

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 22, 2023

Secretary Miguel Cardona  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

As members of Congress who are committed to countering antisemitism, we are deeply concerned about the rise of antisemitic incidents at universities and college campuses.

The U.S. Department of Education has a key role to play in the federal government's efforts to counter antisemitism. We welcome the Department's ongoing commitment to take several steps outlined in the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, including launching an Antisemitism Awareness Campaign, and issuing a recent Dear Colleague Letter circulated to schools on May 25, 2023, clearly stating that "a school violates Title VI when it fails to take adequate steps to address discriminatory harassment, such as antisemitic harassment." Additionally, the Department's Antisemitism Awareness Campaign lists several important actions the Department will take, including continued data collection and increased technical assistance for both schools and community organizations.

We strongly encourage the Department to continue taking the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism into consideration as it investigates individual incidents of anti-Jewish discrimination and enforces federal civil rights law. In addition, we reiterate our support for the Administration's proposed action to issue regulations pursuant to Executive Order 13899 on Combating Anti-Semitism to provide the strongest level of protections for Jewish students.

According to the ADL, antisemitic incidents on college campuses increased by 41 percent from 2021 to 2022. Recent campus surveys also confirm that many Jewish students face discrimination or a hostile environment on campus. The 2021 ADL-Hillel Campus Antisemitism Survey found that nearly one third of Jewish students personally experienced antisemitism directed at them on campus or by a member of the campus community. A 2022 survey also found that 54% of Jewish students feel that they pay a social cost for supporting the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. We hope that you agree that these findings are alarming and unacceptable. Jewish students, like all students, deserve equal rights to an education free from discrimination and harassment because of their identity.

As you know, the overall number of complaints received by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has risen from approximately 10,000 cases in 2019 to more than 19,000 cases last year. While we welcome the Department's successful resolution of a recent case at the University of Vermont, we encourage the Department to continue to swiftly investigate other pending cases and to continue to enforce federal civil rights laws against antisemitism in all forms. We also encourage the Department to undertake concerted efforts to encourage the reporting of antisemitic incidents; despite the increase in complaints to OCR, anti-Jewish incidents remain woefully underreported.

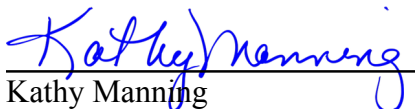
That is why we respectfully request that the Department provide written responses to the following questions:


1. How is the Department working to swiftly resolve a backlog of pending discrimination complaints, and specifically those involving antisemitism?
2. What additional resources does the Department require to successfully resolve the pending complaints in a timely manner?
3. How will the Department help schools, including those that have experienced an increase in antisemitism, improve their processes and procedures for reporting antisemitic incidents on college campuses?
4. How does the Department plan to highlight best practices to prevent and address antisemitism on campus and ensure students, educators, and administrators are aware of available resources?
5. What technical assistance will the Department provide to schools regarding Title VI, its application to Jewish students and its coverage of all forms of antisemitic discrimination?

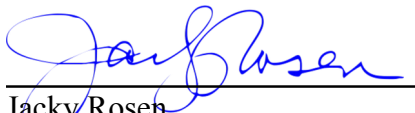
Keeping the priorities and questions outlined above in mind, we urge the Department to brief Congress on the Department's plan to implement key actions outlined in the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism by September 30, 2023.


Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response and continuing to work with you to help combat antisemitism and other forms of discrimination in higher education.

Sincerely,

  
Kathy Manning  
Member of Congress

  
Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress

  
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

  
James Lankford  
United States Senator



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



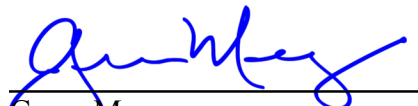
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Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



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Roger Marshall M.D.  
United States Senator



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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



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Randy K. Weber, Sr.  
Member of Congress



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Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



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Rick Scott  
United States Senator




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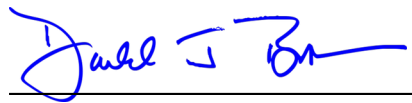
Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress




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Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress


  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress


  
Don Bacon  
Member of Congress

  
Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress


  
Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

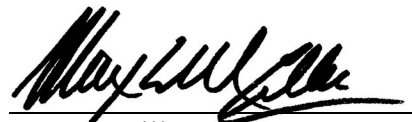
  
Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress

  
Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress

  
Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

  
David Kustoff  
Member of Congress

  
Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

  
Max L. Miller  
Member of Congress



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Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



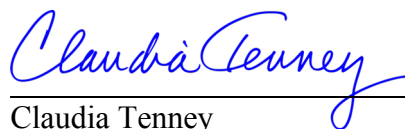
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Young Kim  
Member of Congress



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Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



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Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



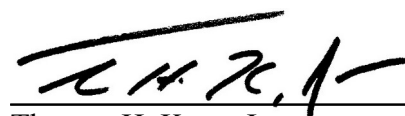
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Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



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Patrick K. Ryan  
Member of Congress



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Thomas H. Kean, Jr.  
Member of Congress



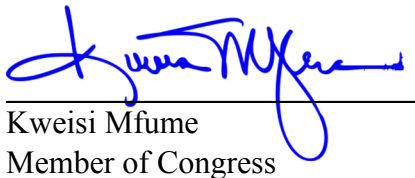
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Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



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Mike Flood  
Member of Congress



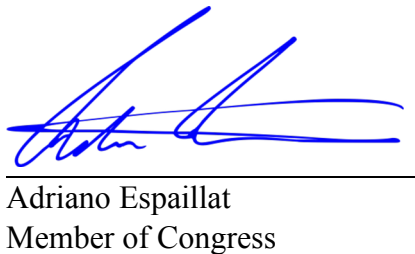
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Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



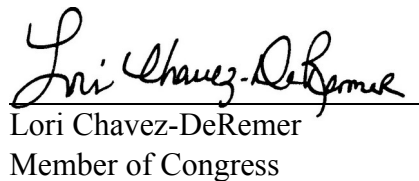
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Mike Carey  
Member of Congress



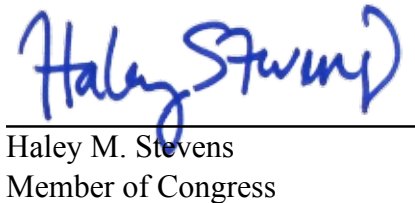
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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



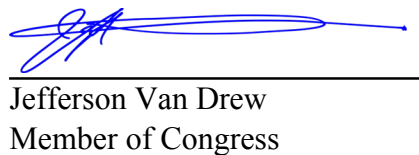
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Lori Chavez-DeRemer  
Member of Congress



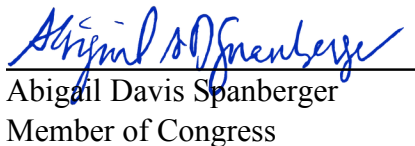
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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



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Jefferson Van Drew  
Member of Congress



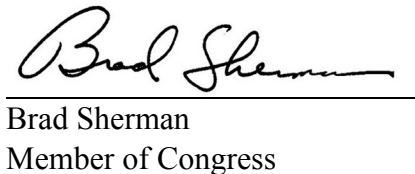
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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



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Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



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Jenniffer González-Colón  
Member of Congress



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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



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Marcus J. Molinaro  
Member of Congress



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David J. Trone  
Member of Congress



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Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



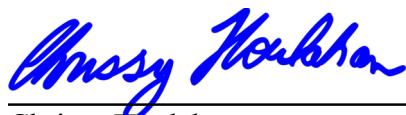
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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



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Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress



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Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



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Nick LaLota  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



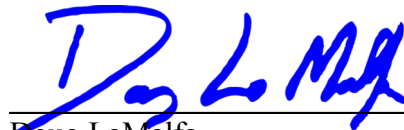
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Anthony D'Esposito  
Member of Congress



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Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



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Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



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Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



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Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



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André Carson  
Member of Congress



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Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



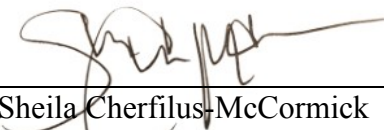
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress





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Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress



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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress



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Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



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Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress



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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



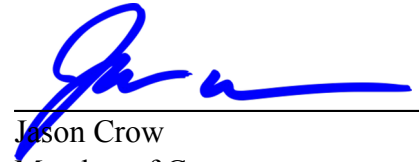
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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



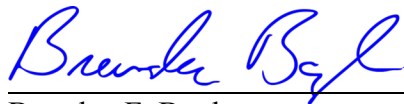
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Susie Lee  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Higher  
Education and Workforce  
Development



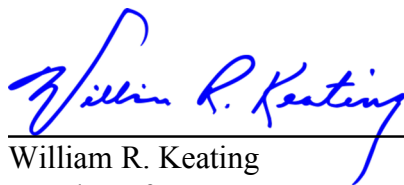
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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



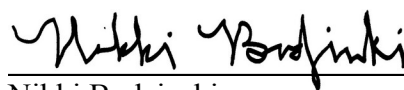
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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress




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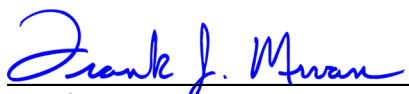
Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

  
Frank J. Mrvan  
Member of Congress