

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2023

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

I am deeply disturbed by the increase in antisemitic incidents, including hate speech and intimidation, on college and university campuses across the United States following Hamas's brutal terrorist attack on Israel on October 7. 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. No student should have to fear for their safety or ability to study in a safe environment, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or race. I, therefore, strongly urge you to take immediate action to keep Jewish students safe, including by forming a task force within the Department of Education dedicated to countering campus antisemitism and led by a designated senior official, issuing updated guidance to college and university administrators making clear the consequences of failing to ensure the safety of Jewish students, and convening a high-level meeting to develop actionable strategies.

According to a recent study, nearly one-third of Jewish students reported personally experiencing antisemitism directed at them at an institution of higher education. 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. Far too many do not have this sense of security because of their actual or perceived views on Israel." Since Hamas's terrorist attack on October 7, the Secure Community Network has reported 94 antisemitic incidents on campuses.

I welcome the Office for Civil Rights' launch in May 2023 of the Antisemitism Awareness Campaign and appreciate the Office's ongoing engagement with the Senate and House Bipartisan Task Forces for Combating Antisemitism. I welcome the additional actions taken last month to make clear that Title VI prohibits antisemitism in federal funded programs and activities. However, in light of the recent rise in antisemitism on college campuses, more needs to be done to keep students safe. The entire U.S. Senate stands behind this call to action, having unanimously passed on October 26 a bipartisan resolution I co-led with others condemning the increasing number of incidents on campus aimed at intimidating Jewish students. Therefore, to protect Jewish students from this growing threat, I request that you promptly take the following actions:

- **Form a task force within the Department of Education dedicated to countering campus antisemitism and led by a designated senior official**, whose responsibilities would include coordinating between the Department of Education, college and university leaders, and Jewish organizations;
- **Issue updated guidance to all college and university administrators** that 1) reaffirms their legal obligations to protect Jewish students, 2) makes clear that higher education institutions failing to ensure the safety of Jewish students will face consequences, 3) calls on higher education institutions to issue statements condemning antisemitism; and
- **Convene a high-level meeting** involving campus administrators, law enforcement, Jewish students, and leading Jewish organizations to enable Jewish students to share their concerns and develop clear, actionable strategies to prevent and respond to antisemitism on campus. I appreciate the Department recently engaging key stakeholders and encourage you to bring all parties to the table at the same time to discuss how to address this ongoing crisis.

I look forward to hearing from you on the swift and meaningful actions the Department of Education is undertaking to keep Jewish students safe.

Sincerely,



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JACKY ROSEN  
United States Senator