

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 9, 2024

Dear Chairman Sanders:

As co-chairs of the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism, we are deeply disturbed by the increase in antisemitic incidents on college and university campuses across the United States following Hamas's October 7 terrorist attack on Israel. No student should have to fear for his or her safety or ability to study in a safe environment, regardless of his or her ethnicity, religion, race, or national origin. Therefore, as Congress begins a new session, we strongly urge the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to take immediate action to keep Jewish students safe, including by holding a full committee hearing on campus antisemitism, so that we can better understand the scale and scope of this scourge, and take action to counter it.

Since October 7, we have seen Jewish students locked in a library at Cooper Union as protesters attempted to break down the door[1]; at Cornell University, a student made calls to rape and kill Jewish students on campus[2]; and at Stanford University, an instructor singled out Jewish students as "colonizers" and asked them to identify themselves and stand in a corner, stating, "That's what Israel does to the Palestinians." [3] These are but a few of the hundreds of antisemitic incidents that have taken place at colleges and universities over the past few months. Schools have a legal responsibility to protect their students from discrimination, yet many university presidents and administrators have failed to forcefully condemn antisemitic speech and incidents on campuses in the wake of Hamas's terrorist attack. Even while testifying before the House Committee on Education and Workforce on December 5, university presidents failed to speak out with conviction against clear, horrific and flagrant displays of antisemitism.

According to a recent study, 73 percent of Jewish college students surveyed say they have experienced or witnessed antisemitic incidents on their campuses since the start of the 2023-24 school year.[4] The same study finds that, since October 7, only 39 percent of Jewish students feel comfortable with others on campus knowing they are Jewish – a decline of nearly half from when the same question was asked prior to October 7.[5] The first-ever U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism rightly points out that, "all students, educators, and administrators should feel safe and free from violence, harassment and intimidation on their campuses." We are profoundly concerned that far too many Jewish students do not feel safe on college and university campuses. Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of Education has continued to delay the issuance of a proposed rule governing the application of Title VI in cases involving antisemitic harassment and discrimination.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you on the swift and meaningful actions the Committee can take to keep Jewish students safe, which should include, at a minimum, holding a full committee hearing on campus antisemitism. We stand ready to work together with the Committee to help counter antisemitism.

Sincerely,



JACKY ROSEN
United States Senator



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator

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- [1] <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/cooper-union-jewish-students-locked-library>
- [2] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2023/10/30/anti-semitism-threats-police-cornell/71380881007/>
- [3] <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/stanford-suspends-instructor-reportedly-called-jewish-students-colonizers-downplayed-holocaust/>
- [4] <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/campus-antisemitism-study-campus-climate-and-after-amas-terrorist-attacks>
- [5] <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/campus-antisemitism-study-campus-climate-and-after-amas-terrorist-attacks>
- [6] <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/one-third-jewish-students-experienced-antisemitism-college-campuses-last>

CC: Ranking Member Bill Cassidy