

A GROWING THREAT: ANTISEMITISM ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

A Survey of College Students and Recent Alums
on Campus Antisemitism



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Methodology

Survey conducted online March 25 – June 14, 2021

Respondents were recruited to the survey by Alums for Campus Fairness via public Facebook groups, social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram, email marketing campaigns, and word of mouth

Respondents were filtered to:

- ▶ 18-29 year-old Americans that self-identify as Jewish
- ▶ Current students or recent graduates of a 4-year undergraduate degree program in the U.S.

506 completed surveys, no weights applied

- ▶ 312 enrolled students
- ▶ 194 alumni

One half of a percent (.5%) and higher is rounded up in the presentation

Anonymous stories of antisemitism

The survey concluded with an optional open-ended question for respondents to share a story from their personal experience.

More than one out of four respondents (137 out of the total 506 respondents) chose to submit an anonymous story after completing the survey.

Responses came from a diverse group of students and recent graduates, males and females, from all 5 geographic regions.

Their responses are included in this report verbatim as submitted

While the survey didn't ask about Israel-related antisemitism or Holocaust education/issues, the open-ended responses certainly suggest that they are a big factor affecting students' experience on campus:

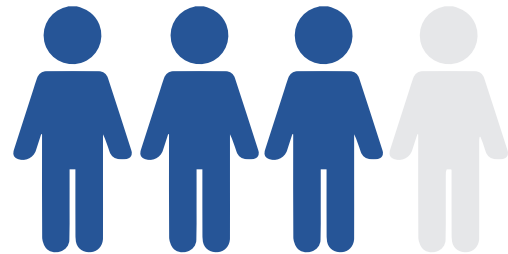
- ▶ 50 of 137 reference Israel, Palestine, or BDS
- ▶ 26 of 137 reference the Holocaust, swastikas, Nazis or Hitler

Other responses match the bias-related incidents mentioned in the survey:

- ▶ 27 of 137 reference an experience with a professor or the school's administration
- ▶ 17 of 137 reference antisemitic "jokes" said in their presence
- ▶ 4 of 137 reference physical violence

Key Findings

Nearly every Jewish college student and recent grad across the U.S. thinks that antisemitism is a problem on U.S. college campuses, with three out of four saying it is a 'very serious problem'.



This sentiment isn't something that exists because of what these students and grads think is happening on other students' campuses. It is a very personal sentiment as seen by the 95% of Jewish students and recent grads who say that antisemitism was a problem on their own campus.

Antisemitism on college campuses isn't getting any better.

Nearly half of the Jewish college students surveyed said that antisemitism is getting worse on their campus, while over a third said it is staying about the same. Only 16% said it is getting better.

“

UConn has experienced seven antisemitic incidents in the year and three during Passover alone. Each act has gotten bigger and bolder and the students have become frightened.

- Female, 20,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Northeast

”

These sentiments are born out of real-life experiences, with nearly 80% of Jewish students and recent grads saying that they themselves, someone they know, or both themselves and someone they know received offensive or threatening antisemitic comments in person from another student.

Over half received an offensive or threatening antisemitic comment from a faculty member or employee of their school, more so than those that received an antisemitic comment online.

For 44% of students and recent grads, they themselves, someone they know, or both were physically threatened because they were Jewish. Antisemitism is happening in person and for many of these students and grads, it is or was a physical threat.

These experience inform their campus experience significantly. While the vast majority of these students and recent grads say they feel safe identifying as a Jew at their school, 69% say they always or sometimes avoid certain places, events, or situations at their school because they are concerned for their safety as a Jew.

Key Findings

While the data remained consistent across all groups, **two differences warrant further exploration:**

The students who say antisemitism on campus is getting worse are mostly from private schools, while those who say it is staying about the same or getting better attend or attended state schools.



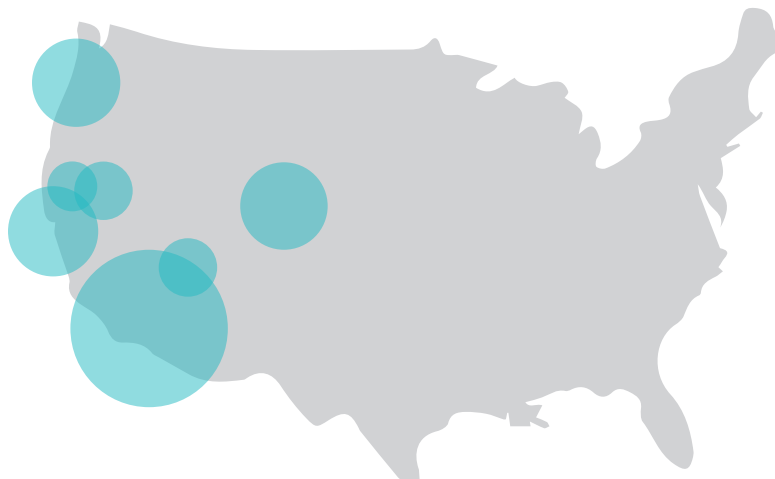
However, students and grads who attended a state school are more likely to have been physically threatened themselves or know someone who was physically threatened, as compared to respondents from a private school.

“ 3 of my fraternity brothers were walking home from the bars one night and right outside their house they got jumped and beaten up by members of another fraternity for the sole reason of them being Jews.

- Male, 23,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Southeast

”

Consistently, students and grads who attended school in the West were more likely to report cases of antisemitic incidents and were more likely to perceive antisemitism as a major problem on their campus as compared to all other regions in the U.S.



ANTISEMITISM ON CAMPUS

U.S. State Department definition shared with respondents:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews.

Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

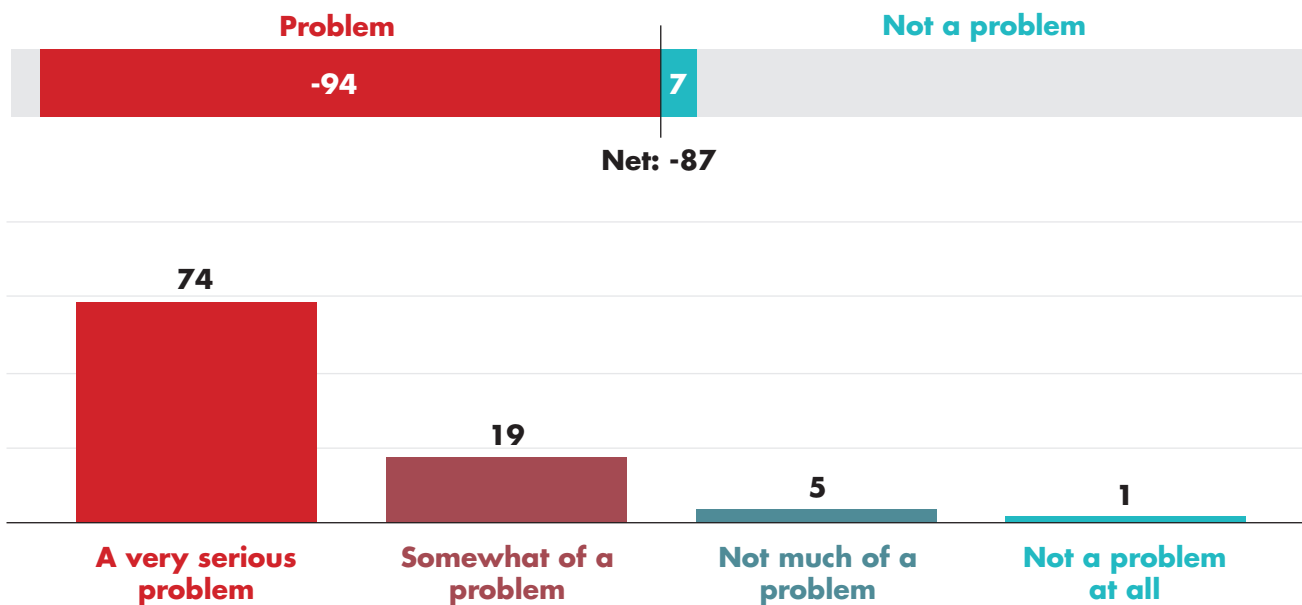
anti-Semitism

Semitism is hostility to Jewish people. The extreme Front promoted anti-se-

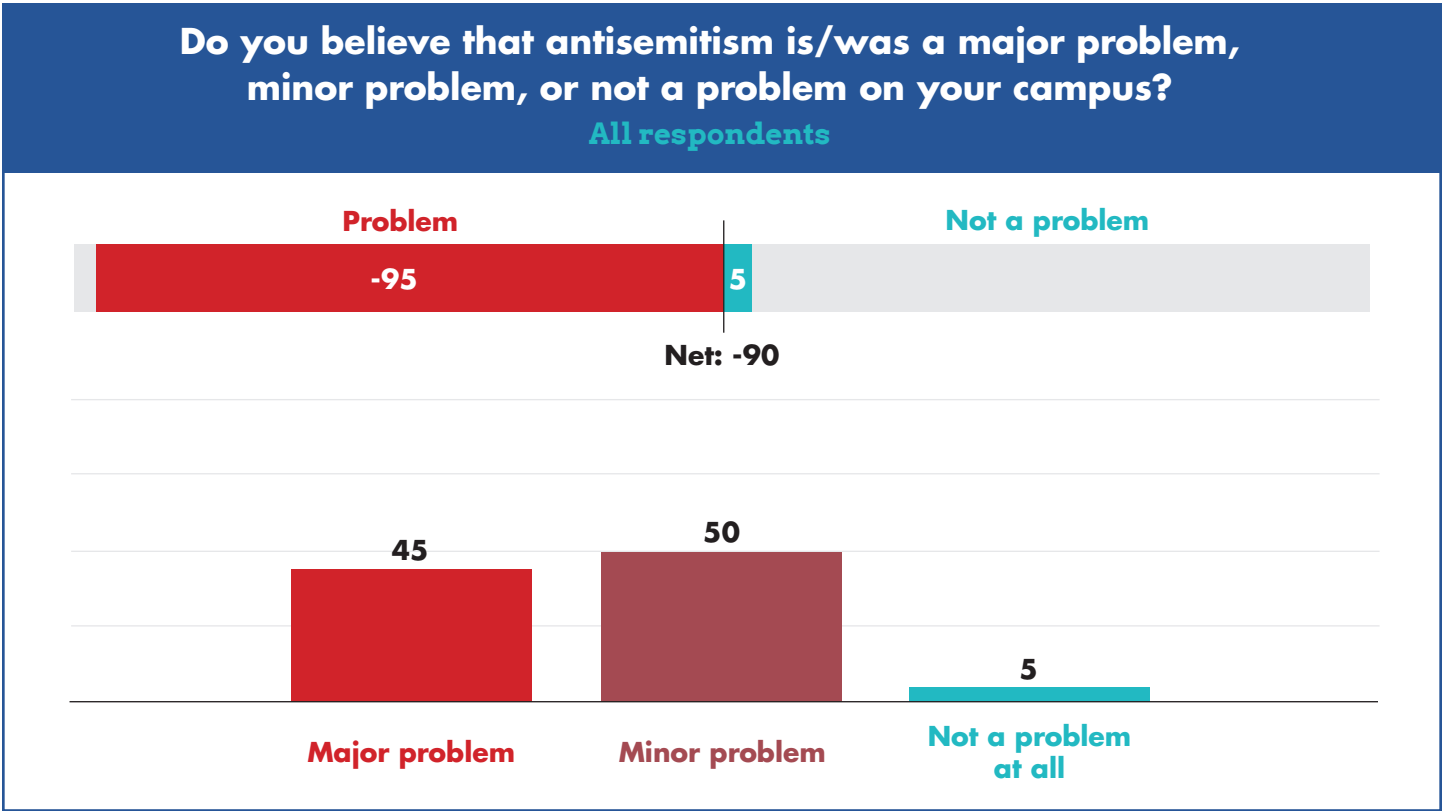
Nearly all Jewish college students and recent grads think antisemitism is a problem on U.S. college campuses.

How much of a problem, if at all, do you think antisemitism is in general on U.S. college campuses in recent years and today?

All respondents



Nearly all students and grads say antisemitism is/was a problem on their campus.



“ In the recent student government election, there were a lot of accusations that one ticket was perpetuating antisemitism and that the ticket was not stopping it. When appealed to the election commissioner, they did not punish the ticket and allowed it to continue. A lot of drama ensued and eventually one ticket had to drop out (this ticket had a White, Jewish male as the Presidential candidate) and in turn, the other ticket won the election. There were accusations that the winning ticket have a desire to ‘repurpose white-dominated spaces’ and I have heard from others that they have mentioned doing such with Chabad and Hillel.

- Male, 20,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Southeast ”

“ I’ve had pennies thrown at me people saying ‘you gonna pick that up jew?’

- Male, 26,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Southeast ”

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Nearly all students and grads say antisemitism is/was a problem on their campus.

Comments continued

“ A student running for student council President (who had also made transphobic remarks about his opponent) said that abortion was worse than the Holocaust and publicly stood by his statement.

*- Female, 21,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Northeast*

”

“ I was an RA for residence life. Someone carved a swastika into my door and into the shared bathroom stall on our floor, as well as into the area near the elevators. The person responsible was never caught.

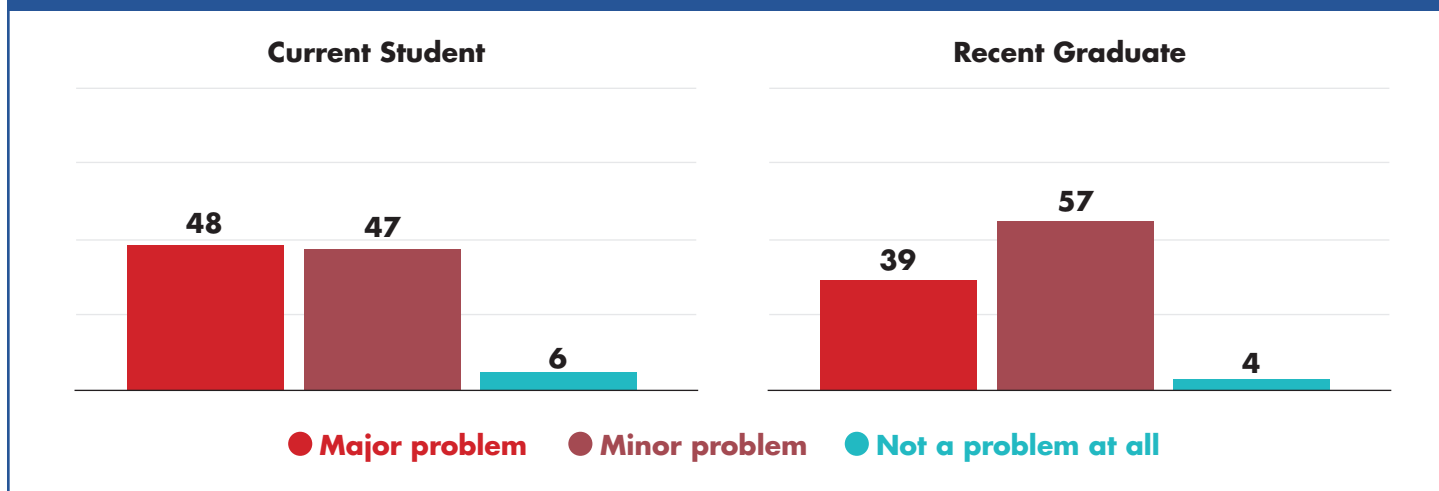
*- Male, 28
Graduated from a state university/college in the Midwest*

”

While nearly 100% of students and grads say antisemitism is/was a problem on their campus, current students are more likely to call it a 'major' problem and grads a 'minor' one.

Do you believe that antisemitism is/was a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem on your campus?

All respondents by education status



“ I have too many to list. Swastikas and “SS” symbols litter the campus. I get asked if I’m a Zionist upon people learning I’m Jewish to determine if I am a “good” Jew or not. A girl in my class said we need to “stop demonizing Hitler” so we can understand him and his motives better. Posters of Holocaust victims next to doctored images of aborted fetuses as a comparison on campus. A campus police officer telling me I am too sensitive about above poster and that he has Jewish friends and he’d been to Israel so he knows what he’s talking about. Cardboard cutouts of gravestones with names of Jewish leaders on them as a protest of “Israel.” I could go on.

*- Female, 26,
Currently attends a state university/college in the West*

”

“ I haven’t but I know it is such a major problem and I often have to hide being Jewish to fit in and so my professors can like me. I also sometimes feel that I’m the spokesmodel for Jewish humanity at my school.

*- Female, 22,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Midwest*

”

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While nearly 100% of students and grads say antisemitism is/was a problem on their campus, current students are more likely to call it a 'major' problem and grads a 'minor' one.

Comments continued

“ Freshman roommate saying that I’m “too Jewish.” Some typical micro aggressions. A professor comparing a dog having to be in a dorm room all day to Jews in the cattle cars. (Thankfully nothing physical).

*- Male, 25,
Graduated from a private university/college in the Northeast*

”

“ I did not experience any antisemitism on campus but a lot of reasonable people I socialized with and learned from (students and faculty alike) do not support Israel’s occupation of Palestine. These criticisms of government policy never made me feel unsafe as a Jew and, likewise, I felt comfortable expressing support for the Pro-Palestinian movement and practicing Judaism at the same time. Antisemitism is a major issue globally but I do not feel that it is more pronounced on college campuses than otherwise. I think lack of support for Israel is often conflated with antisemitism and that is a shame.

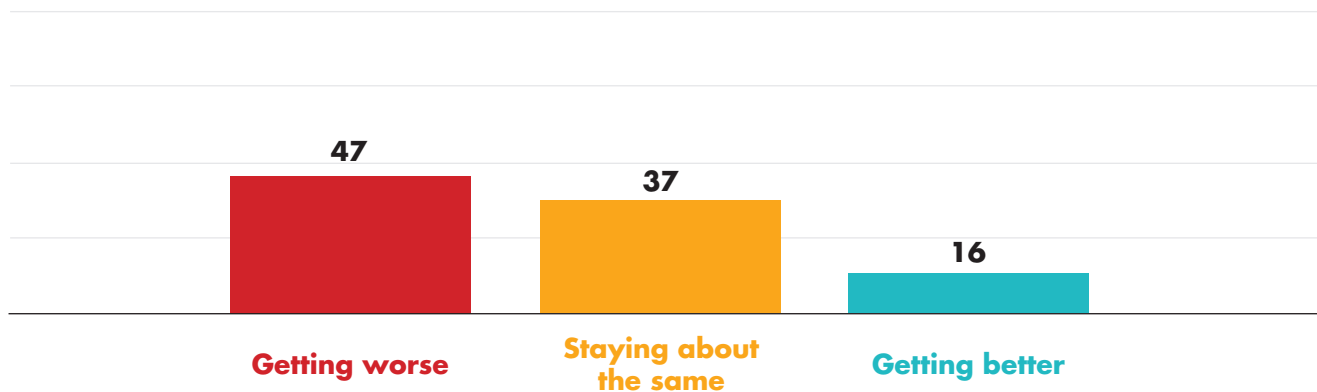
*- Male, 26,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Midwest*

”

Nearly half of current students say antisemitism is getting worse on their campus.

Do you believe that antisemitism on your campus is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Current students that believe antisemitism is a problem on campus only



“ My school recently had a ‘scandal’ where they discovered a lot of the D1 sports team members participated in neo-nazi activities. Because they were signed on as good athletes; the school has ignored the issue and pushed it under the rug. Never felt that scared despite threats made online by fellow peers before, but this adds a whole new element. There are even photos of the athletes at neo-nazi meeting areas holding nazi propaganda.

- Female, 23,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Northeast ”

“ I go to a small liberal arts college with a large international population. Let’s just put it this way--the only Israeli student we’ve ever had left after a year because they felt physically unsafe on campus. The multiple Palestinian students feel right at home here however with BDS stickers on many of the buildings. The Jewish population is quickly shrinking on campus despite the Jewish student union being the most active group on campus to make events that center around feeding others.

- Female, 23,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Midwest ”

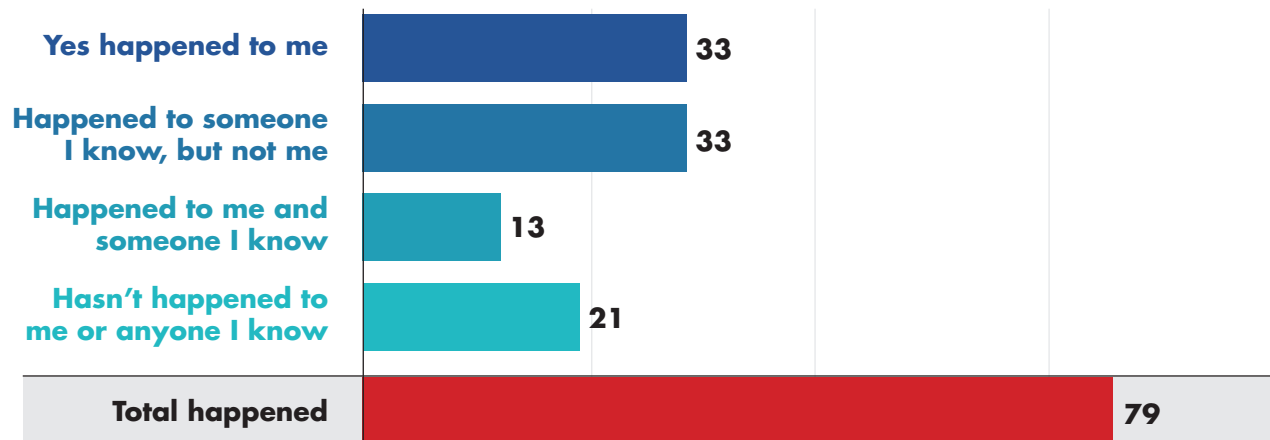
BIASED-RELATED INCIDENTS

Offensive or threatening antisemitic comments made in person by another student.

Another student made offensive or threatening antisemitic comments in person

All respondents

Please indicate if the incident has happened to you, has happened to someone you know but not you, has happened to you and someone you know, or hasn't happened to you or anyone you know.



“ A couple years ago my roommate had a friend over and I was talking about how I was excited for my families upcoming Passover dinner; and his friend who I had never even met before said “what do you guys even do during Passover, talk about your 401ks and investing in real estate?”

- Male, 22,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Southwest

”

“ One night after coming home from a Cross Country meet I went back to my room to find my roommates had a friend over. He started off the conversation talking about his dislike of refugees entering the US. Before I knew it he was talking about how Hitler wasn't such a bad guy and the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was exaggerated. I then said “you know I'm Jewish right?” And he responded “yeah I could tell from the moment you walked into the room.” -Goucher College

- Male, 24,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Northeast

”

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Offensive or threatening antisemitic comments made in person by another student.

Comments continued

“ I was in the school cafeteria freshman year when my friend’s roommate pointed to a guy at another table and said she didn’t like him and said “he’s only arrogant because he’s Jewish.” I told her I was Jewish and she shrugged it off and said “I wasn’t talking about you.” She didn’t actually apologize, however.

- Female, 22,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Southeast

”

“ My personal experiences revolved around being the butt of anti-Semitic “jokes” that might not have been said intentionally maliciously but still made me feel uncomfortable and ostracized.

- Female, 28,
Graduated from a private university/college in the Northeast

”

“ Someone used the word Kike as a funny word in a college wide presentation, and refused to apologize for it because he, a Black man, said I needed to focus more on the struggles Black people face than Jews. The student body President told me all Jewish men look alike and are ugly, also used to tell everyone I was rich (I wasn’t) and traveled out of country a lot (never have). She also held up a bag of bagels once yelling “look I’m more Jewish than you.”

- Female, 23,
Graduated from a private university/college in the Southwest

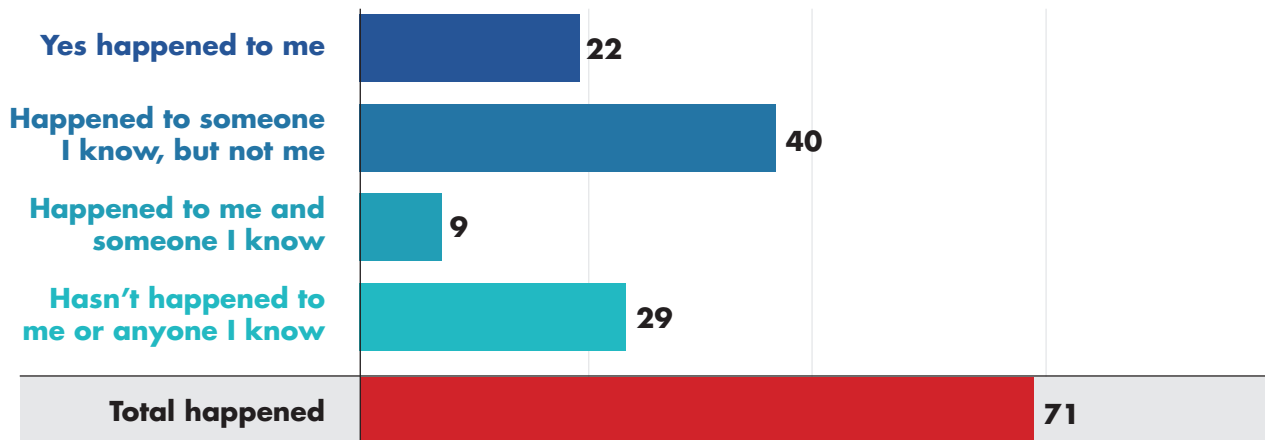
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Offensive or threatening antisemitic comments not made in person.

Someone sent you antisemitic messages that were offensive or threatening

All respondents

Please indicate if the incident has happened to you, has happened to someone you know but not you, has happened to you and someone you know, or hasn't happened to you or anyone you know.



“ I was airdropped antisemitic caricatures during orientation week. Students have said stuff to me. And more that I don't feel comfortable sharing.

- Male, 20,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Northeast ”

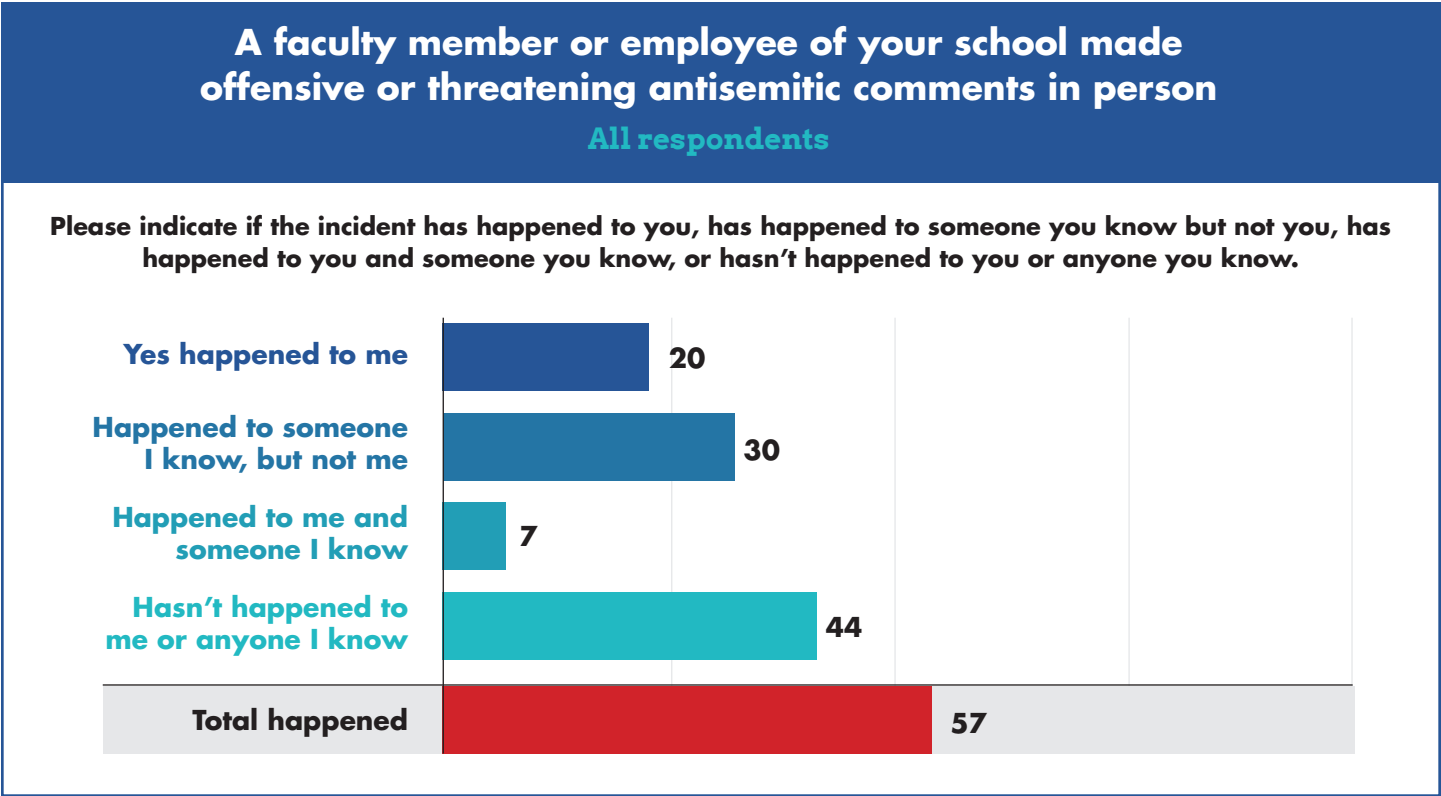
“ A situation happened at my school in which my name was released resulting in me getting anonymous death threats full of horrible antisemitism. The school refused to acknowledge any of it including them releasing my name. They said I could go to the police; but all I needed was the school to take accountability.

- Female, 22,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Northeast ”

“ I wrote an article unrelated to my Judaism for the campus newspaper. A classmate messaged the following, unprovoked: “Jews have an incredible amount of institutional power in this nation, and a Black woman is really no threat to you or your community. You comprise of 5% of this nation yet hold next to 30% of assets in Wall Street.”

- Female, 25,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Midwest ”

Faculty or school employee made an offensive or threatening antisemitic comment in person.



“ I had a professor make a horribly offensive analogy about the Holocaust. When I told her it was offensive, she gaslit me and said if I was so sensitive, I should find another career. There has been rising anti-Israel activity on-campus. At the same time, we have found swastikas and hate-speech from alt-right groups on campus.

- Female, 22,
Currently attends a state university/college in the West

”

“ A professor told me that he didn't have to give me another option to take a test when the test was on Rosh Hashanah. He said it wasn't his problem. Also when I reported instances of antisemitism on campus to the administration the response I got was and I quote "you have friends right?" As if that was an appropriate response to a student telling them there were antisemitic instances on campus.

- Female, 23,
Graduated from a private university/college in the Northeast

”

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Faculty or school employee made an offensive or threatening antisemitic comment in person.

Comments continued

“ One time I asked my accounting professor if I could please move my exam because of religious holidays (Rosh Hashanah), he answered back by saying “do you think I should change my schedule because of you being jewish?” I answered, “No, I am just politely asking for an extension or a new date since I won’t be able to complete the exam the day you have set for it.” He didn’t hesitate and answered, “I already told you that I am not jewish and I won’t change your exam.” After this the only option left for me was to talk to the head of accountancy. So, I went on told her the situation, and without thinking twice she told me, “of course the professor should give you a new date to complete your exam because of your religious holidays, and btw jag sameaj” It turns out the head of department is Jewish and she right away let the professor know of her answer regarding the moving for my exam. I completed my exam right before Rosh Hashanah. After the jag I was eager to see what I scored on the exam. I went to class the following morning and for my surprise I had failed the exam. I asked the professor and he told me “I didn’t have time to correct your exam, and I guessed what grade you deserved.” I politely answered him back, “Ok, I understand is there any way we can sit together and go over it?” The professor eagerly answered back to me “as you changed my schedule because of your jewish holiday, I am not willing to grade your work.” I ended dropping the class and getting a 4.0 the second time I took the course, but obviously with a different professor.

- Male, 20,

Currently attends a private university/college in the Northeast ”

“ A professor, when discussing the Jewish Diaspora in ancient Babylonia, said that “It seems that the Jewish version of this history may be distorted to make it seem worse than it was, as unsurprisingly many Jews were wealthy while in Babylon.”

- Female, 20,

Currently attends a state university/college in the West ”

“ Professors often made out of hand comments that supported antisemitic conspiracy theories against Israel, such as that Israelis harvest Palestinian organs or use Palestinian children as target practice.

- Female, 25,

Graduated from a private university/college in the Southeast ”

Continued on next page >



Faculty or school employee made an offensive or threatening antisemitic comment in person.

Comments continued

“ I took a course on US citizenship and equity at UC Berkeley. On the first day of class the Professor went down the roster, taking roll. When he got to my name, he stopped and began asking me antisemitic questions related to economic libel and the Rothschild conspiracy theory. My last name is Rothschild so I experience this kind of antisemitism constantly, but it was unnerving being outed in class at a University that is notoriously antisemitic. I never hid my last name nor my ethnicity until I went to Cal. But in all honesty this experience was just the tip of the iceberg at Cal. I would never encourage Jews to attend UCB.

- Female, 27,
Graduated from a state university/college in the West

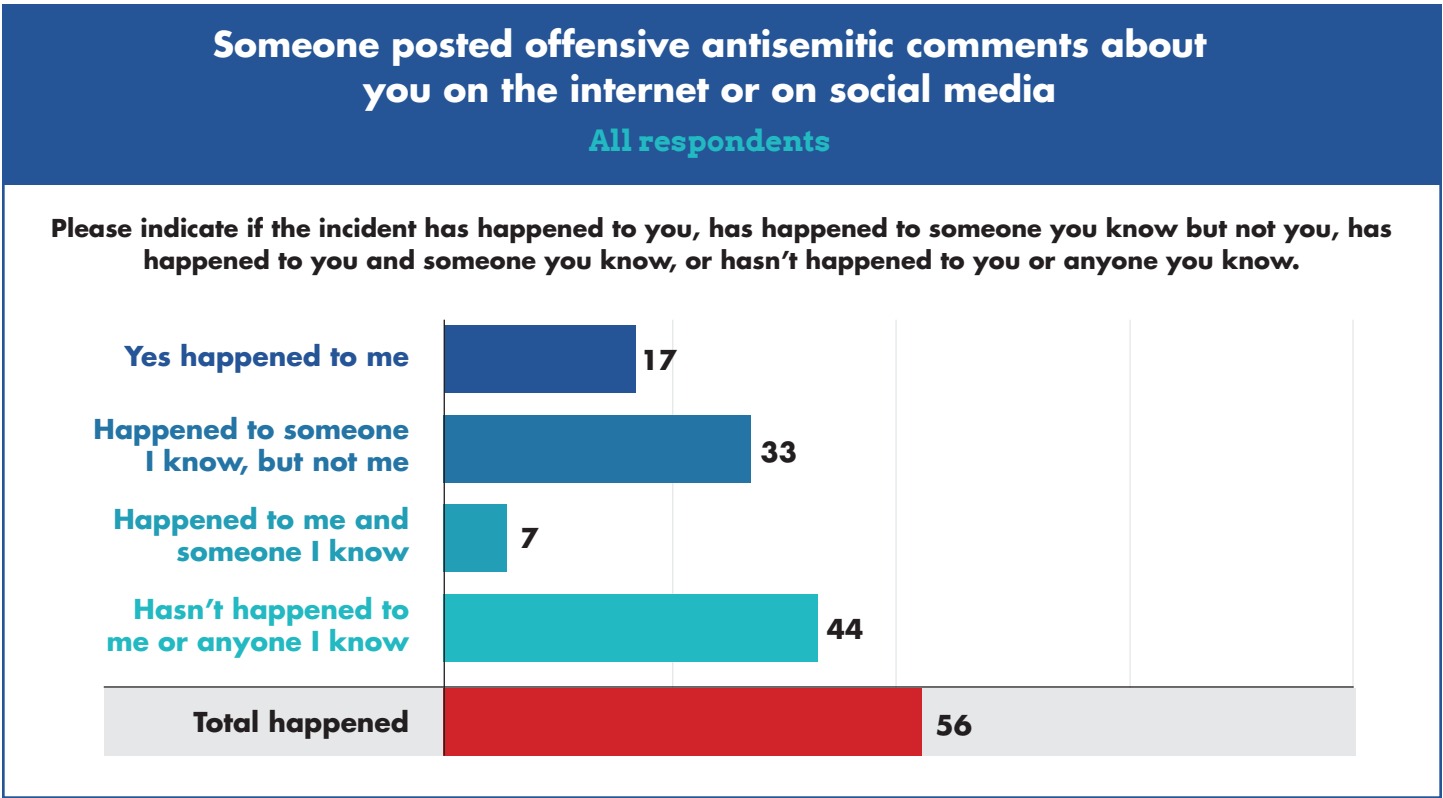
”

“ Long story but tldr. Professor was incredibly antisemitic (jews did 9/11; Jews own the media etc). Friend and I filed a 30 page report (and met with) multiple deans on his antisemitism. We received a 1.5 page letter stating that we misconstrued his comments and he did nothing wrong. Then they offered him tenure.

- Female, 25,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Northeast

”

Antisemitic comments posted online or on social media.



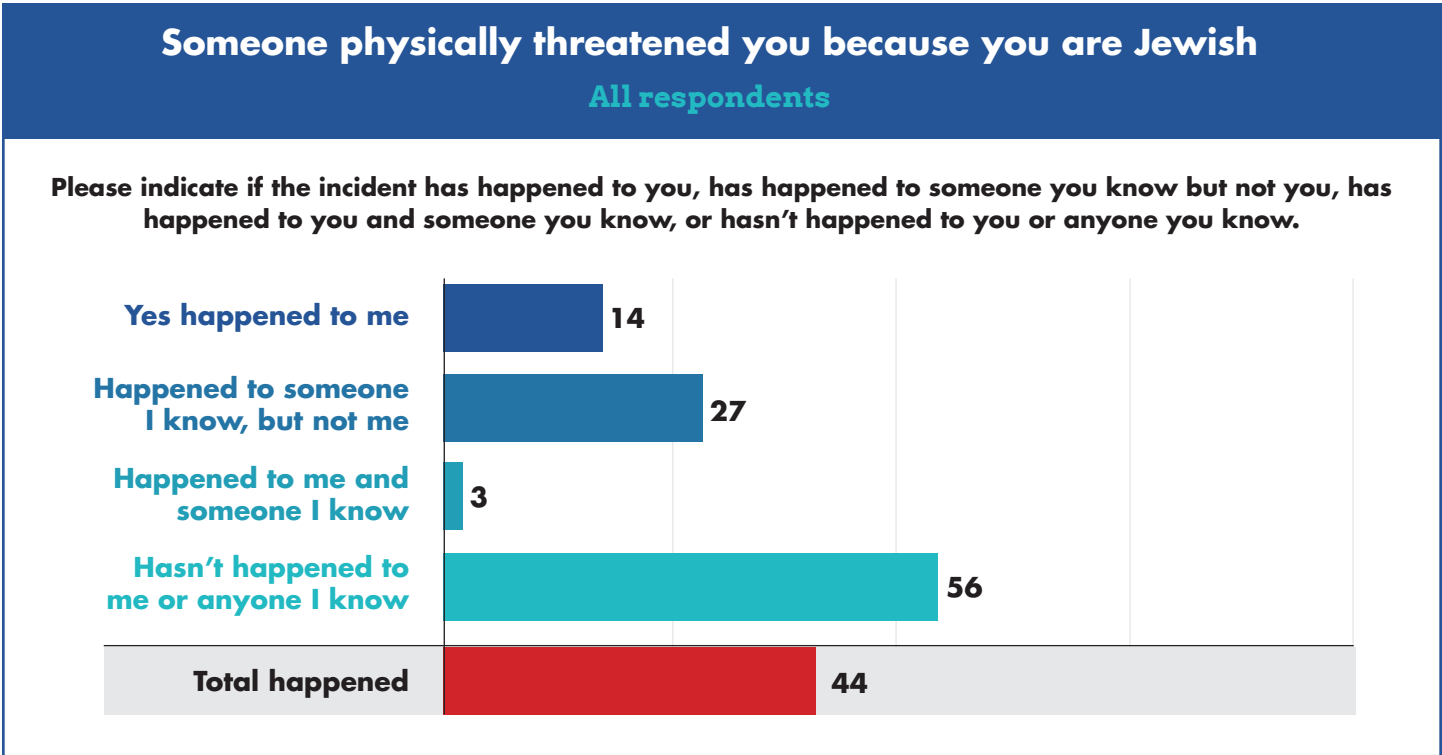
“ A student used our university’s official Instagram accounts to call Jewish students colonizers and demand they delete pro Israel stuff, even if it was something as unbiased as “2,000+ rockets launched at Israel” and, when reporting to the school, they did nothing to punish him.

- Female, 23,
Graduated from a private university/college in the Southwest ”

“ Someone at my school posted a video about all the reasons why the Holocaust was a good idea, nothing has happened to him yet.

- Female, 19,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Northeast ”

44% of Jewish students and grads were physically threatened because they are Jewish or know someone who was.



“ I was called a K!ke bltch and threatened physically.
- Female, 19,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Northeast ”

“ I was threatened and beaten at school.
- Male, 19,
Currently attends a private university/college in the West ”

“ In a required Freshman training class, a student repeatedly made violently antisemitic comments during diversity training week and after. Me and my friends nicely asked him to stop and explained the harm in what he was saying. He did not care. I informed the professor who handled it in class publicly and both of us filed reports. He yells “SHALOM” at me every time he sees me on campus. He is a student government representative. This was the first of many incidents I have experienced.
- Other, 21,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Southeast ”

Continued on next page >



44% of Jewish students and grads were physically threatened because they are Jewish or know someone who was.

Comments continued

“ While walking to class shortly after the Pittsburgh shooting, a fellow student attacked me. He had previously in classes given me the middle finger even though no previous interaction had ever taken place. This student tackled me and attempted to beat me before another student pushed him out of the way. I reported the incident but the university said that there was nothing they could do because there is not a big enough Jewish population within the school.

- Male, 23,

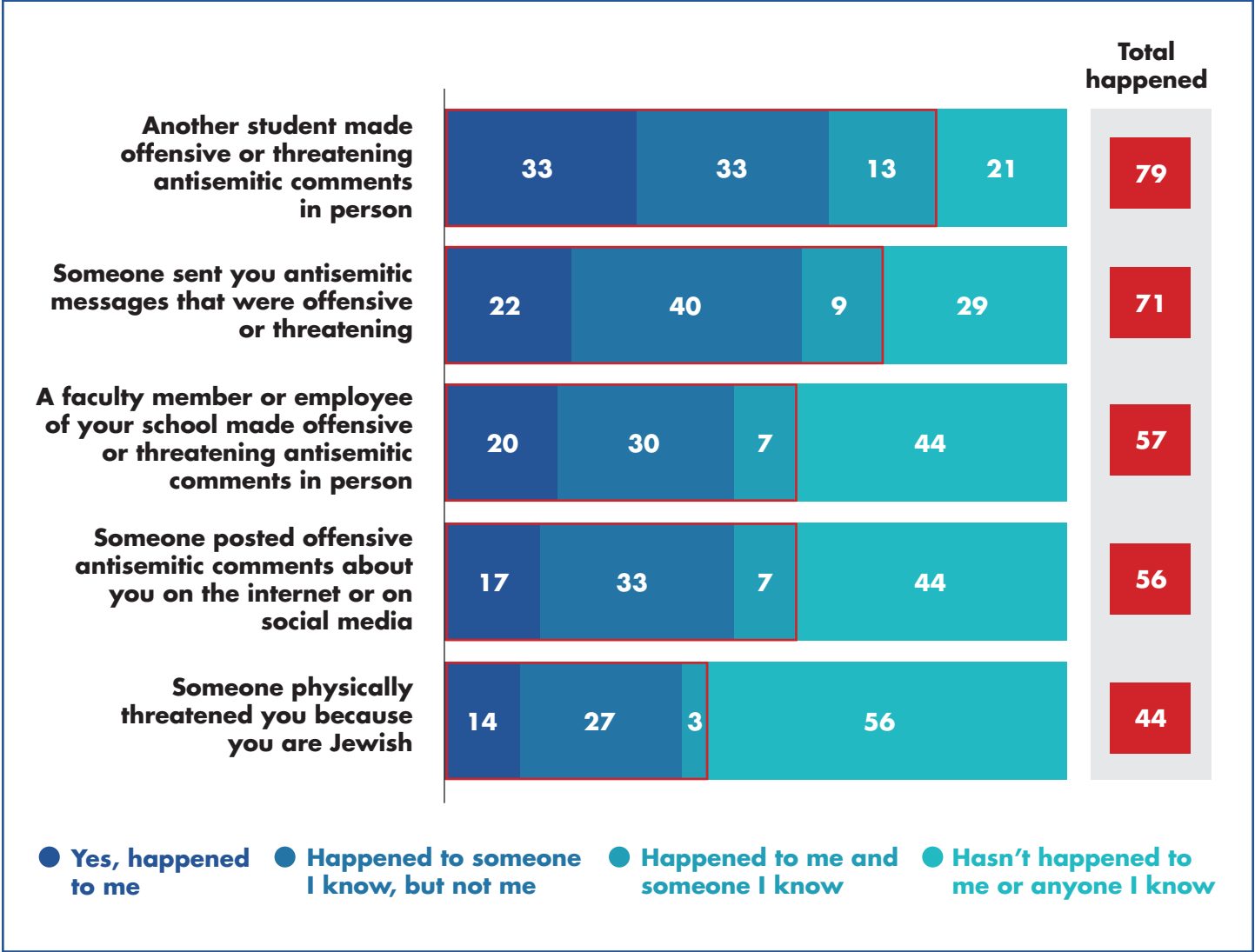
Currently attends a private university/college in the Midwest

”

For Jewish college students and recent grads, college campuses are a place to experience real-life antisemitism.

Below is a list of some common bias-related incidents that take place on college campuses. For each one, please indicate if the incident has happened to you, has happened to someone you know but not you, has happened to you and someone you know, or hasn't happened to you or anyone you know.

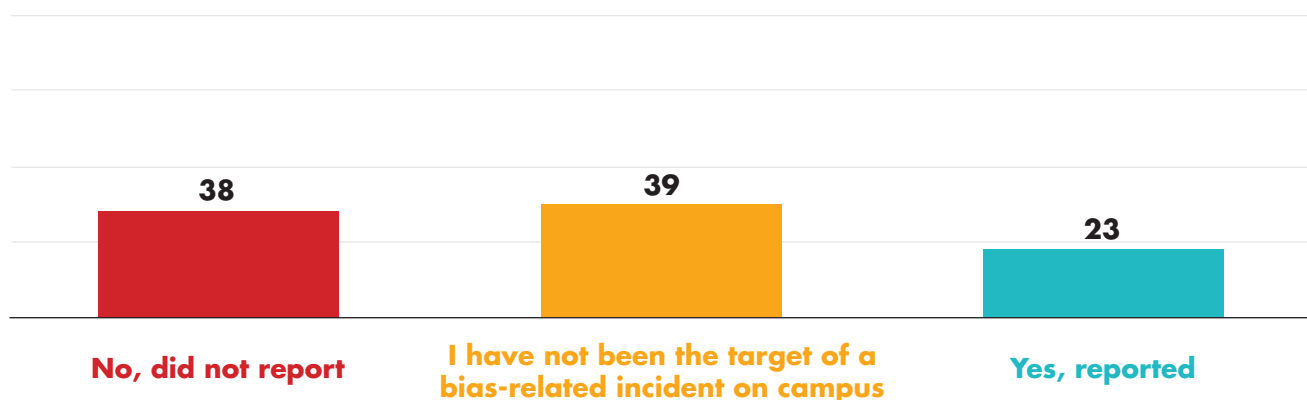
All respondents



Most students and grads who were the target of an antisemitic incident on campus **did not report the incident.**

When antisemitic incidents occur on college campuses, some students choose to report the incident, but many do not want to or have time to report it. If you have been the target of an antisemitic incident on campus, did you report the incident?

All respondents



“ One of my friends had her mezuzah repeatedly knocked off her apartment door, and with each repeated removal (not by the apartment complex- just other students) it was placed in more and more complicated and frustrating places to hide it so she presumably wouldn't continue to put it back. I mentioned to her that she should report it to campus police, but she was understandably worried about either causing a scene, or alternatively, no one taking the report seriously.

- Female, 27,
Graduated from a state university/college in the Southeast

”

“ My suitemate and I are both notably Jewish and someone wrote “Jesus dies for your sins” on our door. We didn't have a mezuzah for that reason but whoever wrote that knew we were Jewish. We spoke to our RAs about it and then later that week, the same people wrote “snitches get stitches”. We chose not to report it higher up and the school was supportive of us after this incident, but it was just scary since my school is supposedly very safe for Jews (WashU).

- Female, 19,
Currently attends a private university/college in the Midwest

”

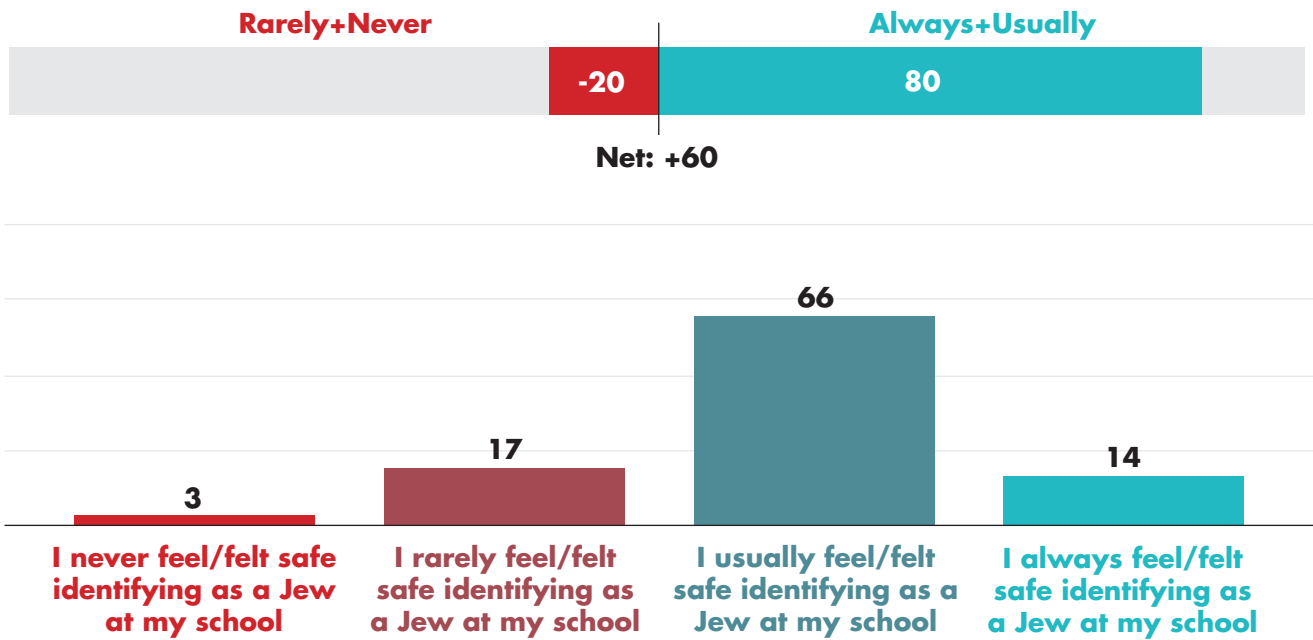


SENSE OF SAFETY

Most students and grads said they feel/felt safe identifying as Jewish at their school.

And thinking about the following statements, which one comes closest to your own personal view?

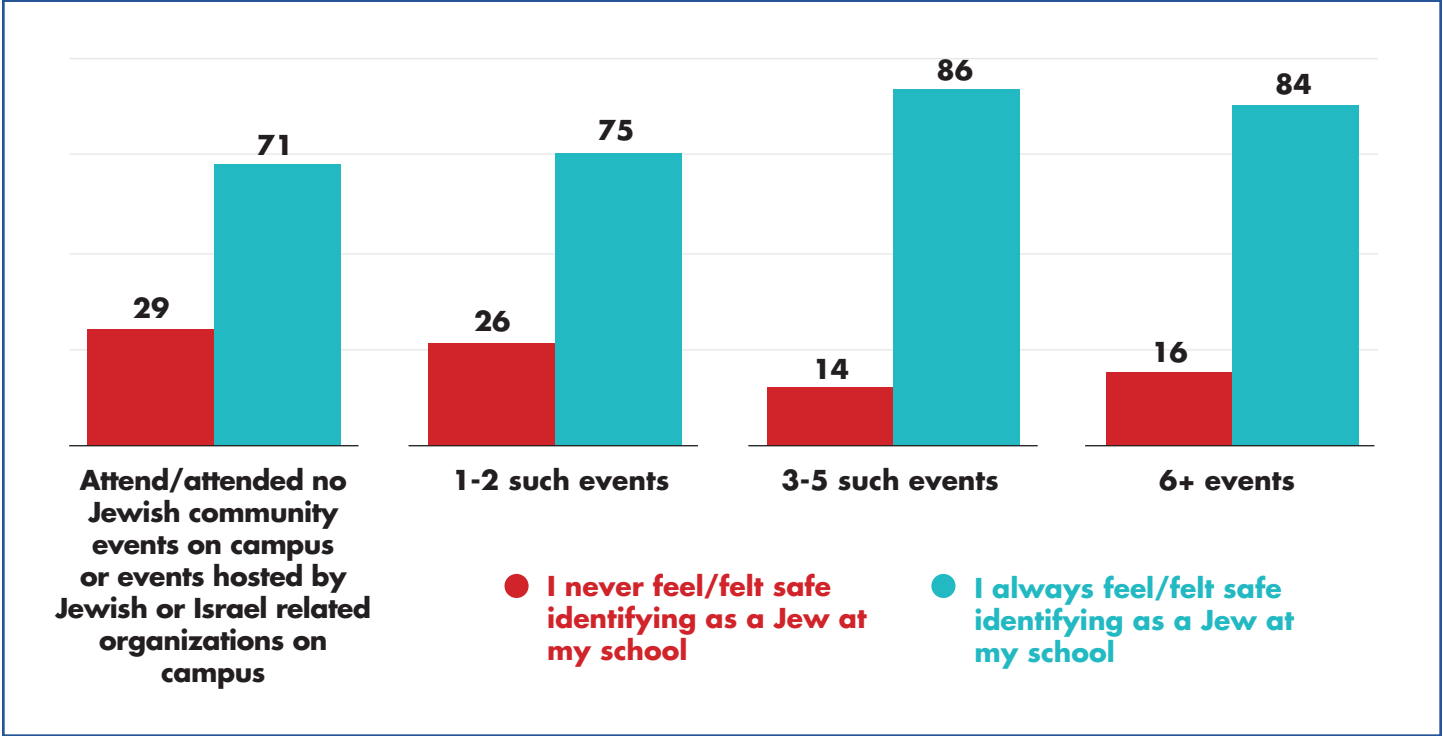
All respondents



The students and grads who attended more Jewish community events on campus felt safer identifying as a Jew on campus.

And in thinking about the following statements, which one comes closest to your own personal view?

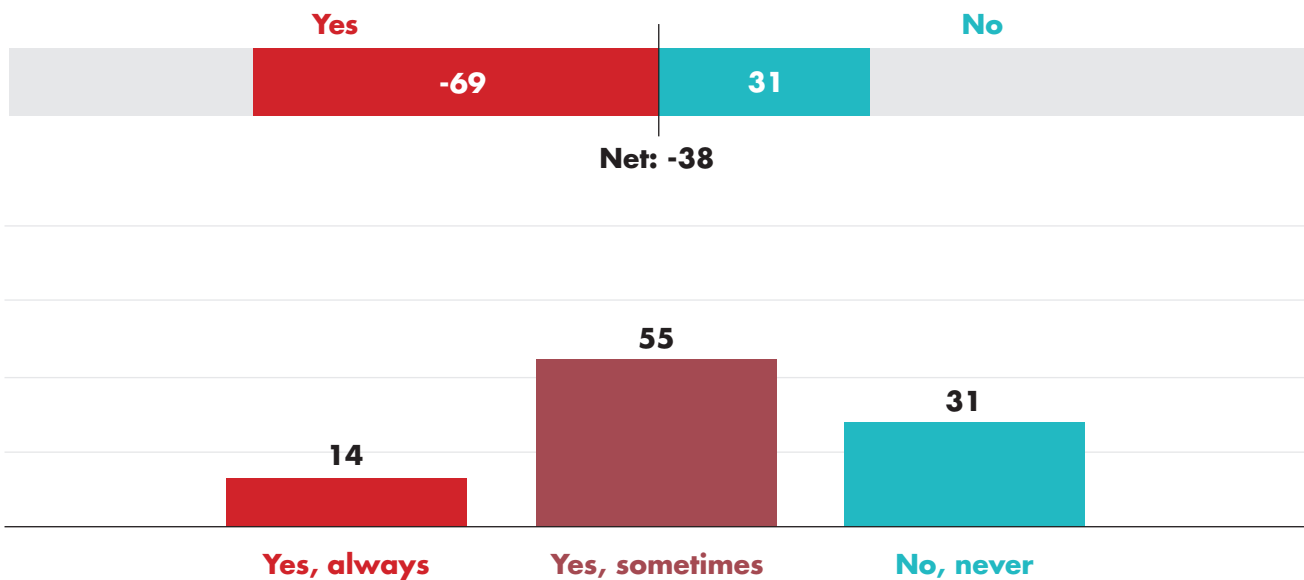
All respondents by attended Jewish events/events hosted by Jewish/Israel orgs



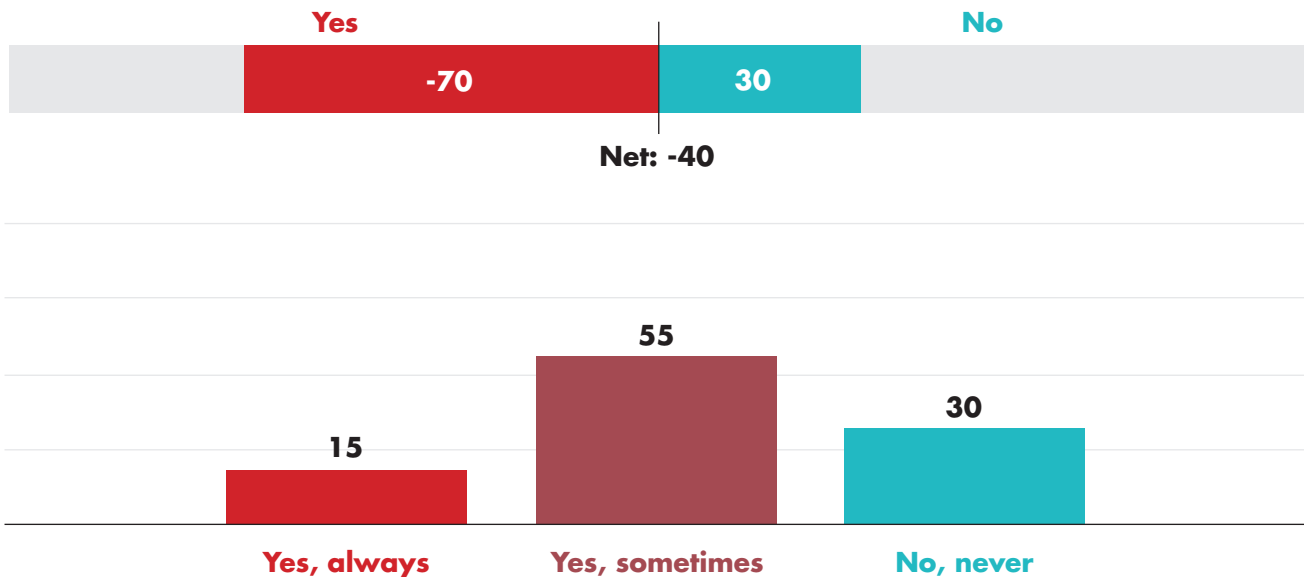
69% of students and grads say they have avoided certain places, events, or situations at school because they are Jewish.

Do/Did you ever avoid certain places, events, or situations at school out of concern for your safety or comfort as a Jew?

All respondents



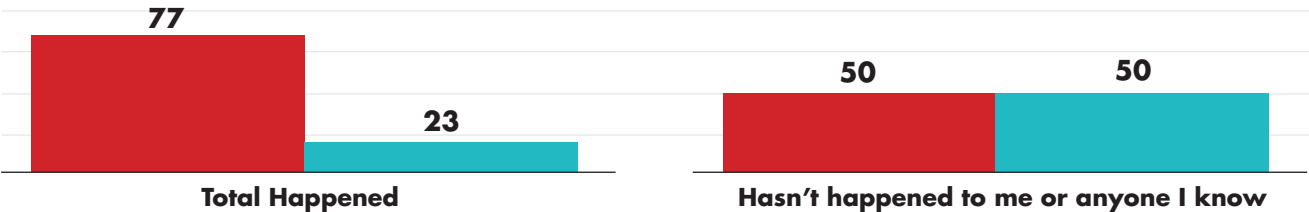
Current Students Only



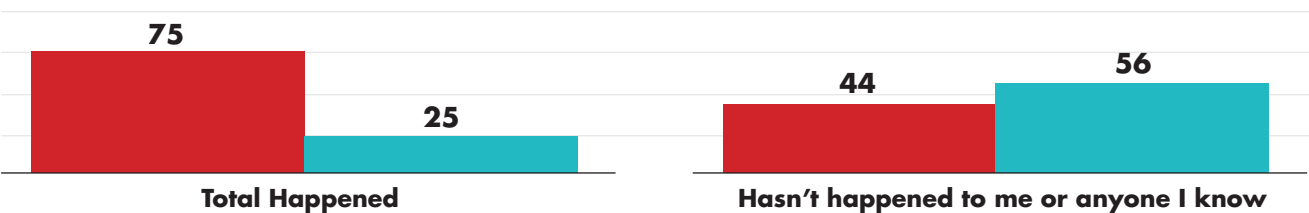
Students and grads who have **not experienced an antisemitic incident** are **less likely to avoid places, events, or situations on campus.**

Do/Did you ever avoid certain places, events, or situations at school out of concern for your safety or comfort as a Jew?

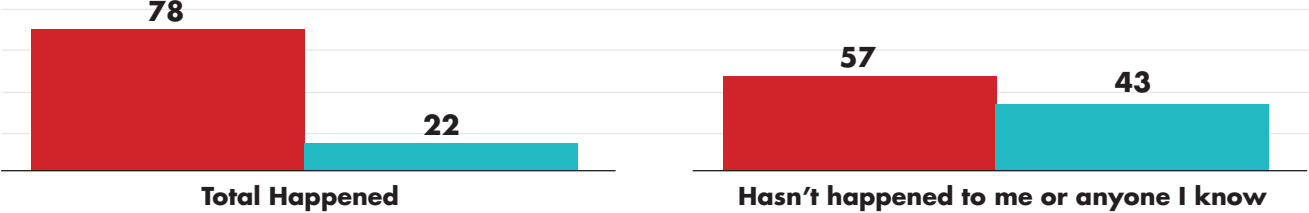
All respondents by someone sent you antisemitic messages that were offensive or threatening



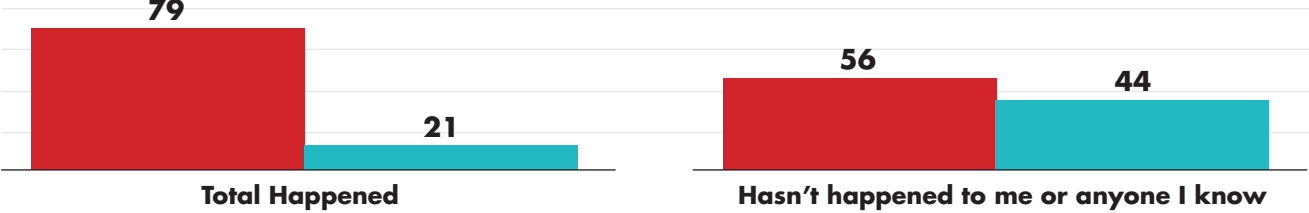
All respondents by another student made offensive or threatening comments in person



All respondents by a faculty member or employee of your school made offensive or threatening antisemitic comments in person



All respondents by someone posted offensive antisemitic comments about you on the internet or on social media

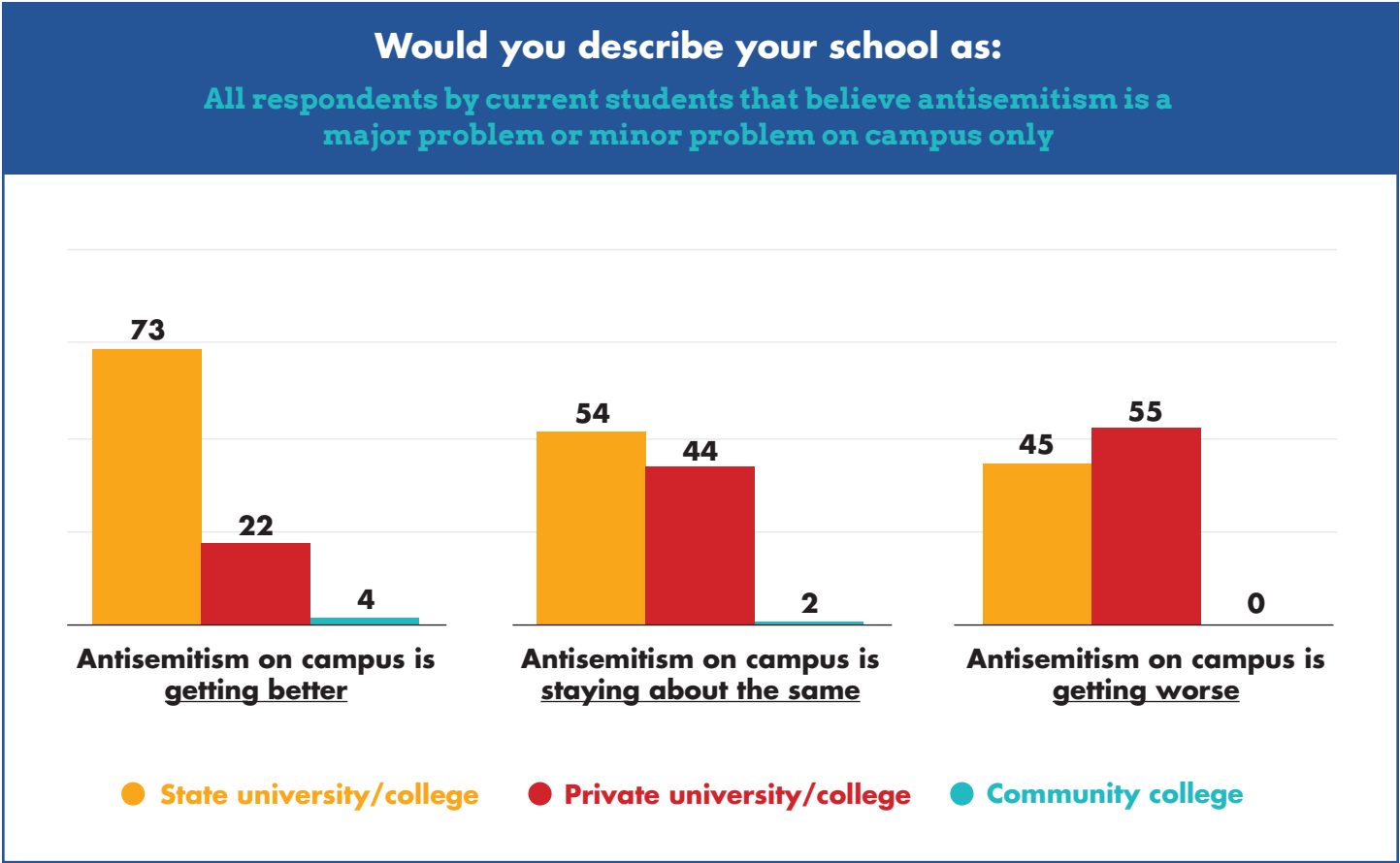


● Yes, always + sometimes ● No, never



PUBLIC V. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

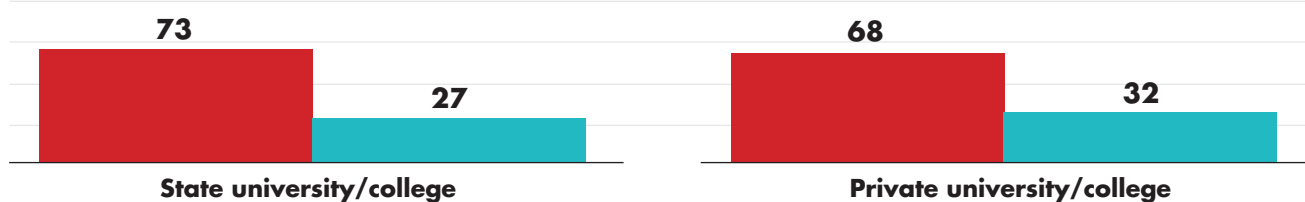
The majority of students who say antisemitism is getting worse on their campus attend a private school.



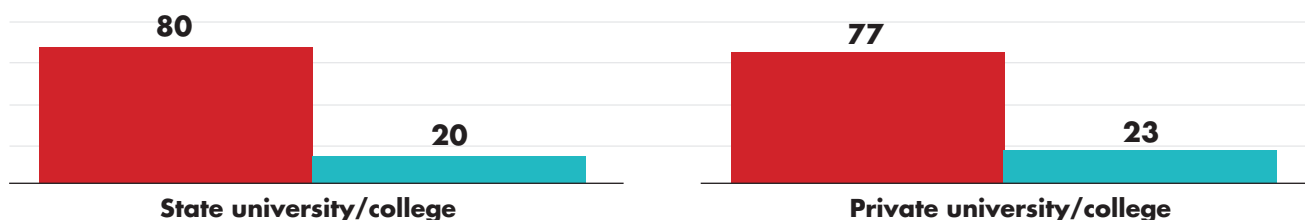
No difference between public and private schools.

Please indicate if the incident has happened to you, has happened to someone you know but not you, has happened to you and someone you know, or hasn't happened to you or anyone you know.

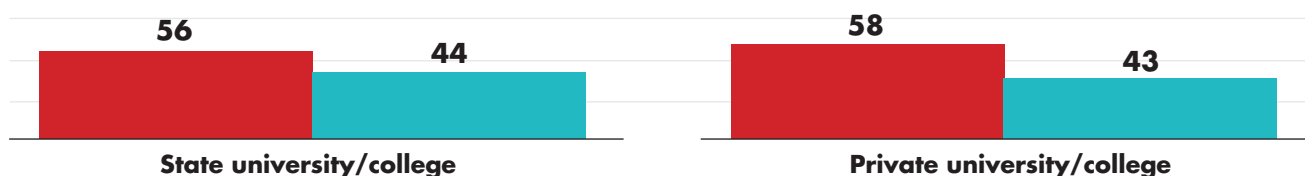
All respondents by someone sent you antisemitic messages that were offensive or threatening



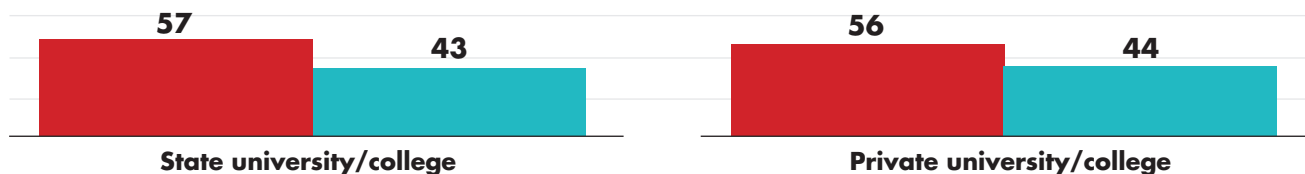
All respondents by another student made offensive or threatening comments in person



All respondents by a faculty member or employee of your school made offensive or threatening antisemitic comments in person



All respondents by someone posted offensive antisemitic comments about you on the internet or on social media



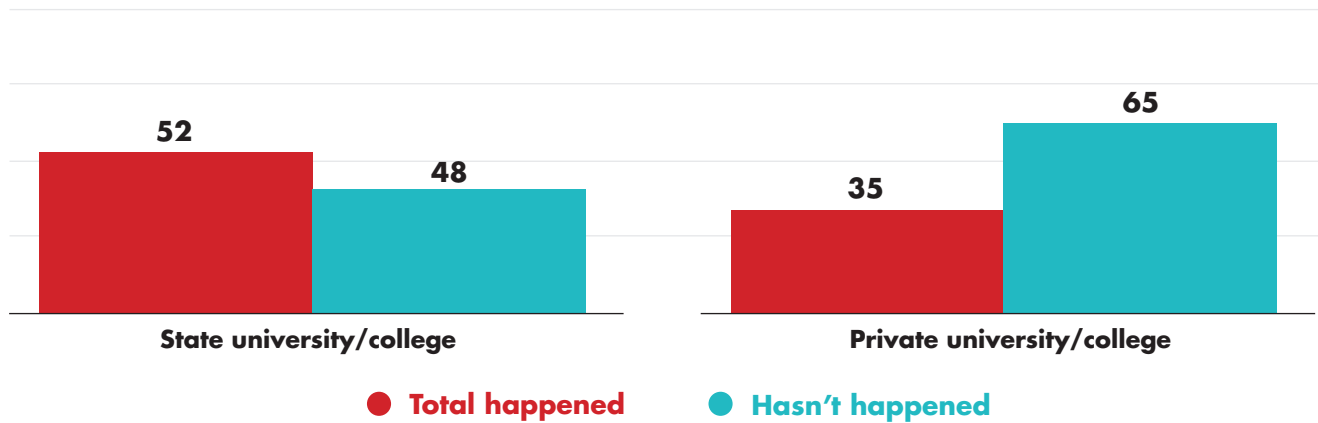
● Total happened

● Hasn't happened

Physical antisemitism more reported among public students and grads.

Please indicate if the incident has happened to you, has happened to someone you know but not you, has happened to you and someone you know, or hasn't happened to you or anyone you know.

Someone physically threatened you because you are Jewish



“

I was having a conversation with a guy in my dorm and when I mentioned I was Jewish he made a joke about gassing me and when I explained that it was hurtful and not funny he spit on me.

- Female, 20,
Currently attends a state university/college in the Midwest

”

UNDERSTANDING THE SAMPLE

Understanding the sample

Nearly 60/40 split of current students and graduates

All respondents

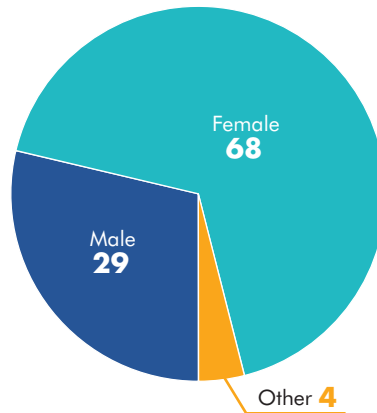
Are you currently enrolled in, or have you ever graduated from an undergraduate, 4-year college or university?



Most were women

All respondents

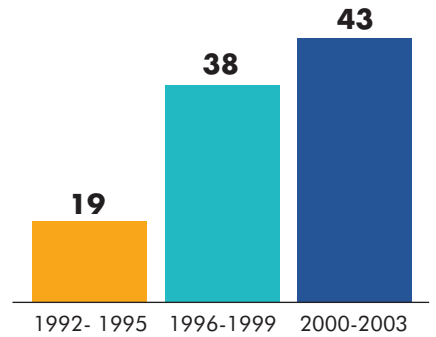
Gender:



Age according to year born

All respondents

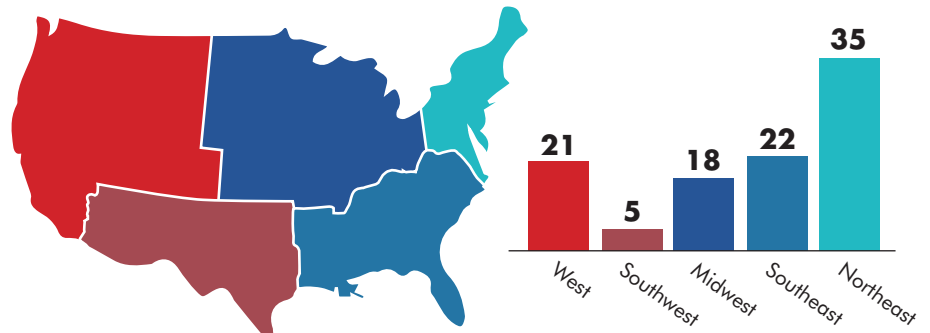
In what year were you born?



From across the U.S.

All respondents

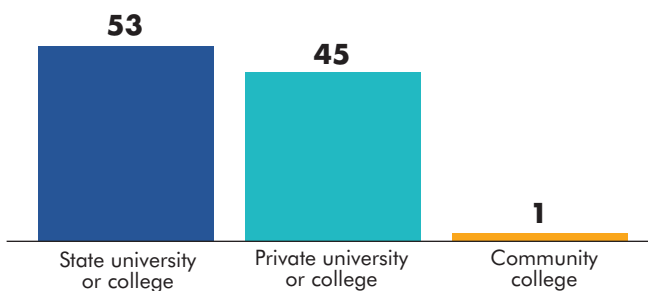
Are you currently enrolled in, or have you ever graduated from an undergraduate, 4-year college or university?



Attended both public and private schools

All respondents

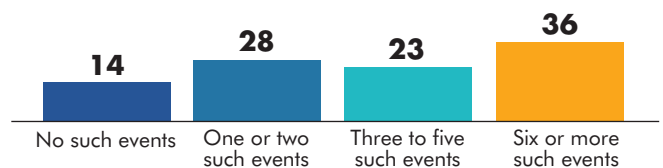
Would you describe your school as...



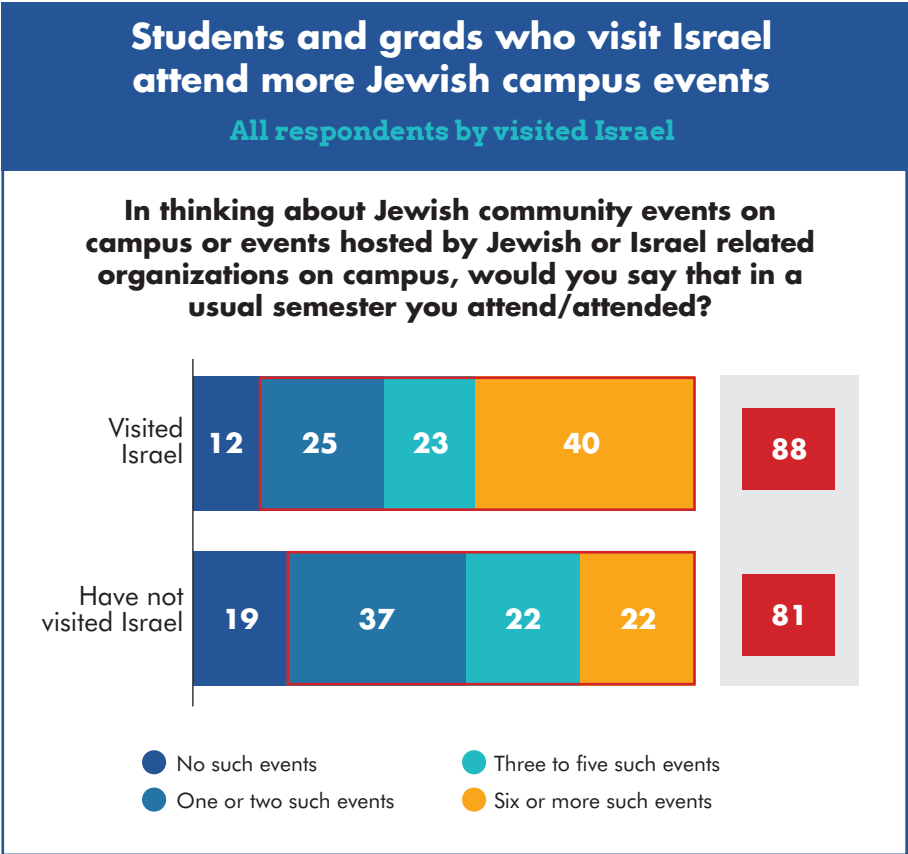
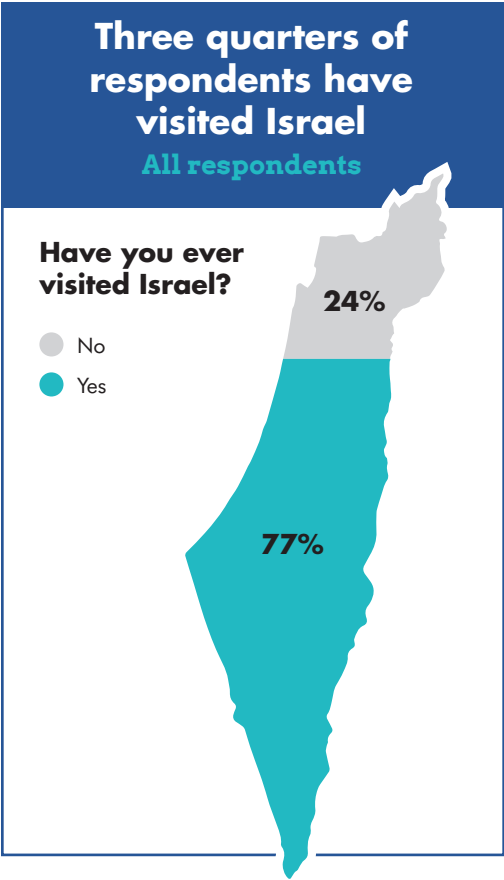
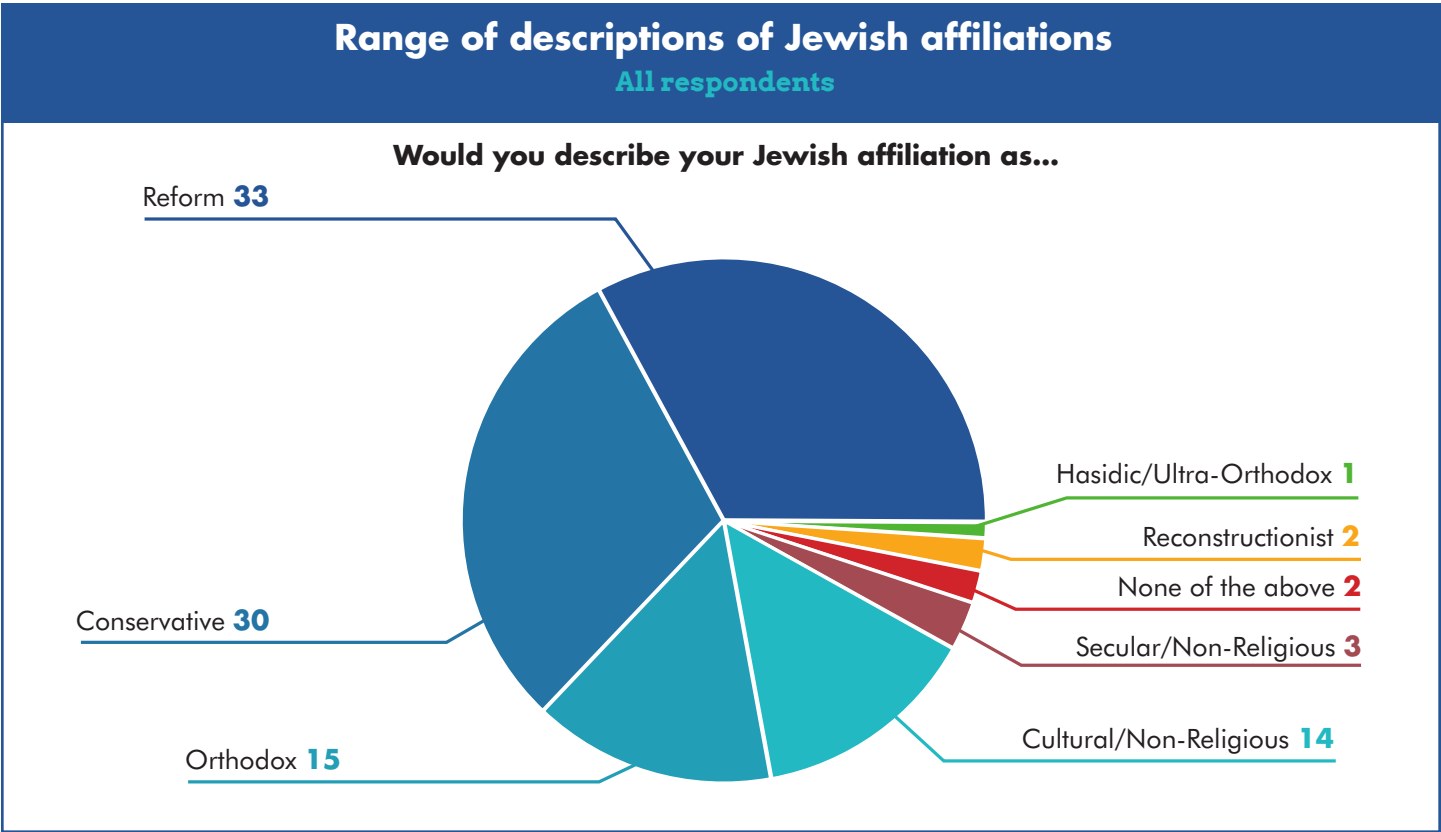
Range of levels of activity in Jewish life on campus

All respondents

In thinking about Jewish community events on campus or events hosted by Jewish or Israel related organizations on campus, would you say that in a usual semester you attend/attended?



Understanding the sample



Stay up-to-date on and get involved by signing up at:

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info@campusfairness.org

About Alums for Campus Fairness

Alums for Campus Fairness (ACF) is the unified alumni voice on issues of antisemitism, demonization of Israel, and bigotry. With over forty chapters and nearly 10,000 members, ACF positions thousands of alumni on the front lines of key issues at their alma maters and works to ensure that universities remain pillars of open dialogue and equal opportunity for all students.