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Bipartisan Federal Report Calls for Stronger, More Transparent Response to Campus Antisemitism

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report examines university responses, federal Title VI enforcement, and the experiences of Jewish students following October 7, 2023.

WASHINGTON — September 28, 2026 — The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights today released a unanimously approved, bipartisan report stating that campus antisemitism is a serious civil rights concern and calling attention to inconsistent university responses, limited federal transparency, and reduced enforcement capacity.

[*The Federal Response to Antisemitism on American College and University Campuses*](#) examines how institutions of higher education and the federal government have responded to allegations of antisemitism following the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attack against Israel. The report also considers how universities and federal agencies met their legal obligations under Title VI and the federal Constitution in order to protect Jewish students from discrimination and harassment while respecting free expression, freedom of assembly, and academic freedom.

“This bipartisan, unanimously adopted report sends a clear message that protecting students from antisemitism is a shared civil rights responsibility,” said Rochelle Garza, Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. “Students deserve protection from discrimination and harassment while colleges and universities uphold free speech and expression. This report provides a factual foundation to help policymakers and higher education leaders move that work forward.”

The report is the culmination of a rigorous, bipartisan investigation led by Commissioners [Peter Kirsanow](#) and [Mondaire Jones](#). It includes testimony from current and former federal officials, college and university students, legal scholars, researchers, Jewish and civil rights organizations, and higher education experts; a public comment session; and responses to Commission discovery requests from nine universities.

Among the report’s key takeaways:

- **Campus antisemitism is a serious and growing civil rights concern.** Jewish students reported harassment, vandalism, threats, exclusion, and rhetoric that affected their safety, sense of belonging, and educational experiences, particularly after October 7, 2023.
- **Universities face a difficult legal and operational balance.** Institutions must address discrimination and harassment based on Jewish shared ancestry while

protecting political speech, peaceful protest activity, academic freedom, and other forms of expression covered by the First Amendment and central to effective higher education.

- **Universities' responses remain inconsistent.** The nine universities examined had complaint procedures and resources for Jewish students, but they varied significantly in how they classified, investigated, and resolved complaints.
- **Limited and inconsistent data collection and analysis of antisemitism in the U.S makes it difficult to accurately assess the true scope of unlawful campus antisemitism.** Universities, advocacy organizations, scholars, and the federal government produce inconsistent or unreliable data on antisemitic incidents and frequently fail to distinguish between claims of unlawful antisemitism and claims about controversial expression.
- **Not every offensive or antisemitic incident constitutes a Title VI violation.** Title VI protects Jewish students when discrimination is based on race, national origin, or shared ancestry—not religion. Universities rarely determined that reported conduct met the legal threshold for a violation, although they frequently provided supportive or corrective measures. Current Title VI law distinguishes discrimination based on Jewish ancestry or national origin from opposition to Israel or Zionism. The report's review of First Amendment law also notes substantial protections for peaceful campus protests and other expression.
- **The federal government has appeared to sometimes lack the capacity and transparency needed for effective enforcement.** The Department of Education's ("ED") Office for Civil Rights is handling substantially more complaints without a comparable increase in staff. In fact, ED's staff levels and other enforcement resources have been substantially reduced under the current administration. Meanwhile, outdated or incomplete public information and the failure of ED, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide requested records prevented the Commission from fully evaluating federal enforcement.
- **Recent federal enforcement has sometimes represented a departure from established practice.** Historically, agencies have emphasized investigation, voluntary resolution, and ongoing compliance monitoring before considering program-specific funding termination. Current federal efforts have shifted toward funding suspensions, settlements sometimes judicially determined to be overbroad and illegal, and monetary payments.
- **Federal actions intended to protect Jewish students may produce unintended harm.** Students and experts testified that sweeping funding cuts and institutional penalties did not necessarily make them feel safer and could disrupt research, harm uninvolved students and programs, chill lawful speech, and generate resentment toward Jewish students.
- **Effective responses should center affected students and campus-specific conditions.** The report underscores the importance of consulting Jewish students, improving institutional policies, and developing approaches suited to each campus rather than relying solely on broad punitive action from the federal government.

Taken together, the report identifies a need for stronger federal coordination, greater transparency, adequate staffing of civil rights offices, improved data collection, clearer guidance for colleges and universities, and adherence to the federal agencies' statutory obligation to comply with Commission discovery requests.

The Commission will continue working with report contributors and affected students to elevate the Commission's investigation and inform the public conversation.

Read the full report: [The Federal Response to Antisemitism on American College and University Campuses | U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#)

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