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*Antisemitism on America's College and University Campuses:
Current Conditions and the Federal Response*
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Commissioners Garza, Nourse, and members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the critically important subject of antisemitism on America's college and university campuses. I am Kevin Rachlin, Vice President of Government Relations for the Nexus Project, a nonpartisan organization that works to combat antisemitism, uphold democratic values, and protect free speech. I have previously testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on these issues, and I appreciate the Commission's bipartisan decision to examine the federal response to this growing crisis.

I want to be direct with this Commission from the outset: antisemitism on America's campuses is real, it is serious, and it demands a thoughtful, effective response. But I also want to place this crisis in a broader context that is too often missing from the conversation. Antisemitism does not exist in isolation. It is deeply connected to other forms of bigotry—racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, xenophobia—and it thrives in environments where democratic norms are weakened and where any community's civil rights are eroded. The fight against antisemitism is inseparable from the fight against all forms of hatred, and both are inseparable from the preservation of American democracy itself. When we get the response to antisemitism right, we strengthen the institutions and norms that protect every American. When we get it wrong—when we weaponize Jewish pain for political purposes to score cheap points while failing to focus on and invest in what actually works—we make the problem worse for Jews and for everyone.

The data paint an alarming picture. According to the FBI's most recent Hate Crime Statistics report, anti-Jewish hate crimes reached an all-time high of 1,938 incidents in 2024—a 5.8 percent increase over 2023 and the highest number ever recorded since the FBI began collecting data in 1991.¹ These incidents included 178 physical assaults against Jewish individuals. Anti-Jewish hate crimes accounted for 69 percent of all religion-based hate crimes, despite Jews comprising roughly 2 percent of the American population. That translates to more than five antisemitic hate crimes every single day.

But this Commission should understand that this surge in anti-Jewish hatred is part of a broader crisis of hate in America. The FBI's 2024 data recorded 11,679 total hate crime incidents—the

second-highest year on record.² Anti-Black hate crimes remained the single largest category. Anti-Muslim and anti-Arab hate crimes remained at alarming levels. Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes totaled 2,390. The same forces that fuel antisemitism—conspiracy thinking, dehumanization, the erosion of democratic norms—fuel hatred against all of these communities, and any strategy that fights antisemitism while ignoring or aggravating other forms of hatred will not succeed.

The campus dimension of this crisis is equally stark—and worsening. According to AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America 2025 Report, released just days before this hearing, 42 percent of current or recent American Jewish college students report experiencing antisemitism at least once during their time on campus—up from 35 percent in 2024.³ One in four Jewish college students—25 percent—report having felt excluded from a group or event because of their Jewish identity. Among young Jewish adults ages 18 to 29, nearly half—47 percent—say they were personally targeted by antisemitism in the past year, compared to 28 percent for those age 30 and over. The 2024 data, which remains instructive for trend analysis, found that nearly one-third of Jewish students—32 percent—reported that faculty members on their campuses had promoted antisemitism or created hostile learning environments, and 43 percent had avoided expressing their views on Israel out of fear.⁴

These numbers describe a campus environment in which a significant share of Jewish students feel they cannot fully participate in the educational experience they are paying for and entitled to—an environment in which many feel compelled to hide their identity, self-censor, or avoid campus spaces altogether. The broader AJC data tells a story of sustained crisis. In 2025, 55 percent of American Jews reported altering their behavior out of fear of antisemitism—continuing a sharp upward trajectory from 38 percent in 2022, to 46 percent in 2023, to 56 percent in 2024. The percentage of Jews who avoided publicly wearing or displaying items that could identify them as Jewish nearly doubled from 23 percent in 2022 to 41 percent in 2025. Two-thirds of American Jews—66 percent—say Jews in the United States are less secure than a year ago, and an overwhelming 91 percent say they feel less safe as a result of three violent antisemitic attacks in 2025: the Passover arson attack on the Pennsylvania Governor’s residence, the murders of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, and the firebombing of a Boulder, Colorado, march in support of hostages held by Hamas.⁵ These are not abstract survey responses. They describe a community living in fear in the country that has been its safest home in the diaspora in two millennia.

No student—Jewish, Muslim, Black, Asian, LGBTQ+, or any other identity—should have to hide who they are to participate in campus life. When Jewish students look over their shoulders before putting on a Star of David necklace, that is unacceptable. When Muslim students fear wearing a hijab on campus, that is also unacceptable. When any student’s identity becomes a source of danger in an institution of learning, American democracy itself is diminished.

The AJC's 2025 parallel survey of the U.S. general public underscores why punitive enforcement alone cannot solve this problem. Thirty percent of American adults either have never heard the term "antisemitism" or have heard it but cannot define it. Fewer than half—45 percent—of general public respondents reported personally seeing or hearing any antisemitic incidents in the last 12 months, compared to the 73 percent of Jewish Americans who experienced antisemitism online alone. Even among Americans who personally know a Jewish person, only 54 percent had witnessed antisemitic incidents—and among those who do not know any Jewish people, the figure drops to 32 percent. You cannot enforce your way out of a crisis that a third of the public cannot name and that more than half have never witnessed. These numbers are a case study in why education, relationship-building, and investment in genuine understanding must be the foundation of any serious strategy—and why an approach built primarily on deportation, defunding, and surveillance is structurally incapable of addressing the underlying problem.⁶

Part of what makes campus antisemitism so difficult to address is the genuine complexity of identifying what is antisemitic conduct. This challenge does not diminish the reality of antisemitism—it makes precision all the more essential. Getting this distinction right matters, because both under-identification and over-identification of antisemitism carry serious consequences.

When antisemitism goes unidentified or unaddressed, Jewish students suffer real harm—they are excluded, threatened, and denied equal access to educational opportunities. But when the label "antisemitism" is applied too broadly—it discredits the very effort to combat antisemitism, chills constitutionally protected speech, alienates the potential allies that Jewish students need most, and erodes the First Amendment protections that safeguard every American's right to dissent.

It was precisely this challenge that led the Nexus Task Force—a group of leading scholars at universities where campus protests have taken place, affiliated with the Bard Center for the Study of Hate—to develop *A Campus Guide to Identifying Antisemitism in a Time of Perplexity*, released in September 2024.⁷ The Campus Guide provides a framework rooted in scholarly expertise and practical experience to help administrators, educators, and students recognize and address antisemitic behavior and rhetoric while safeguarding free speech, academic freedom, and safety.

The Campus Guide proceeds from several core principles that this Commission should consider as it develops its recommendations. First, antisemitism is an enduring, malleable, and ancient prejudice that takes many different—even contradictory—forms. It cannot be reduced to a single definition or a checklist. Second, intent matters, though words and actions can be antisemitic even absent explicit intent when their impact impedes Jews' ability to participate as equals in campus life. Third, there is speech that may be offensive but is not directed against Jews as Jews—and there is political speech that may be deeply uncomfortable for many Jewish students but is not antisemitic. Making these distinctions is difficult but necessary.

The Guide offers screening questions to help determine whether specific expressions are antisemitic. It asks whether a statement promotes traditional antisemitic tropes—conspiracy theories about Jewish control of governments, media, or banking; antisemitic symbols or imagery; Holocaust denial. It asks whether conduct advocates violence against Jews or Jewish institutions, or discriminates against Jews through social exclusion or denial of equal rights. And critically, it asks whether a statement conflates Jews with Israel—holding all Jews collectively responsible for actions of the Israeli state, assuming dual loyalty, or assuming that all Jews are Zionists and excluding or threatening them on that basis.

The Nexus Campus Guide’s most important contribution is that it urges colleges and universities to prioritize education and protection over punishment and recrimination—an approach rooted in their fundamental identity as educational institutions. This approach is not only more consistent with the mission of the university—it is more likely to actually change minds and behavior. It is also the approach most consistent with the democratic values that undergird American higher education: open inquiry, the free exchange of ideas, and the protection of dissent even when that dissent is uncomfortable.

Let me be clear about something before I turn to the federal response: many universities have failed their Jewish students, especially after October 7. Administrators were slow to respond to harassment, inconsistent in applying their own codes of conduct, and in some cases indifferent to Jewish students’ legitimate fears. The impulse to hold institutions accountable for those failures is understandable and, in many cases, justified. The question before this Commission is not whether the federal government should act at all, but whether the specific actions taken have been designed to protect Jewish students—or whether they have been shaped by a political agenda that ultimately makes the problem worse.

This Commission’s investigation cannot be complete without a thorough examination of the Heritage Foundation’s Project Esther and the degree to which the current administration has adopted it as a blueprint for federal action to combat antisemitism on campus. Understanding this connection is essential to evaluating whether the federal response to campus antisemitism has been designed to protect Jewish students—or to advance an ideological agenda that ultimately endangers them.

Project Esther was published by the Heritage Foundation on October 7, 2024—the one-year anniversary of the Hamas massacre.⁸ Described by Politico as “a lesser-known blueprint from the same creators of Project 2025,” it lays out a sweeping strategy to brand a broad range of critics of Israeli government policy as part of a “ Hamas Support Network”—a fabricated umbrella category encompassing Palestinian solidarity organizations, progressive nonprofits, civil liberties groups, and even some mainstream Jewish organizations—so that they could, in the document’s own words, be “deported, defunded, sued, fired, expelled, ostracized and otherwise excluded.”⁹

Three facts about Project Esther are critical for this Commission to understand. First, no major American Jewish organization participated in drafting it or has endorsed it.¹⁰ Its primary authors and supporters are evangelical Christian organizations, including the Family Research Council and the Faith and Freedom Coalition—groups tied to Christian Zionist theology and, in some cases, the New Apostolic Reformation.¹¹ That a Christian nationalist organization has appointed itself the arbiter of what constitutes antisemitism—over the objections of the Jewish community itself—should concern every member of this Commission.

Second, Project Esther focuses exclusively on left-wing critics of Israel while completely ignoring right-wing antisemitism.¹² It makes no mention of Proud Boys, white nationalist movements, neo-Nazi groups, the 2017 Charlottesville rally where marchers chanted “Jews will not replace us,” or the 2018 Tree of Life synagogue massacre—the deadliest antisemitic attack in American history—where the shooter targeted Jews for allegedly helping immigrants. This is not an incidental gap. When asked to explain why Project Esther omitted right-wing antisemitism entirely, the Heritage Foundation's head of antisemitism operations, James Carafano, stated bluntly: “White supremacists are not my problem because white supremacists are not part of being conservative.”¹³ Intelligence assessments across both Democratic and Republican administrations have consistently found that the overwhelming majority of antisemitic violence in the United States comes from domestic far-right extremists. Any strategy that ignores this reality is not a strategy to protect Jews—it is a strategy to exploit Jewish fear.

Third, and most alarmingly, the current administration has systematically adopted Project Esther’s recommendations as federal policy. A May 2025 New York Times investigation found that the administration had called for or acted upon more than half of Project Esther’s proposals.¹⁴ Heritage Foundation officials acknowledged “clear parallels” between their recommendations and administration actions.¹⁵ The implementation of these recommendations from Project Esther has been swift and far-reaching:

Executive Order 14188, signed January 29, 2025, directed agencies to use “all available and appropriate legal tools” to combat antisemitism, while its accompanying fact sheet threatened: “To all the resident aliens who joined in the pro-jihadist protests, we put you on notice: come 2025, we will find you, and we will deport you.”¹⁶

Deportation of students and legal residents for constitutionally protected speech. Mahmoud Khalil, a lawful permanent resident and Columbia University graduate, was arrested by ICE agents in March 2025 and detained in Louisiana—not for any criminal act, but for his role as a lead negotiator in campus protests. Rümeyssa Öztürk, a Tufts doctoral student, was grabbed off a public street by plainclothes agents and forced into an unmarked car. Government documents later revealed that officials acknowledged these students were “likely not removable” under terrorism statutes and that their conduct “could be seen as protected speech.”¹⁷ The administration proceeded anyway.

Weaponized defunding of universities. The revocation of \$400 million in grants and contracts from Columbia University and warning letters to 60 institutions were framed as antisemitism enforcement.¹⁸ But in practice, these actions have been used as leverage to compel universities to suppress political speech, discipline students and faculty for their viewpoints, and accept conditions that have nothing to do with protecting Jewish students from harassment or violence.

A Joint Task Force to Combat Antisemitism spanning the Departments of Justice, Education, Health and Human Services, and GSA—an unprecedented coordination of federal enforcement power that, rather than focusing on hate crimes and civil rights enforcement, has been oriented toward suppressing political advocacy and punishing institutional dissent.¹⁹

Social media surveillance of visa applicants and holders for “antisemitic” content, with the Department of Homeland Security announcing it would screen social media accounts—using expansive and politically charged definitions that risk capturing protected political expression.²⁰

Each of these actions was presented as a response to a genuine problem - and antisemitism on campus is a real issue. But every one of these actions also has a direct analog in Project Esther’s recommendations. And every one of them represents an expansion of government power that, once established, can be turned against any community or any form of dissent. The deportation powers being tested on Palestinian solidarity activists today can be used against Jewish activists tomorrow—or against any American who challenges government policy. The defunding mechanisms used to pressure universities over political speech related to Israel in the name of protecting Jews can be used to punish universities over any subject the government disfavors. This is not a hypothetical concern. The same administration that claims to be fighting antisemitism has simultaneously gutted civil rights enforcement across the board—rolling back protections for LGBTQ+ students, dismantling DEI programs, and weakening Title IX enforcement.²¹ The tools built in the name of fighting antisemitism are already being used to attack the rights of other communities.

In October 2025, the Nexus Project released *The Shofar Report: A Call to Defend Democracy and Confront Antisemitism* as a comprehensive alternative to the Project Esther framework.²² The Shofar Report was developed with contributions from leading scholars and advocates including my fellow witness Amy Spitalnick of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Leading Expert on White Nationalism Eric Ward, J Street CEO Jeremy Ben-Ami, UCLA professors Dov Waxman and David Myers, historian Lila Corwin Berman, former U.S. envoy for combating antisemitism Hannah Rosenthal, and author Emily Tamkin, among others.

The Shofar Report is grounded in a historical reality that this Commission should take seriously: *Jews have thrived in societies with strong democratic institutions, robust civil rights protections,*

independent universities, and a vibrant civil society. They have been endangered in societies where those institutions are weak or under attack—even, or perhaps especially, when Jewish safety is offered as the justification for those attacks.

The AJC's own 2025 data confirm this connection. Seventy-seven percent of American Jews and 64 percent of U.S. adults say they have less trust in how democracy is functioning in the United States compared with five years ago. As AJC's Director of Antisemitism Policy stated: "Antisemitism is never an isolated problem—it is both a warning sign and a catalyst of deeper societal breakdown. When hatred toward Jews is allowed to spread, it corrodes social trust, legitimizes extremism, and weakens the democratic institutions that protect everyone." The correlation between declining democratic trust and rising antisemitism is not coincidental. It is the pattern of history, and it should shape this Commission's recommendations.

This is not a partisan observation. It is the lesson of Jewish history across centuries and continents. And it is confirmed by the American experience. The same civil rights infrastructure that protects Jewish students under Title VI protects Black students, Muslim students, and every other community. The same First Amendment that allows Jewish students to practice their faith openly protects the religious liberty of every American. The same independent judiciary that enforced the rights of Jewish communities in Charlottesville and Pittsburgh enforces the rights of every targeted group. Weakening any of these institutions in the name of fighting antisemitism does not protect Jews—it removes the guardrails that have made America the safest and most prosperous home Jews have ever known.

The Shofar Report rejects the false choices that have come to dominate this debate. We do not have to choose between protecting Jews and protecting democracy—one requires the other. We do not have to choose between fighting antisemitism and defending civil society—we need both. We do not have to choose between Jewish safety and the rights of other minorities—throughout American history, these have risen and fallen together. Jews marched alongside Black Americans for civil rights not only because it was right, but because Jewish leaders understood that a society that protects the most vulnerable protects everyone. That principle has not changed.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the current moment is that the same administration claiming to fight antisemitism is systematically dismantling the very institutions that enforce civil rights for Jewish students and all students.

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights—the primary federal mechanism for investigating Title VI complaints, including complaints of antisemitic harassment—has been gutted. Layoffs have eliminated nearly half the Department of Education's workforce. Regional OCR offices have been closed, including the California office. In the three months following these cuts, OCR received nearly 5,000 complaints but investigated only 309.²³ Plans to dismantle the Department of Education entirely—and potentially transfer OCR to the Department of Justice

without a clear plan for continuity of investigations—would eliminate the specialized expertise needed to address discrimination in educational settings.

You cannot credibly claim to fight antisemitism while dismantling the institutions that enforce civil rights. And you cannot claim to protect Jewish students while gutting the same office that also protects Black students from racial discrimination, students with disabilities from denial of services, and female students from sexual harassment. The Office for Civil Rights is one office, enforcing one body of law, for all Americans. When it is weakened, everyone suffers. When Cornell University's antisemitism investigations were closed as part of a \$60 million settlement related to frozen research funding,²⁴ the message was clear: civil rights enforcement has become a bargaining chip, not a principle.

The push to codify the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as a legal enforcement standard also warrants this Commission's careful scrutiny. IHRA has genuine value as an educational and awareness-raising tool—it has helped institutions recognize forms of antisemitism they might otherwise have missed, and many organizations use it productively in that capacity. But IHRA itself describes the definition as 'non-legally binding,' and for good reason. Of its eleven illustrative examples, seven relate to Israel—including 'denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination' and 'applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.' These involve inherently subjective political judgments that reasonable people, including many Jews, disagree about. When given the force of law, they place enforcement officials in the position of adjudicating contested political questions as straightforward matters of discrimination—with the predictable result that legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies, advocacy for Palestinian rights, and calls for equality in international law become legally actionable as antisemitism. Five states have already incorporated IHRA into hate crime laws, and several others have adopted it through executive actions directing law enforcement to use it in criminal investigations.²⁵ As the Arab American Institute has documented, this conflation risks weaponizing antisemitism enforcement against Arab American, Palestinian, and Muslim communities—turning one community's civil rights protections into another community's instrument of suppression.

Federal courts are increasingly reaching the same conclusion. In *Students for Justice in Palestine v. Abbott* (W.D. Tex. 2024), Judge Robert Pitman found that Texas public universities' incorporation of the IHRA definition into their speech policies constituted viewpoint discrimination under the First Amendment, noting that the definition "labels 'calling the State of Israel a racist endeavor' and 'drawing comparisons between Israel and Nazis' as antisemitic" while students could be punished under those policies for such expression. The First Circuit, in *StandWithUs v. MIT* (2025), rejected the per se equation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism, holding that Title VI "cannot be wielded to compel a private university to extinguish protected speech simply because it is political, divisive, or offensive." In *Landau v. Haverford College* (E.D. Pa. 2025), Judge Gerald McHugh dismissed Title VI claims after finding that "many of the

incidents pled fall within the protection of the First Amendment," and warned that courts cannot allow plaintiffs to "blur the line between Zionism as a political philosophy and Zionism as a component of Jewish identity, and in the process implicitly sweep any and all criticism of Israel into the basket of antisemitism." These rulings reflect a growing judicial recognition that using antisemitism definitions to police political speech about Israel raises fundamental constitutional problems—problems that codification would deepen rather than resolve.

There is also a more fundamental problem. Codifying a standalone legal definition for antisemitism—whether IHRA or any other formulation—creates a framework of Jewish exceptionalism in civil rights law, singling out one form of hatred for specialized legal treatment while other targeted communities receive no comparable protection. This is not only inequitable; it is counterproductive to Jewish safety. Jews are most secure when civil rights protections are strong, consistent, and universal. A legal architecture that elevates antisemitism above other forms of hatred undermines the principle of equal protection that has been the Jewish community's most reliable shield—and risks generating the very resentment and division that fuel antisemitism in the first place.

The AJC's seven years of longitudinal data make this point conclusively. Despite the proliferation of IHRA adoptions, executive orders, and enforcement actions since 2019, the rate of American Jews personally targeted by antisemitism has risen from a baseline to 31 percent in both 2024 and 2025—a figure that has plateaued at crisis levels rather than declining. The approach is not working. The question is whether this Commission will recommend more of the same, or whether it will have the courage to recommend strategies grounded in evidence of what actually reduces prejudice: education, intergroup contact, and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Recommendations to the Commission

Drawing on the Nexus Project's research, our Campus Guide, the Shofar Report, our direct engagement with Jewish communities nationwide, and my own experience testifying before Congress on these issues, I respectfully offer the following recommendations:

1. **Recommend that the federal government pursue evidence-based policy that addresses antisemitism from all sources.** Intelligence assessments have consistently found that the overwhelming majority of antisemitic and extremist violence in the United States is perpetrated by domestic far-right extremists. Any federal strategy that ignores right-wing antisemitism—as Project Esther does—is not a strategy to protect Jews. The Commission should recommend full funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides critical physical security to synagogues, mosques, Black churches, Sikh gurdwaras, and other houses of worship, as removing the new requirements the Administration has included related to immigration enforcement and DEI . Protecting all vulnerable communities from hate-motivated violence is not a zero-sum game; it is a shared national imperative.

2. **Recommend preserving and strengthening—not dismantling—civil rights enforcement infrastructure.** The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights must be fully staffed and funded to investigate all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism, promptly and fairly. The Commission should sound the alarm that workforce reductions and office closures have crippled OCR’s ability to process not only antisemitism complaints but all civil rights complaints. Plans to eliminate the Department of Education represent an abandonment of civil rights protections for every protected class precisely when they are most needed. The Commission should recommend passage of the Antisemitism Response and Prevention Act, which would prohibit the transfer or closure of OCR without explicit statutory authorization.²⁶
3. **Recommend comprehensive legislation over narrow definitional approaches.** The Antisemitism Response and Prevention Act (ARPA) would create a national coordinator for antisemitism policy, fund hate crime tracking and reporting infrastructure, invest in campus safety programs, and protect OCR from being dismantled—while also recognizing that the May 2023 National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, developed with input from more than 1,000 Jewish stakeholders, represents the gold standard for a whole-of-government approach.²⁷ This type of comprehensive strategy is far more likely to reduce antisemitism than bills focused on codifying a single definition as an enforcement standard—an approach that risks chilling constitutionally protected speech without addressing the underlying drivers of antisemitic conduct.
4. **Recommend that universities adopt educational approaches as a first-line response to antisemitism and all forms of campus hatred.** You cannot punish your way to a more civilized society. Consistent with the Nexus Campus Guide, this Commission should urge colleges and universities to prioritize education and protection over punishment and recrimination. Campuses should invest in programs that teach recognition of antisemitism across all its forms—from white nationalist conspiracy theories to antisemitic rhetoric that sometimes appears within criticism of Israeli policies—while also building the broader infrastructure of inclusion that protects every student. These efforts should be embedded within comprehensive anti-discrimination frameworks that address racism, Islamophobia, and all forms of bigotry together, because the same campus cultures that breed antisemitism breed other hatreds.
5. **Recommend that federal civil rights enforcement be conducted fairly, consistently, and without political weaponization.** The Commission should examine whether the current pattern of enforcement actions has been consistent and fair, or whether it has been used selectively to advance political agendas unrelated to Jewish safety. Title VI investigations should be conducted on the merits of each complaint, with consistent standards across institutions and across all forms of discrimination. Antisemitism enforcement must not be deployed as a weapon to punish universities for their political

character, to suppress constitutionally protected speech, or to build precedents that can be turned against other communities. When civil rights enforcement is perceived as politically motivated, it undermines the legitimacy of enforcement for everyone.

6. **Recommend that the Commission explicitly examine the administration's implementation of Project Esther as part of its investigation.** The Commission should request documentation of the relationship between Project Esther's recommendations and federal actions taken since January 2025—including the executive order, the deportation proceedings, the defunding actions, and the joint task force's activities. The Commission should assess whether these actions have been designed to protect Jewish students from harassment and discrimination, or to suppress political speech, punish institutional dissent, and build enforcement powers that threaten the civil liberties of all Americans.
7. **Recommend that any federal approach to combating antisemitism be developed in genuine partnership with the Jewish community and in coalition with other targeted communities.** More than 100 Jewish organizations have joined together to oppose attacks on democratic norms and values—attacks that fundamentally threaten the freedoms and safety of Jews and all Americans. The Jewish community is not monolithic, and its voices should not be filtered through the political preferences of a single think tank or a single administration. The Commission should ensure that its investigation reflects the full range of Jewish communal perspectives and the experiences of all communities affected by the current enforcement approach.

I want to close by challenging this Commission to think beyond the frame of “combating” antisemitism and ask a harder question: What would it actually take to reduce it?

Answering that question honestly requires us to acknowledge which strategies have worked and which have not. It requires evidence rather than ideology. And it requires recognizing that Jewish safety on campus will not be achieved through surveillance, deportation, or the defunding of institutions—but through the hard, sustained work of education, consistent civil rights enforcement, and building campus cultures where disagreement about international politics does not become hatred of people based on their identity.

Reducing antisemitism means building a society where Jewish safety does not depend on surveillance or censorship, but on genuine understanding and solidarity. It means creating campus environments where disagreement about international politics does not spill over into hatred of people based on their identity. It means recognizing that the fight against antisemitism is the fight for American democracy—and that a democracy that fails to protect its most vulnerable members will ultimately fail to protect anyone.

History teaches us that the societies that have been best for Jews are the ones that are best for everyone—where the rule of law is applied equally, where independent institutions check the

abuse of power, where civil rights are protected for all, and where diverse communities build solidarity rather than suspicion. That is the America we should be building. That is the standard against which this Commission should measure every federal action it examines.

The Jewish community deserves better than performative outrage from those who weaponize our pain while dismantling the institutions that protect us. We deserve a federal response that takes antisemitism seriously enough to invest in what actually works—education, coalition-building, consistent civil rights enforcement, and the preservation of the democratic institutions that have been our best protection throughout American history. And every American community targeted by hate deserves the same.

This Commission, through its bipartisan leadership, has an opportunity to take a leading role in explaining what a serious, evidence-based, democracy-affirming approach to combating campus antisemitism looks like. I urge you to seize that opportunity. I stand ready to work with you to make it a reality.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Endnotes

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25. Arab American Institute, “AAI Statement on the FBI’s 2024 Hate Crime Data Release,” October 17, 2025, <https://www.aaiusa.org/library/2024-hate-crime-data>. As of 2024, five states—Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, and South Dakota—have incorporated

IHRA into hate crime laws; four additional states—Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Ohio—have adopted executive orders or resolutions directing law enforcement to use the IHRA definition in criminal investigations.

26. Antisemitism Response and Prevention Act of 2025, H.R. 6806, 119th Cong. (2025).
27. White House, *The U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2023).

Appendix: Key Resources

Nexus Project Resources

A Campus Guide to Identifying Antisemitism in a Time of Perplexity, Nexus Task Force / Bard Center for the Study of Hate, September 2024

The Shofar Report: A Call to Defend Democracy and Confront Antisemitism, The Nexus Project, October 2025

Written Testimony of Kevin Rachlin Before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee, 2025

Data and Research

FBI Hate Crime Statistics Report, 2024 (released August 2025)

The State of Antisemitism in America 2025 Report, American Jewish Committee, February 2026

The State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, American Jewish Committee and Hillel International, February 2025

U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, May 2023

Baker, Katie J.M., “The Group Behind Project 2025 Has a Plan to Crush the Pro-Palestinian Movement,” *The New York Times*, May 2025

Legislation

H.R. 6806 — Antisemitism Response and Prevention Act of 2025

S. 826 — Preventing Antisemitic Harassment on Campus Act of 2025

Executive Order 14188, “Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism” (January 29, 2025)