind. He was one of the ones that they did not want appearing on the Passover meeting.

Mr. OWENS. Okay. A quick question. Was there any reprimand? Any consequences to these folks at the end of the day? Anything happen to these people?

Ms. LERMAN. Yes. We reached a settlement with them that they had to stop teaching these curricula that were full of anti-Israel and antisemitic content. They agreed to work with Jewish organizations to create alternative content. They agreed that they would follow what we have in California—it is called controversial issues.

They have to teach both sides of something, not just one side of something;

Mr. OWENS. Okay.

Ms. LERMAN. They have to let students disagree.

Mr. OWENS. Okay. Okay. Well, thank you.

Ms. LERMAN. And so on.

Mr. OWENS. Real quick, Dr. Shufutinsky, in your opening statement you discussed foreign funding for K through 12 programs. Can you give an example of some foreign funding supporting antisemitic course material or teachers?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Yes. Part of that is coming from Qatari Foundation International, where they are funding Arabic language and culture classes in multiple school districts in multiple states. Some of that course material then is a complete revision of history, obviously, demonizing the State of Israel, and also misdefining Jews as an ethnoreligious group.

Mr. OWENS. Okay. Thank you. I just want to say thank you for this Committee for being so forward thinking and make sure this ends. We have to make sure that hatred stops teaching our kids this way, so with that I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman KILEY. Thanks very much. Representative Mannion of New York is recognized.

Mr. MANNION. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a statement about the teachers of this country. To characterize them as angry, hate filled, Godless, adults does them a disservice, as what I found teachers to be in this country, my colleagues, people I represented, are compassionate, educated, intelligent educators who are trained to be sure that when they see instances of anti-semitism in their classroom, that it is immediately addressed.

It is not just their training that assures that those issues are addressed, there is a network that is built of administrators, of Offices of Civil Rights at the State and the Federal level to ensure that all children can learn in an environment that is supportive. When there are instances of racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia in the classrooms across this country, they are addressed.

They are addressed by those dedicated, compassionate individuals that are trained effectively to make sure that all of their students are respected, and can learn in a setting that is supportive, helpful, individualized. I was trained to be a teacher. I was not trained in an oppressor/oppressive model.

That is not an accurate depiction of what is happening across this country and in our classrooms. We have members of the school board, administrators, parents, students, that are constantly engaged in a discussion to assure that any form of racism or anti-semitism is addressed.

I have found the statements made to be dishonest, to be offensive, and insulting to the teachers of this country, and therefore, the students who learn from them, and with that I yield the rest of my time to Representative Hayes.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, Representative Mannion. I just want to clarify for the record a statement was made earlier by the Chairman that the NEA voted to boycott the Anti-Defamation League. That is absolutely not true. Once again, this is a union of 3 million members. I do not support that vote, I mean that procedure, but their charter, the NEA's charter mandates that when the executive board puts something for a vote, it goes up to the full committee.

There were a few members of the executive board who thought they wanted to vote on this, and that is what happens with Democratic processes. You get a vote. On July 18th, NEA President Becky Pringle actually issued a statement saying that they were not putting this to the full committee, and the NEA would not adopt this policy, so it is once again, just not an accurate statement to say that the NEA voted to boycott the Anti-Defamation League at their representative assembly.

The executive board, which is part of their charter, when you are in a Democratic process, a member may not like something, they want to put it up for a vote, you get a vote on it. You get a vote on it. I know that you guys do not like the idea that if you disagree with something there cannot be any dialog, any discussion, any discourse.

That is just not how it works. While I disagreed with even that proposition, I believe that those members get the right to force a discussion on it. Whether you like it or not. Again, I am thinking this is the third time I have seen some of these witnesses here at this Committee Hearing, so I guess there is a shortage of people who want to pedal these ideas, but we have to call it out.

I encourage everyone watching this hearing to look up the information for yourself. Look at the footnotes and testimony because so many egregious statements have been made today, and with that I yield back.

Mr. OWENS. [presiding]. Thank you. I would like to now recognize Mr. Moylan from Guam.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Shufutinsky, what can be done to prevent teachers from attending trainings, or professional development sessions that engage in anti-Jewish bickery?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Thank you for that question. I just want to say in my testimony today, both oral and written. This is not to demonize teachers. This is to point out a problem that is persistent and unfortunately increasing in our K through 12 school system. We are seeing a huge rise in antisemitism in our K through 12 school system.

We want teachers to have the resources available, so that they can best do their job. Part of what is failing teachers, as well as students, is professional development programs that are peddled to

teachers, that are teaching them antisemitic ideology. What can be done? We can make sure that at least at the State level, the district level, that those credits are not counted toward professional development credits.

We can also make sure that taxpayer dollars are not funding groups and organizations that are providing antisemitic teacher professional development. That should not be allowed.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you. Let us talk some more. In many cases, school districts will pay for their teachers to attend radical seminars, or institutes. When school districts set up these partnerships, are district leaders privy to the content of these programs ahead of time?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. If they are not, they should be. That is part of the responsibility of being a district administrator and a leader.

Mr. MOYLAN. Our principals and administrators capable when it comes to antisemitic professional development efforts proliferating in their districts?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Many of them are. Many are not unfortunately. What we are seeing is there is some district administrators that can use education on what antisemitism is. Part of that is them being able to get educated on who the Jewish people are as a people, as an ethnoreligious group where Jewish people come from, and how being anti-Israel and antizionist is antisemitic.

AI think that we can really use a lot more education related to that. We can also use some education related to Jewish people are not a monolith. There is no Jewish community. There are multiple communities, and multiple points of views, and that should be acknowledged.

Mr. MOYLAN. Very well. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you. I would like now to recognize Ms. Wilson.

Ms. WILSON. Thank you, Chair Kiley and Ranking Member Bonamici, for recognizing me. This hearing is being held to paint the picture that Democrats are antisemitic, and you are failing. All of these hearings that you have had on antisemitism—you did it to do that, and you failed. It is not working.

Democrats, as a party, are not antisemitic. I am from Miami, and I live amongst thousands of Jews, some in my own neighborhood on my own street. I was a school principal. In all of my years of being a school principal at Miami-Dade County, I never heard a child taunt a Jewish student based on their religion.

The only antisemitism I am aware of was I was raised during the Civil Rights Era, and signs on Miami Beach spoke loudly, “No Jews or Niggers allowed.” My shared struggle with Jews is clear. I believe in the separation of State. I believe in the separation of church and State. That is one of the tenants of our democracy.

Guess who is trying to tear that down? It is Republicans. Right across the street we have the Department of Education in shambles. It has been reduced to shambles, and the President is asking them to pull together whatever skeleton staff they have, to come up with a plan to determine how we could institute prayer in schools, so that we can hurt little Jewish students’ feelings, break their hearts, and bring them to tears.

How can you hold a hearing on antisemitism when the President announced that this week? I believe in separation of church and State, and now Republicans are saying we are going to ask schools to be sure to post the Ten Commandments on every school classroom wall, and post a crucifix on every classroom wall.

What is more antisemitic than that? Breaking little Jewish children's hearts, breaking their spirits, and making them contemplate if there is a place in that school for them? How dare you? Such hypocrisy. Who is antisemitic my friends? My colleagues on the other side are truly antisemitic when they try to come up with anti-American ideas of spreading Christianity across public schools in our Nation to make our Jewish students feel ashamed of their own religion.

With that, I have a question. Ms. Shufutinsky, I noticed that you called that opinion piece in the Jewish news of Northern California, that opinion piece you highlighted that Governor Newsom stood up for Jewish students by vetoing a curriculum. You also highlighted that he stood firm, ensuring that bigotry was not included in the new curriculum.

Can you confirm that Governor Newsom has stood firm against bigotry and fought antisemitism in California? Are any blue states trying to mandate prayer in schools? Are any blue states trying to put crucifixes, crosses, on the school walls? Are they placing the Ten Commandments on school walls, or the Lord's Prayer on the public-school classroom walls?

Who is antisemitic?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Governor Newsom——

Ms. WILSON. I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. The witness may answer.

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. Governor Newsom did veto the first draft of——

Ms. WILSON. I yield back. That is my time, and I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. All right. We will go to the next person for question, Mr. Messmer of Indiana.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the witnesses for being here today. Teachers unions across the Nation have been consumed by antisemitic ideology and activism. Ms. Neily, can you talk about the ways in which teachers' unions perpetuate antisemitism in the K through 12 schools?

Ms. NEILY. Sure. I think one great example comes from Southern California where the Los Angeles Union School—Unified School District, and the UTLA, which is an affiliate of both the NEA and the AFT, have actually created a provision to work on a joint ethnic studies commission.

This went back as far as 2019, and it is still in effect as of today because it was just resigned in 2025. Half of the people on that committee are union representatives. That committee oversees implementation of the mandated course requirements and ethnic studies, and associated professional development, as Ms. Shufutinsky alluded to, is deeply problematic.

Curriculum selection, recommendations for expanding ethnic studies to include gender specific courses and sexual identity, and also advocating for salary point credits, so that ethnic study teachers get a higher salary just for teaching that class. This is

incentivizing teachers to go down this path and to produce and insert this ideology into their classrooms.

Adopting curriculum from places like Brown University, putting these things together, but also just across the board we have seen these teachers' unions do things like, you know, push curriculum like woke kindergarten, which has been paid for using Federal task dollars in districts like in Northern California. That was used in New York City Public Schools to have third graders sing the wheels on the tank.

Third graders do not even—they still believe in the tooth fairy at that point, and so to use children as our foot soldiers, human shields in this battle of ideology is something that is so deeply unconscionable, and to be pressed and promote through teacher union networks, which we have obtained records through FOIAs of all of the leaders of the Educators for Palestine Caucus.

They were sharing these materials, they are encouraging each other to participate in these teach-ins, like the Oakland Education Association. This is a superhighway to share this hateful information with each other from coast to coast.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you. How have Jewish teachers been impacted by antisemitism within the unions that represent them?

Ms. NEILY. Teachers are also being abused by this, unfortunately. Watching some of these things be disseminated. The Freedom Foundation actually has a number of lawsuits against teachers associations, including the Portland Association of Teachers because in Portland Public Schools, the Portland Association of Teachers has distributed anti-Israel teaching materials, which drew from programs like Teaching While Muslim, and Woke Kindergarten.

They have actually coauthored the Teach Palestine Guide of the Oregon Educators for Palestine, urging educators to present a singular anti-Israel perspective in classrooms. They have published know your rights guides, teaching and organizing for Palestine within Portland Public Schools, which promotes and tells teachers who to get this material into classrooms.

Defended the use of the phrase, "From the River to the Sea Palestine Will be Free," which is widely recognized as a call for the annihilation of the State of Israel. This is just one of many issues where teachers have been left out to dry. There have been—there was a protest a few months ago outside of the New York City Department of Education because those educators in that union also have been betrayed by UFT, that have not stood up for them.

There was a teacher in New York City Public Schools that came to light in this hearing last year, where a teacher was chased, and had to hide in a locked classroom because she was being chased by a mob. That teacher's union did not stand up for her, did not defend her.

If something like that happened to another teacher of a different race, of a different religion, there would be—bloody murder would be screamed, but the fact the silence speaks volumes, and that is unacceptable.

Mr. MESSMER. Are these teachers given the opportunity to leave the union, or voice their discontent?

Ms. NEILY. If they are in a public sector union, thanks to the Janus decision they are, but if they are a private sector. If they are a private school, or if they are in a private union, they are not allowed to, and I think that is something else that, you know, hopefully this Committee and Congress eventually looks at.

Mr. MESSMER. Okay. Thank you. The most important time to shape a child's mind is during the K through 12 education where they can develop views and morals that take them well within adulthood. Ms. Shufutinsky, sorry about that, how does exposure to antisemitic messaging from authority figures in K through 12 schools affect Jewish students' sense of safety and identity, as well as create problematic ways of thinking for all students?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. What it can do to Jewish students is it can make them feel like their identity is not valid, and like they are worth being targeted, so it can increase their insecurity, make them ashamed, make them feel embarrassed at the communities that they come from.

Mr. MESSMER. Thank you. What mechanisms currently exist to hold K through 12 faculty accountable when they promote antisemitic rhetoric in a classroom, or and are those mechanisms sufficient?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. They are not sufficient. There are mechanisms. There are standards. There are education codes that districts and teachers are supposed to follow. Unfortunately, I think in the cases that we have all spoken about, we have seen it all too often they are not being followed.

Mr. MESSMER. Okay, thank you. Thank you for your responses, and I yield back my time.

Chairman KILEY. Representative Adams of North Carolina is recognized.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr., Chairman, and thank you all for your testimony today. I am really appalled at all that I have heard. Let me just say having been in the classroom for 40 years, having trained teachers, I really resent much of what has been said about our unions, particularly the NEA.

I support them. I support unions and what they do for children. Let me just begin by saying this pretty plainly. Antisemitism is real, it is rising, and it has no place in our schools. Every student, Jewish, Muslim, black, brown, or otherwise, deserves to feel safe, respected, and protected in their learning environment, and that is not up for debate.

When students tell us that they do not feel safe, we have a responsibility to listen, not to score political points, not to pit one group against another, but to take action that protects each and every child. What troubles me is how too often instead of working together on solutions, some of this Committee have chosen to weaponize antisemitism as a political tool to undermine teachers, to attack unions, and to discredit higher education.

I have spent 40 years in the classroom as a professor, and I taught in public education as well, public schools, and private public schools. My daughter works in public schools, my grandchildren, my children, all went to public schools, but I know what really happens in our schools.

Teachers show up every day to nurture, to challenge, to protect our children, and they are not the problem, and blaming them does not do anything to keep Jewish students safe. Let me just turn to Rabbi Jacobs, and ask you, Rabbi Jacobs, the majority has claimed that antisemitism in our schools has been brought there by teachers, by teachers' unions, and even by academic views.

How do you respond to that assertion, and what do you see as the real drivers of antisemitism in schools today?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. I want to echo what you said. There are more than 3 million people who wake up every morning and teach our children in public schools, and I have seen their extraordinary work personally as a graduate of public schools, as a parent of public-school students.

Teachers get into this profession because they care about children because they want children to learn. We have heard accusations against teachers, against administrators, and of course we can come up with egregious examples, but the vast majority of our teachers and administrators walk into those school buildings every morning because they want to help children learn.

I also want to appreciate Representative Hayes for clarifying that the NEA Regional Assembly did pass that resolution that was mentioned, but that the board rejected it, and the NEA President showed her leadership in making a very powerful statement about antisemitism. This is actually an example of how engagement with the community is the response, not punitive responses.

Similarly, in public schools when there is an instance of antisemitism the response should be to engage with the school to ensure that the school's code of conduct is followed, to engage with the school district, and of course, if it cannot be resolved at that level, to bring it to the Office for Civil Rights, which as we have said has been decimated.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. Let me move on if I can.

Rabbi JACOBS. Yes, go ahead.

Ms. ADAMS. I have some more questions. The Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education is supposedly on the front lines of protecting students, but we have seen that office gutted and undermined. How could the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights better serve Jewish students right now, and what resources or authority would make the greatest difference?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. Just over a year ago Jewish organizations and civil rights organizations supported Representative Goldman's bill, the Showing Up for Students Act, which would have increased the OCR budget by 280 million dollars. That is money that is desperately needed, so that the office that has the mandate to investigate and to resolve complaints, as well as the experts who have the knowledge to do so, can do their work.

What we need to do is we need to restore funding to the Office for Civil Rights, and we need to ensure that they can investigate and resolve complaints that come.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. Thank you. Listen, I have heard from Jewish students in various meetings, they do not want their pain to be politicized. They want to be safe. They want to be part of a community, and you know, I think what we have heard here today is pret-

ty awful. I want to yield back to the Representative from Connecticut.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you for the time. I just want to clarify the record once again. The Oregon Educators for Palestine is not a teacher's union, it is an advocacy group made up of community members, educators, but it is an advocacy group. It is not associated with any teacher's union. With that I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Representative Fine of Florida is recognized.

Mr. FINE. No, no.

Chairman KILEY. I am sorry. Representative Scott will first go first, and then we will go to Representative, Mr. Fine, as having waived onto the Committee.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, Mr. Chairman, we heard that 67 percent of religious hate crimes were antisemitism. I would like to put that in perspective. Of all of the hate crimes, the Office of Civil Rights has pending discrimination cases over 5,800 disability, over 3,200 race and national origin, 2,800 and some sex discrimination, and of the category that could be included in antisemitism, also Islamophobia, 144.

Of all the hate crimes, it is a small minority. The religious hate crimes that could be—if you just want to put that in perspective. Rabbi JACOBS, you indicated—well, you outlined the many initiatives that can actually fight hate crimes generally. How effective can those initiatives be against antisemitism if it ignores protecting all students, including race, Islamophobia, homophobia, gender and disability and others?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thank you. When we educate about bigotry, we have to educate about bigotries, all bigotries. We have to ensure that schools are safe for all children, so that includes educating teachers and students about antisemitism, along with racism, along with homophobia, along with Islamophobia, and other bigotries.

That is an approach that works. We also have to educate against bullying because when we allow bullying and harassment into our schools, then that opens the door for bullying that is based in hate against specific groups, and unfortunately, this administration also has dropped the initiatives of previous administrations to address bullying.

Mr. SCOTT. How effective can an antisemitism initiative be if it just ignores everything else?

Rabbi JACOBS. I do not believe that we can talk about antisemitism in a vacuum. We have to make sure that American society, as well as our schools are places that are safe for everybody, including Jewish students.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. This is the 11th hearing we have had on antisemitism. We have had none on racism, Islamophobia, gender discrimination, disability discrimination. The Chair talks about all the oversight we have done and complains about antisemitism. The agency that can actually do something about it, the Office for Civil Rights, is essentially being dismantled.

I think you talked about defunding hate crime prevention grants. What is the difference in talking about the problem and actually doing something?

Rabbi JACOBS. Thanks. Well, the Jewish community is making very specific requests, including funding, as you said, hate crime

prevention grants, including the Office for Civil Rights. Those are programs that will address specific instances on the ground, as well.

As I want to mention President Biden's comprehensive national strategy on antisemitism, which used every tool that the U.S. Government has at its disposal to address antisemitism, ranging from using humanities grants to ensure that Jewish stories are told, to doing training for government employees at every level, to school-based education.

That is an approach that was created in consultation with more than 1,000 Jewish leaders. I was honored to be one of them, and that addressed very concrete instances of antisemitism, and it is an approach that this administration has completely dismissed in favor of an approach that is just about attacking political opponents and cynically using the fears of the Jewish community to try to dismantle Democratic institutions.

Mr. SCOTT. What about dismantling the Office of Civil Rights, which had actually enforced problems of complaints we have had, they are presented to the Office of Civil Rights, something could actually be done. Is that right?

Rabbi JACOBS. Yes. In the last annual report of the Office for Civil Rights, they reported that they had resolved more complaints than in any previous year, and so this is an office that is desperately needed, and has been defunded, and so we need to restore funding to that office, bring back their expert staff, as well as the regional offices, which are the ones who can deal with specific cases on the ground.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a minute. Mr. Chairman, when I was citing statistics that were related to OCR cases, I recognize we were discussing hate crimes, but based on the 2024 statistics from the Department of Justice, hate crimes based on race, ethnicity and ancestry were the majority of the cases, and religion totally was 23.5 percent.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you. Representative Fine of Florida is recognized.

Mr. FINE. Well, thank you Mr. Chairman. I have a number of thoughts. This is a deeply personal issue for me. I want to talk about a couple constituents and issues that they have had. I knew a kid who was in seventh grade who faced so much antisemitism when he was in his public school that the principal made an extra copy of his key, so that he could hide in that principal's office. That happened to me when I was a kid.

When I had children, I made the decision that I would fight to make sure that my children did not have to go through what I did as a kid. It is a promise, by the way, I have failed to live up to because my son, after October 7th got into a fight at school because he was a Jewish kid.

Now, fortunately, my son is 6'2" and he is a varsity athlete, it was—Jacob won, the other kid did not end up in such great shape, but nonetheless, he never should have had to go through that. I actually wear the kippah that I wear right now. I did not wear it until May the 6th.

I wear it because my son asked me to in honor of all the Jewish kids that do not feel safe to wear theirs, and so I literally wear a

target on my head these days because that is what unfortunately, we live in the world today. When I sit in these hearings I feel like I am in an alternative universe, and here is why.

We have solved this problem in Florida. We do not have this problem in Florida, and we do not have it because of some Office of Civil Rights, and 280 million dollars of extra funding, we have it because we passed bills that made sense. For example, the State of Florida designated CARE a terrorist organization, and said governments should not work with organizations that say that October 7th made them happy.

Not only that, we passed a bill. This is my question. I actually want to start with Ms. Neily. We passed a bill, it was my bill, a bill did something very simple. It said as Rabbi Jacobs implied, we should not discriminate in how we deal with discrimination, and the bill was very simple.

It said Florida adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the most widespread definition of antisemitism that is out there, and it said that you, if you are a K-12 institution, you simply must treat antisemitism the same way you treat racism. If you have got a code of conduct, delete black, put in Jew, delete racism, put in antisemitism, and treat them the same.

When we did that the problems ended. My question to you Ms. Neily, you talked about how things would not be the same if it was other religious groups. Do you believe if we did something like this federally, like we did in Florida, that we could address the problem nationally?

Ms. NEILY. It has been astonishing to watch across the country, administrators turn a blind eye to this. We reached out to about two dozen districts after October 7th, asking them for statements, looking, comparing what they said after George Floyd's murder with what happened after October 7th.

Many districts were silent. Some equivocated, and some just pretended it did not happen at all. We actually also reached out to a number of school districts that had used the Black Lives Matter at school curriculum, because you remember that BLM had posted that lovely graphic of the paraglider afterwards.

He said well, in light of this, are you planning on using this curriculum and having this event going forward? A school board member in UpState New York, in Rochester, said well, let us remember the role that the Jews played in the slave trade. None of us have clean hands.

When you have failed leadership at the top of the district, at the top of a State that will not do anything, as you said, you can have all the laws in the books, but if people will not get off their butts and do anything about it, it does not matter. I do think it takes real leadership like we have seen in Florida, and I think as we are seeing from this Committee, to address an issue, to acknowledge an issue.

This is—I mean it is the first step of a 12 step program, saying that there is a problem.

Mr. FINE. Sure.

Ms. NEILY. To pretend that there is not a problem is reprehensible.

Mr. FINE. Look, I came up with this idea because I believed if a student in a school in Florida called a black student the N word, they would be expelled, and by the way, they should be. Somehow when it came to Jews, everyone discovered freedom of speech. That is why we came up with this principle, which is you cannot burn a cross if you are the KKK on the college green, you should not be able to say from the river to the sea, kill all the Jews, I mean they are the same thing.

Dr. Shufutinsky, and I apologize if I got your name wrong, what is your view? Again, simply passing a law that says you must treat anti—defining antisemitism, and you must treat it the same way as you treat racism. Do you believe that would help solve the problem?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. I do, and I think it is the same thing as racism. We are dealing with an upsurge in anti-Jewish bigotry. Jews who are being attacked in classes and on campuses are not being attacked because of the way they pray, they are being attacked because they are Jewish, because they are of the Jewish people.

Mr. FINE. I am going to come back to you with this question. You know, we have the Philadelphia School District that's working with CARE, an open front for Muslim terror. Again, the head of CARE said October 7th made him happy. He did not say it 5 minutes afterwards, to be clear, he said it like a month later, not in the fog of war, and he still has that job today.

Why do you think a local school district would choose to work with an institution that said October 7th made them happy?

Ms. SHUFUTINSKY. The leadership in that district must agree with it, and October 7th likely made them happy as well.

Mr. FINE. It is not the issue. This is one of the biggest problems we have in fighting antisemitism, it is not that they are not uneducated, it is because they agree. We are going to fight this in this Committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman KILEY. Thank you, and thank you to all our witnesses for your testimony. I will now recognize Ms. Bonamici for her closing remarks.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for your testimony. As we heard multiple times, this is the 11th hearing on antisemitism we have had in the past few years, and what has happened? Are things better? No. Antisemitism is on the rise, tensions and divisions have increased.

My colleague just suggested that there is—they have solved antisemitism in Florida, but just a quick check shows that recent headlines say, "A disturbing trend of Israel related antisemitic incidents continues in Florida, and Palm Beach County leads Florida in antisemitic instances for a second year."

They did not solve antisemitism in Florida. We know that schools have a responsibility to provide all students with a learning environment free from discrimination. It is the role of the Federal Government to help schools live up to that responsibility, traditionally that has been done by the Office for Civil Rights, which investigates instances of discrimination and harassment at schools.

After reviewing the facts of each claim of discrimination then they provide a resolution agreement that is designed to bring the school into compliance with the law. I also want to clarify as the

Rabbi did with the discussion about the National Education Association, which did not adopt the resolution that was proposed.

The same thing with Portland Teachers Association. There is a mention that there was a problematic curriculum, but without the clarification that it was withdrawn after community conversation, so we need to have a clear record that these community conversations are really critical to making changes.

Instead of strengthening the ability of the Office of Civil Rights to serve students and schools, the Trump administration is slashing its budget, trying to eliminate the Department of Education, which houses the Office, and what is left of its staff.

More importantly, instead of working in a constructive way to actually prevent and curb antisemitism, the administration, and some in this body are using antisemitism to undermine public education and educators, and to further their effort to attack higher education.

Sadly, these actions are likely to exacerbate antisemitism the administration claims they want to eliminate, and ultimately, all students will suffer, and so will society, the economy and democracy. Again, if my Republican colleagues truly care about the well-being of Jewish students, and wanted to fight antisemitism, they should demand that all antisemites and white nationalists in the Trump administration be fired immediately, and that the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education be fully funded.

We must use our full oversight authority to subpoena those White House officials who have enabled the White House to embrace bigots and antisemites. They are setting an example and not a good one, and we should hold them accountable for their actions. If my colleagues could muster the courage, we could actually prevent and curb antisemitism, and I stand ready to work with anyone on either side of the aisle to make that happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KILEY. Thanks very much. There are a couple members of the minority who suggested that somehow we were criticizing teachers with this hearing. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have the highest degree of admiration for teachers across this country.

What we have done is criticize specific actions of groups like the NEA, and in fact, the Democrat witness herself, Rabbi Jacobs, agreed that it was wrong for the NEA to decide to boycott the Anti-Defamation League, and of course it is. I mean how could anyone do that, say that we are going to boycott using the materials of the Anti-Defamation League in our classrooms.

You know, when it comes to the teachers themselves, I actually want to read you a message that I received from a teacher who was there when the NEA decided to boycott the Anti-Defamation League. This is what this teacher said. "I saw people line up wearing shirts accusing Jews of genocide, eager to speak against anything Jewish.

They weren't improvising, these were coordinated rehearsed lies. While I felt safe in my small corner of the convention, surrounded by respectful and inclusive delegates, many of my Jewish friends did not. Educators from various states did not feel safe in their as-

signed sections and had to find other places to sit near friends and allies.

There were tears, panic attacks, silent breakdowns, but also hugs, strength, unshakable solidarity.” It is much worse for the students who are encountering this in schools and classrooms across the country. This ought to shock the conscience of every decent American.

What have we heard today? Our friends here on the other side of the dais come in with wild conspiracy theories about members of the administration. You want to talk about January 6th. You want to subpoena Stephen Miller? We are hearing about our friend, Mr. Fine, who is telling us about students who have to go and hide in the principal’s office in their school.

You guys come in here and want to subpoena Stephen Miller?

Unidentified Speaker: Yes.

Chairman KILEY. These are serious problems in our country, and we need serious people and serious leadership to deal with them, but that is what our Committee is going to continue to provide. We will be investigating violations of Title VI where they occur across the country. We will be working against the poison of liberated ethnic studies.

We will be working to protect the civil rights of Jewish students across America. That is the purpose of these hearings. We have seen some progress, but we have a long way to go. With that said, the Motion—I will move to the Motion.

Rabbi JACOBS. May I please clarify my comments?

Chairman KILEY. No, you may not. I want to move to the—we will now return to the gentlelady’s Motion to subpoena Mr. Miller.

Mr. OWENS. Chairman, I move to table the Motion.

Chairman KILEY. The Motion to table is an order, and not debatable. The question is shall the Committee—

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Chairman, I would like a roll call vote.

Chairman KILEY. Yes. We will take the vote first. The question is shall the Committee table the Motion to authorize a subpoena. All those in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

Chairman KILEY. All those opposed say no.

[Chorus of noes]

Chairman KILEY. In the opinion of the Chair the ayes have it, and the Motion to table is agreed to.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chairman, I request a roll call vote.

Chairman KILEY. A recorded vote has been requested. We will now be voting on the Motion to table. We will suspend until the Clerk is in place to call the vote. The Clerk will call the roll.

The CLERK. Mr. Kiley.

Mr. KILEY. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Kiley votes aye.

Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Thompson votes aye.

Mr. Owens.

Mr. OWENS. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Owens votes aye.

Ms. Miller.

Ms. MILLER. Aye.

The CLERK. Ms. Miller votes aye.

Mr. Rulli.

Mr. RULLI. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Rulli votes aye.

Mr. Moylan.

Mr. MOYLAN. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Moylan votes aye.

Mr. Mackenzie.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Mackenzie votes aye.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. HARRIS. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Harris votes aye.

Mr. Mesmer.

Mr. MESMER. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Messmer votes aye.

Ms. Bonamici.

Ms. BONAMICI. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Bonamici votes no.

Ms. Hayes.

Mrs. HAYES. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Hayes votes no.

Mr. Mannion.

Mr. MANNION. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Mannion votes no.

Ms. Wilson.

Ms. WILSON. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Wilson votes no.

Ms. Adams.

Ms. ADAMS. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Adams votes no. Mr. Chairman, on this vote there are——

Chairman KILEY. The Clerk will call the role again for any member who has not voted. The Clerk will call the role again for any member who has not voted.

The CLERK. Ms. Lee? Ms. Ansari?

Chairman KILEY. Have all members voted? Does any member wish to change their vote? Hearing none, the Clerk will report the tally.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote there are 9 yeas and 5 nays.

Chairman KILEY. The ayes have it, the motion is agreed to, this hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Motion to Table: Subpoena of Stephen Miller follows:]

119th COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE - ROLL CALL SHEET
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Bill No: n/a Amendment #: n/a Roll Call #: 1 Voice Vote (Y): 9-5

Date: September 10, 2025

Sponsor/Description: motion to table - subpoena

Disposition: passed ; 9-5

REP MEMBERS (9)		YEAS	NAYS	NOT VOTING (NV)	PRESENT
Mr. Kiley, CA	1	X			X
Mr. Thompson, PA	2	X			X
Mr. Owens, UT	3	X			X
Ms. Miller, IL	4	X			X
Mr. Rulli, OH	5	X			X
Mr. Moylan, GU	6	X			X
Mr. Mackenzie, PA	7	X			X
Mr. Harris, NC	8	X			X
Mr. Messmer, IN	9	X			X
DEM MEMBERS (7)		Y	N	NV	PRESENT
Ms. Bonamici, OR (	1		X		X
Ms. Hayes, CT	2		X		X
Ms. Lee, PA	3			X	
Mr. Mannion, NY	4		X		X
Ms. Wilson, FL	5		X		X
Ms. Adams, NC	6		X		X
Ms. Ansari, AZ	7			X	
TOTALS		9	5	2	
Total: 16/ Quorum: / Report:		YEAS	NAYS	NV	PRESENT
		9	5	2	14

9/10/2025 11:37 AM

[Additional submissions from Ranking Member Bonamici follows:]

Committee on Education and Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kiley,

My name is Karen Marder. During the Sept. 12 hearing on antisemitism in K-12 education, my personal experiences dealing with this issue were falsely recounted by Nicole Neily, president of Defending Education, who asserted that I was not protected by my union, the United Federation of Teachers or its national affiliate, the AFT.

I am writing to set the record straight. At no point did I feel abandoned by my union. If anything, I felt comforted, supported, and advised! The false narrative stated by Ms. Neily was just that: false. My union was there for me from the very first day, throughout the process of getting rid of my principal, the *actual* cause of the riot due to poor leadership and discipline; and my union continues to be there for me to this day.

I want the record to reflect what happened. On Nov. 20, 2023, a large group of students at my school had a riot because they were upset about a social media post I made. The post, made Oct. 8, was a photo of myself standing with a sign that said, "I Stand with Israel." During that riot, hundreds of students stormed the hallways, dancing, yelling, chanting and causing damage to school property. I warned my school about this over the weekend, having been tipped off by a former student online. Not much was done, and I was forced to hide in a locked administrator's office while the school went under lockdown and the police and school security regained control.

As you can imagine, this was extremely terrifying. I was escorted to my car by armed police officers and arrived home in the middle of the day, shaken and upset. Right away, I was in touch with my union, the UFT. I heard from my chapter leader, the school representative, within minutes after arriving home, comforting me and explaining the next steps. By the evening, I had spoken to the union's high school representative. When my principal told me I could use my own sick time while the situation calmed over the next few days, the UFT fought for me; and within a day, I had been approved for paid leave, a process that normally takes weeks and months to process. I spoke to Michael Mulgrew, head of the UFT, who gave me his personal phone number and walked me back into my school when I returned a week later. On the first afternoon, Randi Weingarten, president of the AFT had gotten wind of my story and visited me in my home, making sure I was OK, and connecting me with everyone from the Anti-Defamation League to Sen. Chuck Schumer.

The far right has continuously used my story and other incidents of campus violence as fodder for one of their true goals: union busting. Further, their "concern" about antisemitic acts in schools has only served to be a way to denigrate public schools and those of us that work in and attend them. They do not care about Jewish teachers, Jewish students or Jewish lives. They care about sticking it to the Democrats, and I'm sick and tired of being used in their lies and propaganda.

There is no question antisemitism is on the rise, and we need our union and public schools to work together to create curricula to address it, to have open dialogues with students and staff, and to deal with incidents as they occur. We need lawmakers to stop gaslighting and politicizing the issue.

I feel fortunate that my unions, the UFT and AFT, are and have always been leaders in making sure that *all* students and staff feel safe, welcomed and protected in public schools.

Sincerely,

Karen Marder

[Additional submissions from Representative Scott follows:]

**PRESS RELEASE**

NEA statement on action taken by delegates at 2025 Representative Assembly

Among many items debated at NEA's 2025 Representative Assembly, delegates voted to forward a recommendation to the NEA Executive Committee that the National Education Association (NEA) not use, endorse, or publicize materials from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) or participate in ADL programs.

By: Staci Maiers

Published: July 10, 2025

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NEA Executive Committee for an impact study and further

consideration in accordance with NEA rules on sanctions and boycotts.

Although NEA does not have a partnership with the ADL, the NEA Executive Committee will consider the recommendation from delegates in accordance with NEA policy.

The following statement can be attributed to [NEA President Becky Pringle](#):

“As educators, we are committed to ensuring students of every race, religion or national origin have safe and welcoming spaces to learn and grow. The [National Education Association](#) and its members are unequivocally committed to the cause of educating, organizing against, and combating all forms of hate and discrimination, including antisemitism and anti-Palestinian bigotry. This is a fundamental principle we will never abandon.

“Antisemitism is a very real and urgent problem in this country and throughout the world. It is an insidious hate and cancer. NEA is committed to combating this hate in our classrooms, on our

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recommendation from delegates as outlined by our governing rules. As such, I will convene the NEA Executive Committee to deliberate. In fact, I already have begun outreach to inform that deliberation, by listening and engaging with a wide group of leaders in the Jewish and civil rights communities.

“NEA believes in free speech, academic freedom, and having hard yet honest conversations that can nurture growth and understanding. There is a critical need for us, as educators, to model the type of respectful dialogue and discourse we want to see in the world, in our classrooms, and on our campuses. We will not shy away from difficult or complex issues that affect our members, our students, or our schools, nor will we ever tolerate antisemitism, anti-Palestinian bigotry, or hateful rhetoric or behavior.”

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MENU

PRESS RELEASE

NEA statement on Representative Assembly recommendation

National Education Association President Becky Pringle released the following statement on the Representative Assembly recommendation:

By: National Education Association

Published: July 14, 2025

SHARE



National Education Association President Becky Pringle released the

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“As educators, we know that before making any decision, we must do our own research, listening, and learning. That process has begun by meeting with a multitude of Jewish leaders, civil rights leaders, academic practitioners, and elected officials. Today, I met with Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, to clarify NEA’s process and restate our commitment to combating the rise of antisemitism in our society. [The NEA has a long history of combating antisemitism and providing resources for educators to use in our schools and communities.](#) And we have increased that work over the last several years, given the clear rise of antisemitism. As educators, our duty is to increase understanding and strengthen the culture of respect and inclusion all of our students need. Antisemitism has no place in our union, in public education, or in our country.

“We will move expeditiously, with integrity and authenticity, to abide by our organization’s clear process. As always, our work will be guided by our mission, vision, and core values.”

-###-

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[Questions and responses submitted for the record by Rabbi Jill Jacobs follows:]

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 JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
 VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
 GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
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October 1, 2025

Rabbi Jill Jacobs
 CEO
 T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
 266 W 37th Street
 Suite 803
 New York, NY 10018

Dear Rabbi Jacobs:

Thank you again for testifying at the September 10, 2025, House Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hearing titled "From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools." Enclosed are additional questions submitted by Subcommittee members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than October 22, 2025, for inclusion in the hearing record. Responses should be sent to Anders Vendt (anders.vendt@mail.house.gov) of the Committee staff; he can also be contacted at (202) 860-4040.

We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kiley
 Chairman
 U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
 Committee on Education and Workforce

Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. In your public statements and organizational materials, you have drawn a distinction between antisemitism and what you call “legitimate criticism of Israel.” You have repeatedly stated that boycotting Israel via the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Movement (BDS) is not inherently antisemitic. You refer to the terms “anti-Zionism,” “intifada,” and “from the river to the sea” as “gray areas or terms that need further conversation.”

The majority of American Jews and Israelis see the phrase as calling for the erasure of the State of Israel, its people, and a rallying cry for terrorist groups and their sympathizers.

- a. You’re aware this phrase is used in the Hamas charter and by many Hamas leaders. Do you still consider these gray area terms?
2. You’ve [previously held study sessions](#) with Rabbi Dr. Yanklowitz, who founded an organization that released an anti-Israel letter including signatures from Hamas supporters. Rabbi Yanklowitz is known to back the Puffin Foundation, one of the most extreme anti-Israel groups.

Puffin [blatantly celebrates Communism](#) as an ideal and funds *Jewish Currents*, a paper that accused Israel of “genocide” and described Hamas atrocities as “resistance.”

Do you believe that it is antisemitic to state that Hamas atrocities are a means of resistance?

- a. Please explain why you are qualified to discuss antisemitism in American K-12 institutions when you held a study session with someone who calls Israel a genocidal nation and describes a U.S. designated terrorist organization’s acts of cold-blooded murder, rape, and kidnapping of Jews as “resistance?”
3. A [report](#) by the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel found a 340 percent increase in total antisemitic incidents in 2023(?) compared to 2022. Should teachers or school employees be disciplined or removed if they promote antisemitic propaganda in the classroom, whether it’s explicit or under the cover of “anti-Zionism?”
 - a. In 2019 you spoke at the “Expansion of the Occupation” J-Street Conference. Do you believe a generation is being groomed to view Jewish identity as inherently oppressive when school curriculum and educators teach students that Israel is “committing genocide?”
4. When public schools invite speakers who glorify intifada or justify terrorism against Jews, do you see that as freedom of expression or state-endorsed incitement? Please answer one or the other.
 - a. What would you say to the Jewish parent who tells this Committee: “My child’s school has become a breeding ground for antisemitic hate but when I speak up, I’m labeled a racist or oppressor.” Is that acceptable in America’s public education system?

Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA)

1. At the end of the hearing, the Chair in his closing statement said in regards to the National Education Association (NEA) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL):

“What we have done is criticize specific actions of groups like the NEA, and in fact, the Democrat witness herself, Rabbi Jacobs, agreed that it was wrong for the NEA to decide to boycott the Anti-Defamation League, and of course it is.”

The NEA Board of Directors in fact voted **not** to implement such a proposal to boycott the ADL, and items have been submitted for the record to reflect that fact. During the Chair’s remarks, you asked to be recognized to clarify your statements regarding the NEA and the ADL. The Chair refused to let you clarify your statements for the record. Had the Chair recognized you to clarify your statements, what would you have said?

Representative Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ)

1. Rabbi Jacobs, you’ve been a national leader in confronting antisemitism. From your perspective, how are Jewish students experiencing antisemitism in K-12 schools today, and how has the Trump Administration’s rollback of civil rights protections affected their safety?
2. The Department of Education under the Trump Administration has scaled back investigations into harassment and discrimination. How does this impact the ability of schools to respond effectively to antisemitic incidents?
3. Many Jewish parents and students report feeling abandoned by federal authorities. What concrete steps should be restored or expanded at the federal level to help schools combat antisemitism?
4. You’ve written extensively about the importance of education in combating hate. How do you see the weakening of diversity and tolerance initiatives at the federal level influencing what’s happening in classrooms?
5. In your view, how have changes to Title VI enforcement under the Trump Administration affected schools’ obligations to address antisemitism?

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Responses to Questions from the House Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. In your public statements and organizational materials, you have drawn a distinction between antisemitism and what you call “legitimate criticism of Israel.” You have repeatedly stated that boycotting Israel via the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Movement (BDS) is not inherently antisemitic. You refer to the terms “anti-Zionism,” “intifada,” and “from the river to the sea” as “gray areas or terms that need further conversation.” The majority of American Jews and Israelis see the phrase as calling for the erasure of the State of Israel, its people, and a rallying cry for terrorist groups and their sympathizers.

a. You’re aware this phrase is used in the Hamas charter and by many Hamas leaders. Do you still consider these gray area terms?

I address this question in this article, which has already been entered into the record: <https://medium.com/@truahrabbis/criticism-of-israel-and-antisemitism-how-to-tell-where-one-ends-and-the-other-begins-8035798f5b7c>

2. You’ve previously held study sessions with Rabbi Dr. Yanklowitz, who founded an organization that released an anti-Israel letter including signatures from Hamas supporters. Rabbi Yanklowitz is known to back the Puffin Foundation, one of the most extreme anti-Israel groups.

Puffin blatantly celebrates Communism as an ideal and funds Jewish Currents, a paper that accused Israel of “genocide” and described Hamas atrocities as “resistance.”

Do you believe that it is antisemitic to state that Hamas atrocities are a means of resistance?

a. Please explain why you are qualified to discuss antisemitism in American K-12 institutions when you held a study session with someone who calls Israel a genocidal nation and describes a U.S. designated terrorist organization’s acts of cold-blooded murder, rape, and kidnapping of Jews as “resistance?”

Rabbi Dr. Yanklowitz is a respected Orthodox rabbi and a well-documented supporter of Israel. The statements attributed to him here are incorrect. I cannot comment on every view held by every signatory on any given letter. As I have stated in the materials submitted with my testimony, statements justifying the Hamas attacks are antisemitic.

Rabbi Dr. Yanklowitz certainly has never justified these attacks, and indeed has written extensively against them.

3. A report by the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel found a 340 percent increase in total antisemitic incidents in 2023(?) compared to 2022. Should teachers or school employees be disciplined or removed if they promote antisemitic propaganda in the classroom, whether it's explicit or under the cover of "anti-Zionism?"

a. In 2019 you spoke at the "Expansion of the Occupation" J-Street Conference. Do you believe a generation is being groomed to view Jewish identity as inherently oppressive when school curriculum and educators teach students that Israel is "committing genocide?"

Promoting antisemitism in the classroom is wrong. Schools should follow and enforce their established code of conduct when it comes to instances of antisemitism or any other bias.

I refer you to my article cited above that explains in greater detail the ways in which demonizing Israel can cross over into antisemitism.

4. When public schools invite speakers who glorify intifada or justify terrorism against Jews, do you see that as freedom of expression or state-endorsed incitement? Please answer one or the other.

a. What would you say to the Jewish parent who tells this Committee: "My child's school has become a breeding ground for antisemitic hate but when I speak up, I'm labeled a racist or oppressor." Is that acceptable in America's public education system?

Justification of violence against Jews is certainly antisemitic. In this situation, I would expect a school to follow its code of conduct as it would in any other instance of bias.

Antisemitism in the school system is not appropriate. When there are instances of antisemitism, schools should have a rigorous and transparent process to investigate and address complaints. As with any form of bigotry, students and families who raise concerns should be heard and given appropriate consideration and support. Schools need more capacity and training in order to effectively process and address complaints and provide the best support to targets of bigotry and their families. The appropriate response to antisemitism or to any instance of bias should be education, and as appropriate, the application of the school's code of conduct.

Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA)

1. At the end of the hearing, the Chair in his closing statement said in regards to the National Education Association (NEA) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL):
 “What we have done is criticize specific actions of groups like the NEA, and in fact, the Democrat witness herself, Rabbi Jacobs, agreed that it was wrong for the NEA to decide to boycott the Anti-Defamation League, and of course it is.”
 The NEA Board of Directors in fact voted not to implement such a proposal to boycott the ADL, and items have been submitted for the record to reflect that fact. During the Chair’s remarks, you asked to be recognized to clarify your statements regarding the NEA and the ADL. The Chair refused to let you clarify your statements for the record. Had the Chair recognized you to clarify your statements, what would you have said?

I wished to make clear that I disagreed with the proposal for a boycott, but that the NEA Board of Directors rejected the proposal. I agree with the decision of the NEA Board, and appreciate the comments of NEA President Becky Prgle reaffirming the organization’s commitment to fight antisemitism. In fact, the same NEA conference where the ADL proposal was put forward also included sessions on fighting antisemitism, and NEA shares with its members multiple online resources for addressing antisemitism.

Representative Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ)

1. Rabbi Jacobs, you’ve been a national leader in confronting antisemitism. From your perspective, how are Jewish students experiencing antisemitism in K-12 schools today, and how has the Trump Administration’s rollback of civil rights protections affected their Safety?

The rollback of civil rights protections makes Jewish students and all students less safe. This is true both because Jews need civil rights protections like every other minority group, and because Jews also include people of color, people who need accommodations for a disability, LGBTQ people, and others who need a robust civil rights infrastructure to support them. It runs counter to the letter and spirit of civil rights law to protect one group at the expense of the other. As I said in my testimony, “fighting one kind of hate alone is neither moral nor effective...rising antisemitism is part of a broader rise in hate targeting other groups. Addressing these hatreds requires a broad, inclusive effort across society.”

2. The Department of Education under the Trump Administration has scaled back investigations into harassment and discrimination. How does this impact the ability of schools to respond effectively to antisemitic incidents?

The Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education is the body charged with investigating incidents of antisemitism and other bias, and with the expertise to do so. Department of Education former officials have spoken of how investigations of racism or antisemitism often uncover systemic problems and discrimination targeting other communities. By stripping the funding for this office, the Trump Administration has made it harder to investigate and respond to instances of antisemitism and other bias.

3. Many Jewish parents and students report feeling abandoned by federal authorities. What concrete steps should be restored or expanded at the federal level to help schools combat ~~A~~antisemitism?

A government committed to serve students and families dealing with bigotry and harassment would not be eroding the infrastructure that supports investigating incidents and holding schools accountable for real action to combat it. The majority of Department of Education Office of Civil Rights regional offices have been shuttered, with decades of experienced professionals who have conducted thorough investigations and who were actively monitoring the implementation of commitments made by schools in the aftermath of investigations and resolution agreements.

4. You've written extensively about the importance of education in combating hate. How do you see the weakening of diversity and tolerance initiatives at the federal level influencing what's happening in classrooms?

Our Jewish youth cannot be safe in school communities that do not prioritize inclusion and respect for diversity. The most important federal measures to monitor, recognize and address antisemitism have always buttressed the fight against all forms of bigotry. You simply cannot fight one kind of hate in a silo.

You simply can't provide religious accommodation or any other protection to just one community. That's not what our law mandates and not what will keep communities safe and resilient. Diversity initiatives should include Jews. We need more education on antisemitism, not punishments for schools or educators, or the stripping of funding from public education, none of which help Jewish children.

5. In your view, how have changes to Title VI enforcement under the Trump Administration affected schools' obligations to address antisemitism?

Unlike traditional investigations that involved deep engagement with the schools and the real experience of students, the penalties that have been imposed or publicly threatened

have bypassed that entire process. And the sanctions have harmed research and other programs. Jewish students are suffering along with other students impacted by these cuts. The letters we have seen in the public domain are not the product of evidence based investigations, and there is absolutely no evidence that the funding cuts and interventions have improved the climate for Jewish students.

[Questions and responses submitted for the record by Ms. Rachel Lerman follows:]

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 YASSAMIN ANSARI, ARIZONA

October 1, 2025

Ms. Rachel Lerman
 Vice Chair
 Brandeis Center
 1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Suite 1025
 Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Ms. Lerman:

Thank you again for testifying at the September 10, 2025, House Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hearing titled "From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools." Enclosed are additional questions submitted by Subcommittee members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than October 22, 2025, for inclusion in the hearing record. Responses should be sent to Anders Vendt (anders.vendt@mail.house.gov) of the Committee staff; he can also be contacted at (202) 860-4040.

We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kiley
 Chairman
 U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
 Committee on Education and Workforce

Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. Jewish students in schools from New York to California are being physically threatened, verbally harassed, and shamed in class discussions yet we see almost *zero* enforcement of Title VI protections. Are civil rights laws being selectively enforced when the victim is Jewish?
 - a. In New York City, multiple schools saw Jewish students threatened or attacked physically in the aftermath of October 7. Are any of those school districts being investigated by the Department of Education?
2. In Massachusetts, [maps](#) were uncovered that depicted Israel allegedly “stealing” all of “Palestinian lands.” In Los Angeles, a 5th grade teacher promised to teach 10 and 11-year-old students to “[unlearn Zionist propaganda](#)” that says Hamas is a “terrorist organization.” Is this not evidence that a hostile environment in violation of civil rights laws exists at these schools?
3. When Jewish families report antisemitic discrimination to school districts, how often do those districts respond with hostility, dismissal, or retaliation?
4. What reforms, either statutory or regulatory, are needed to ensure Jewish students receive the same federal protections as any other group?

October 27, 2025

The Honorable Kevin Kiley
Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Responses to Questions for the Record — *“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K–12 Schools”* (Sept. 10, 2025)

Dear Chairman Kiley:

Thank you for the opportunity to supplement the record. Please find my written responses to questions submitted by Rep. Walberg following the September 10, 2025 hearing. We appreciate the Subcommittee’s attention to ensuring equal protection for Jewish students under Title VI.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Lerman
Vice Chair
Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 1025, Washington, DC 20006
rlerman@brandeiscenter.com | www.brandeiscenter.com

1. Jewish students in schools from New York to California are being physically threatened, verbally harassed, and shamed in class discussions yet we see almost *zero* enforcement of Title VI protections. Are civil rights laws being selectively enforced when the victim is Jewish?

There is strong evidence that Title VI is applied unevenly when Jewish students are the victims of discrimination and harassment. Jewish students from coast to coast have been physically assaulted, threatened, excluded from activities, or bullied by peers and teachers for their Jewish identity or perceived connection to Israel or Zionism—yet in many instances, enforcement has been delayed or absent. In some cases, teachers and administrators either look the other way or even encourage anti-Semitic harassment and discrimination in schools.

In reviewing reported anti-Semitism in K-12 schools, the Brandeis Center has found that complaints often remain pending for months or even years, are closed without findings, or are dismissed on grounds that would not be applied to other protected classes. Anti-Semitic conduct may be characterized as mere 'political speech' rather than discrimination and harassment creating the perception—and practical reality—that Jewish students are not afforded the same level of protection under Title VI. No publicly available data exists on the frequency with which Jewish families report antisemitic discrimination to school districts and receive a hostile, dismissive, or retaliatory response. However, reports highlight many cases of district inaction or inept handling, suggesting this is a systemic problem. The result is a reluctance on behalf of families to report anti-Semitism, driven by fears that reporting will make things worse.

Reports from Jewish families and advocacy groups show multiple examples of negative school district responses. These include:

- Dismissal and inaction: Some families report that their complaints are not taken seriously or are ignored, enabling antisemitic behavior to continue unchecked.
- Minimizing incidents: Some schools dismiss antisemitism as "political debate" rather than identifying it as discrimination. An incident report might be described as a "misunderstanding" by the district, even after a legal settlement is reached.
- Hostile environment: The Brandeis Center has reported cases where administrators or faculty have fostered antisemitic environments by downplaying incidents or promoting biased curricula.
- Lack of accountability: Some reports find that administrators fail to hold students and faculty accountable for antisemitic harassment, assault, and other policy violations.
- Negative consequences for the child: Students fear that speaking up will worsen their situation. For example, one Jewish student was reportedly told by a vice principal that the school could not provide ongoing security, leading the family to leave the district.
- Intimidation: Families in some communities have reported being pressured to withdraw complaints, with some questioning the motivation behind reports that paint a broad negative picture of a district.

1(a). In New York City, multiple schools saw Jewish students threatened or attacked physically in the aftermath of October 7. Are any of those school districts being investigated by the Department of Education?

Following the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks, Jewish students in New York City public schools were threatened, assaulted, and subjected to chants supporting violence against Jews.

While DOE complaints are not always available to the public, the Brandeis Center is unaware of New York City schools that are under DOE investigation.

2. In Massachusetts, maps were uncovered that depicted Israel allegedly “stealing” all of “Palestinian lands.” In Los Angeles, a 5th grade teacher promised to teach 10 and 11-year-old students to “unlearn Zionist propaganda” that says Hamas is a “terrorist organization.” Is this not evidence that a hostile environment in violation of civil rights laws exists at these schools?

The examples cited—elementary curricula in Massachusetts depicting Israel as having 'stolen' Palestinian land, and a Los Angeles teacher instructing 10- and 11-year-olds to 'unlearn Zionist propaganda'—are clear manifestations of a hostile educational environment in violation of state and federal civil rights laws. These materials and statements communicate to Jewish students that their identity, heritage, and connection to Israel are illegitimate or immoral. Such instruction goes well beyond political debate; it constitutes ideological indoctrination that stigmatizes children based on their shared ancestry and national origin.

The Brandeis Center has documented dozens of similar cases nationwide where teachers, outside contractors, and activist groups have introduced politicized, anti-Israel content into K–12 classrooms. In some instances, school districts have partnered with organizations that openly reject the legitimacy of the Jewish state or use classroom materials that recycle antisemitic tropes. When a school environment permits or endorses such conduct, it meets the legal standard for a 'hostile environment' under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

3. When Jewish families report antisemitic discrimination to school districts, how often do those districts respond with hostility, dismissal, or retaliation?

Jewish families who report anti-Semitic incidents frequently encounter institutional hostility. Instead of addressing antisemitism as a civil rights issue, many districts reframe it as political debate or academic freedom. This reframing allows schools to avoid accountability while sending a dangerous message to victims that their safety is negotiable. In cases handled by the Brandeis Center, parents have been ignored, accused of weaponizing complaints, or even retaliated against by school administrators. Students have been disciplined, ostracized, or excluded from opportunities after their families reported harassment. This pattern of retaliation creates a profound chilling effect that discourages victims from coming forward and undermines the promise of Title VI.

The [Brandeis Center Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism](#) (the “Coalition”) was created to represent the interests of its members, including by filing actions in its name for the benefit of its members, while protecting its members’ privacy and personal information. The Coalition is entitled to protect the confidentiality of its members’ identities and personal information, as well as internal communications and communications with the Coalition’s counsel, based on the First Amendment rights of free assembly and free speech. When the Coalition files a lawsuit in its name, it does not disclose the names of the members whose interests it is representing. Instead, allegations describing anti-Semitic incidences refer to members by pseudonym, such as Member No. 1 and omit information that might tend to reveal the identities of the member.

4. What reforms, either statutory or regulatory, are needed to ensure Jewish students receive the same federal protections as any other group?

To ensure that Jewish students receive equal protection under federal civil rights laws, Congress and federal agencies should consider the following statutory and regulatory reforms:

- **Adoption and Enforcement of IHRA:** Federal reforms to protect Jewish students include using the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism when enforcing civil rights laws, as directed by proposed legislation and executive orders. Key statutory and regulatory measures include requiring all schools to adopt this definition in their codes of conduct, enforcing existing laws against harassment and violence, and addressing specific issues like online harassment and academic boycotts of Israel.
- **Mandatory Training and Compliance Programs:** Reforms to protect Jewish students may also include mandatory training for all K-12 administrators, teachers, and civil rights coordinators on recognizing and addressing anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic instructional materials.
- **Third Party Accountability:** Outside groups with anti-Semitic agendas are partnering with local school districts to insert biased curricula and instructional materials into the classroom. Some of these groups are connected to foreign funding sources with anti-American and anti-Israel interests. These groups should be closely monitored and held accountable for their role in K-12 anti-Semitism.

[Questions and responses submitted for the record by Ms. Nicole Neily follows:]

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October 1, 2025

Ms. Nicole Neily
 President
 Defending Education
 4532 Cherry Hill Rd
 Suite 119
 Arlington, Virginia 22207

Dear Ms. Neily:

Thank you again for testifying at the September 10, 2025, House Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hearing titled "From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools." Enclosed are additional questions submitted by Subcommittee members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than October 22, 2025, for inclusion in the hearing record. Responses should be sent to Anders Vendt (anders.vendt@mail.house.gov) of the Committee staff; he can also be contacted at (202) 860-4040.

We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kiley
 Chairman
 U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
 Committee on Education and Workforce

Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. In Fairfax County, Virginia, classmates called a middle school Jewish student an “Israeli bomber” and yelled “Free Palestine” as she walked into the school cafeteria, simply because she was Jewish. The school refused to document the incident as antisemitism. Is it common for public schools to downplay and refuse to document instances of antisemitism and instead characterize them as simply “bullying?”
 - a. Do you believe school districts are selectively applying anti-bullying or DEI policies, shutting down some forms of discrimination but allowing antisemitism to thrive unchecked?

Questions for the Record from Rep. Tim Walberg
Committee on Education & the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education
“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools”
September 10, 2025

- 1. In Fairfax County, Virginia, classmates called a middle school Jewish student an “Israeli bomber” and yelled “Free Palestine” as she walked into the school cafeteria, simply because she was Jewish. The school refused to document the incident as antisemitism. Is it common for public schools to downplay and refuse to document instances of antisemitism and instead characterize them as simply “bullying?”**

Yes, schools across the country have repeatedly downplayed instances of antisemitism in schools. In California’s Sequoia Union High School district, school officials dismissed swastikas at a school building found weeks after October 7th as mere “Buddhist religious symbols,”¹ while a year later, a Seattle-area principal called such drawings at an elementary school “a symbol of peace.”²

In some cases, the antisemitism has come from teachers who exploit the authority they have over young learners. In New York City, a pre-K teacher advised parents how to talk to 4-year-olds about “land theft, displacement and ethnic cleansing,”³ while third grade students at PS705 were encouraged to sing “The Wheels on the Tank” – a lesson from “Woke Kindergarten” – that contained the lyrics “The bombs in the air go whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, all through the skies. From every river to every sea the people cry, cry, cry. Free Palestine till the wheels on the tanks fall off.”⁴ In Virginia, an Arlington Public Schools English teacher spent so much class time discussing the Israel-Gaza war that the school

¹ Sue Dremann, “Sequoia Union High School District responds to criticism over swastika drawings,” RWC Pulse, November 9, 2023 <https://www.rwcpulse.com/express-newsletter-content/2023/11/09/sequoia-union-high-school-district-responds-to-criticism-over-swastika-drawings/>

² Michelle Esteban “Principal on leave after swastika comment sparks outrage at Bellevue elementary school,” KOMO News, October 2, 2024 <https://komonews.com/news/local/principal-bellevue-school-district-phantom-lake-elementary-swastika-buddhism-hinduism-cultural-awareness-education-parents-students-safety-statement-emails-investigation>

³ Deirdre Bardolf and Susan Edelman, “NYC pre-K teacher pushes anti-Israel agenda with lessons about ‘land theft, displacement and ethnic cleansing,’” New York Post, November 4, 2023

<https://nypost.com/2023/11/04/metro/a-manhattan-pre-k-teacher-is-spreading-anti-israel-hate-to-the-citys-youngest-learners-and-offering-parents-and-teachers-tips-to-indoctrinate-kids-to-her-left-wing-agenda-educators-and-insiders-told/>

⁴ Deirdre Bardolf, “NYC elementary teachers draw from anti-Israel propaganda to twist ‘Wheels on the Bus’ to celebrate the eradication of Jewish state,” New York Post, January 27, 2024. <https://nypost.com/2024/01/27/metro/nyc-teachers-twist-wheels-on-the-bus-to-celebrate-israel-hate/>

principal emailed her point-blank to ask how one assignment was related to the state's ELA (English/ Language Arts) standards; this same teacher facilitated a student walkout and misused a faculty listserv, yet does not seem to have faced any disciplinary repercussions.⁵ And in California, the Oakland Education Association hosted a "Teach-in for Gaza" featuring pro-Hamas material;⁶ this event quickly went viral, and its accompanying resources have since been shared with and by teachers across the country.

Elected school board members have also played a role in creating this environment; after the Black Lives Matter movement shared a graphic of a paraglider, our organization contacted school districts that had participated in BLM Week of Action to inquire whether leaders planned to continue engaging with the project in light of this incident. A school board member in Rochester New York responded by asserting that the Jews played a role in the slave trade and that "no one's hands are clean."⁷

2. Do you believe school districts are selectively applying anti-bullying or DEI policies, shutting down some forms of discrimination but allowing antisemitism to thrive unchecked?

Yes, many school districts have created a two-tier justice system when it comes to the issue of antisemitism.

Following October 7, our organization reached out to a number of districts across the country to compare statements issued following George Floyd's murder with statements made after the Hamas terrorist attack, and to ask how these districts planned to protect Jewish students.⁸ While most districts failed to respond, it was notable that 17 of 26 districts contacted had issued statements regarding George Floyd and/or the Derek Chauvin verdict while only 11 of the 26 had issued statements regarding October 7th.

Groups engaging in antisemitic conduct are often not disciplined in line with school policies; for example, in Washington's Issaquah School District 411, an unauthorized

⁵ Luke Rosiak, "Virginia Teacher Who Makes Kids Criticize Israel Is Daughter Of Imam At Al Qaeda-Linked Mosque," Daily Wire, October 1, 2024. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/daughter-of-imam-at-al-qaeda-linked-mosque-is-a-teacher-who-makes-students-criticize-israel>

⁶ Defending Education, "Oakland Unified School District emails reveal 'Teach-in for Gaza' materials featured pro-Hamas, anti-Israel content," October 7, 2024 <https://defendinged.org/incidents/oakland-unified-school-district-emails-reveal-teach-in-for-gaza-materials-featured-pro-hamas-anti-israel-content/>

⁷ Alec Schemmel, "Left-Wing School Board President Goes Full Farrakhan, Says Jews Ran the Slave Trade," Washington Free Beacon, November 9, 2023 <https://freebeacon.com/campus/left-wing-school-board-president-goes-full-farrakhan-says-jews-ran-the-slave-trade/>

⁸ Defending Education, "Districts' Responses to Questions on Addressing Antisemitism," November 27, 2023 <https://defendinged.org/investigations/districts-responses-to-questions-on-addressing-antisemitism/>

student organization organized a walkout to commemorate October 7; students involved in this effort – which included posting signs and chalking school facilities to advertise the walkout – were not disciplined because their tabling activities took place off-campus (despite the fact that the district’s “Prohibition Against Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Incident Reporting Form #3207F” does provide “off school property” as a location for a complaint;⁹ and school officials went out of their way to facilitate the walkout, declining to send a follow up note to the community so as to protect the participants’ identities.¹⁰

⁹ Issaquah School District 411, “3207F - Prohibition Against Harassment Intimidation and Bullying Complaint Form,” <https://www.isd411.org/about-us/regulations/3000-series/3207/3207f> (accessed 10/20/25)

¹⁰ Defending Education, “Issaquah School District administrators didn’t know about anti-Israel club on campus, club organized Palestine walkout on October 7,” May 22, 2025 <https://defendinged.org/incidents/issaquah-school-district-administrators-didnt-know-about-anti-israel-club-on-campus-club-organized-palestine-walkout-on-october-7/>

[Questions and responses submitted for the record by Dr. Brandy Shufutinsky follows:]

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October 1, 2025

Dr. Brandy Shufutinsky
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Dear Dr. Shufutinsky:

Thank you again for testifying at the September 10, 2025, House Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hearing titled "From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools." Enclosed are additional questions submitted by Subcommittee members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than October 22, 2025, for inclusion in the hearing record. Responses should be sent to Anders Vendt (anders.vendt@mail.house.gov) of the Committee staff; he can also be contacted at (202) 860-4040.

We appreciate your contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kiley
 Chairman
 U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
 Committee on Education and Workforce

Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. As someone who focuses on national security and education, is the spread of antisemitic hate in K-12 schools part of a broader ideological campaign that endangers Jewish children and inherently undermines American values?
 - a. Can you speak to the influence of foreign-funded, radical anti-Israel groups on American education systems and teacher training programs?
2. How have extremist, foreign-funded organizations like American Muslims for Palestine and Students for Justice in Palestine successfully infiltrated teacher training programs and school curricula?
 - a. Is antisemitism in K-12 settings now being masked as “anti-Zionism?”
 - b. If so, how is this rebranding radicalizing students at an early age?
 - c. Are you concerned that this process will further inflame antisemitism on college campuses?
3. How should Congress respond when taxpayer-funded schools promote political narratives that incite hatred against Jewish Americans and normalize U.S. designated terrorist organizations like Hamas?

**Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hearing titled
“From Playground to Classroom: The Spread of Antisemitism in K-12 Schools.”**

Response to Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. As someone who focuses on national security and education, is the spread of antisemitic hate in K-12 schools part of a broader ideological campaign that endangers Jewish children and inherently undermines American values?

a. Can you speak to the influence of foreign-funded, radical anti-Israel groups on American education systems and teacher training programs?

It is easy to draw connections between an ideological campaign to institutionalize anti-Jewish bigotry in K-12 schools and the spread of antisemitic hate given the sheer number of malign actors who have a direct line into classrooms across the United States. From education departments in colleges to teacher professional development organizations to labor unions, we have seen multiple entities that are spreading ideology that foments anti-Jewish hatred and undermines foundational American values, like free speech, intellectual diversity, and fact-based scholarship. All these vectors have created a perfect storm that has led to the chaotic scenes we have witnessed on campuses across the country over the past few years.

Foreign and domestic entities play a part in influencing the American education system, through teaching training, curriculum development, and support for radical university departments. When these organizations create and disseminate learning materials, often free of charge, educators use them to teach students.

One example that I included in my written testimony is an organization called [PARCEO](#). After experiencing a massive uptick in anti-Jewish bigotry in K-12 schools, more parents, students, and teachers requested training on antisemitism. PARCEO formed to provide that training. However, the individuals who are part of PARCEO believe that anti-Zionism is not antisemitic, and their materials reflect that belief. PARCEO has been invited to lead multiple teacher training sessions in districts across the country.

Another organization that works with K-12 school districts in multiple states is the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). In August 2025, the Philadelphia chapter of CAIR released professional development and resource guides, stating that they were partnering with educators to build “more inclusive schools.” In September 2025, CAIR Philly co-sponsored an event titled, “[Zionism is Racism](#)” with other anti-Israel organizations including the Palestinian Youth Movement.

When organizations that hold biased or prejudicial beliefs are brought into schools to train teachers and develop curricula for students, it influences what materials children are exposed to. It can also shape how a teacher presents information to his or her students.

2. How have extremist, foreign-funded organizations like American Muslims for Palestine and Students for Justice in Palestine successfully infiltrated teacher training programs and school curricula?

- a. Is antisemitism in K-12 settings now being masked as “anti-Zionism?”
- b. If so, how is this rebranding radicalizing students at an early age?
- c. Are you concerned that this process will further inflame antisemitism on college campuses?

Unfortunately, it seems like extremist organizations have outsized influence on teacher training programs and school curricula. Entities that push “anti-Zionism does not equal antisemitism” ideology offer teacher training and curriculum development to K-12 school districts across the United States. Often, the ideology that masks antisemitism as anti-Zionism is framed as being “decolonial.” Both Israel and the United States are presented as settler-colonial nations that must be dismantled. Teaching materials used by these groups refer to the United States as “[Turtle Island](#)” and label Israel as “Palestine.” This rebranding radicalizes students at an early age by teaching them historical inaccuracies and by normalizing the idea that “resistance is justified if people are occupied.”



Rightfully, there is concern about foreign funding pouring into the American education system. However, one point that I believe has not received enough attention is how American dollars are being sent abroad to fund questionable entities. Community-based organizations, many of them with nonprofit tax status, raise money at teach-ins and by [on-campus sales](#)² and [send the funds](#)

¹ “All Institutes,” *Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing (XITO)*. (<https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/all-institutes>)

² *Muslim_students_association*, *Instagram*, December 3, 2023. (https://www.instagram.com/p/C0avNbKL6ij/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=bHU5NTVmb3V2emdp)

[raised abroad](#).³ Whether it's bake sales or [selling t-shirts](#),⁴ these fundraisers target children for their participation.



When children are taught that violence is a justifiable form of resistance, and that there are people who deserve to have violence inflicted on them, it should concern all decent people.

3. How should Congress respond when taxpayer-funded schools promote political narratives that incite hatred against Jewish Americans and normalize U.S. designated terrorist organizations like Hamas?

Congress should take the safety and security of all Americans seriously, including American students who are being targeted by and/or being taught material that incites them to discriminate against their peers and glorify terrorists. When American parents send our children to school, we expect their learning environments to be free of biases and prejudicial ideology. No matter a teacher's opinion, leading children to believe that terrorist organizations are something to emulate will only encourage students to view violence as an admirable exploit.

Parents and students rely on elected leaders and school officials to ensure that the classroom maintains a healthy learning environment. If activists take advantage of their access to children to promote their political agendas, it is up to Congress to step in and address the issue. American taxpayer dollars should not fund institutions that violate the civil rights of any citizen. If institutions are unable to uphold fundamental anti-discrimination policies and legislation, they should not receive taxpayer funding.

The following are a few steps Congress should consider:

- Prevent taxpayer dollars from funding education programs including university departments, teacher professional development, and curricula, that normalizes U.S. designated terrorist organizations.

³ "Emergency Support for Palestinian families in Gaza," *Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)*. (<https://secure.everyaction.com/smtVOHNMqki9nC7D-p6nMQ2>)

⁴ "Shop For A Cause," *Shop Palestine*. (<https://www.shoppalestine.org>)

⁵ *Muslim_students_association*, *Instagram*, December 3, 2023. (https://www.instagram.com/p/C0avNbKL6ij/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=bHU5NTVmb3V2emdp)

- Require transparency regarding (1) foreign funding at all levels of education (K-12 and higher education).

Respectfully,
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