

Dear Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and members of the committee,

I am grateful for the privilege to testify before this committee and for your attention to the issue of campus antisemitism. Thank you for having me here.

My name is Meirav Batsheva Solomon. I grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina and I'm a junior at Tufts University studying International Relations. I'm a proud Jewish American, the daughter of two rabbis, raised in the Conservative movement.

From the minute I introduce myself, most people know I'm Jewish. I wouldn't hide it if I could. I'm so grateful for the tradition I grew up in, for the values and ethics it instilled in me and for the Jewish community I've found at Tufts.

And I'm distraught to see a rising tide of antisemitism, on campus and across the country. Since October 7, we've seen anti-war protests cross the line into ugly rhetoric and stereotyping, hateful vitriol on social media, and violent threats against Jewish students. Friends and classmates of mine have been made to feel unsafe simply on the basis of who they are.

For me, for my friends, for my community, the issue of antisemitism is heartbreakingly personal and real.

This winter, I returned from a semester abroad at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

I had friends in the south running to bomb shelters, friends returning from the front in

Gaza, friends dealing with the trauma and pain of war. We'd talk about it and time after time they'd turn to me and say "Meirav, I want to hear about American college campuses."

Our campuses aren't some second front in the war. They're thousands of miles from the conflict. I personally know student protesters and Jewish students who were perplexed by the encampments. In too many instances, protesters have ignored Jewish humanity, embraced antisemitic tropes, conflated the government of Israel with Jewish people around the world. That's despicable and vile. Too many Jewish students have felt the sting of antisemitism.

That doesn't mean that the answer is to shut down all legitimate debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or equate all criticism of the Israeli government with antisemitism. These are complex issues, and we all benefit from hearing multiple viewpoints – even ones we fundamentally disagree with – as long as the discussion is in the spirit of genuine exchange.

We can't give up on the colleges and universities we call home, or cave to those who have wanted to discredit higher education long before this spike in antisemitic incidents. Protecting education, civil rights, and free and open dialogue is vital to my future and the ability of Jewish students to succeed and thrive – a right that generations before us fought for. The vast majority of our classmates aren't Hamas-aligned radicals. They're students whose perspectives may differ from ours, but must be welcome as long as they voice them respectfully. When my grandparents applied to college, antisemitic

quotas kept them from getting a fair shake. We shouldn't let the hateful ideas of a small minority of students be a reason to dismantle the education they fought so hard for.

This administration has abandoned the holistic, whole of government approach that its predecessor developed to combat antisemitism. The [Biden Administration's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) offered comprehensive guidelines and actions at federal, state, and local levels to keep Jews safe, promote education and understanding, and stop the scourge of antisemitism on campus and online. This administration has threatened to withhold federal funding from universities that retain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, sacrificing resources that keep Jewish students safe at the altar of their culture war. It has suspended thousands of investigations conducted by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, even as the Office deals with record numbers of antisemitism cases since October 7.

Jettisoning Biden's prudent approach, this president is taking a cue from the Heritage Foundation's Project Esther. Developed by a task force that includes Christian nationalists, without any major Jewish organization's input, Project Esther blames the spread of antisemitism on us. It says Jewish "complacency" is the problem. It says the solution is punitive measures against "a cabal" of purported " Hamas Supporting Organizations" on American campuses and in civil society. It completely ignores any antisemitism on the right, where, year after year, the vast majority of violent incidents occur.

However vile the views some protestors espouse, white nationalist, far right extremists pose the gravest threat to American Jewish safety. As presidential advisors raise their arms in fascist salutes, white nationalist groups like the Patriot Front stage xenophobic rallies, and bigots on social media glorify Nazis and denigrate Jews, we must be honest about the most urgent threat to the Jewish community. It isn't student protesters, but the bloody legacy of Pittsburgh and Poway, Charlottesville and the Capitol riot.

The white supremacist Patriot front marched two weeks ago in Boston, Des Moines, Houston, and Providence. Patriot Front literature reads "No Zionists in government" and promotes the racist, antisemitic great replacement theory. These were grown ups marching in the center of major American cities. Any Jewish student should wonder how such unabashed hate promoted by the Patriot Front and other groups are apparently not worth a mention at this hearing. I cannot blame the many Jewish students who see this fixation on campuses while ignoring a growth of rightwing terror as more about someone else's political agenda than our safety.

When politicians and national Jewish organizations claim to speak for all Jewish students while promoting policies that many of us oppose, they are engaging in the same erasure of Jewish diversity that anti-semites practice. True support for Jewish students means listening to our diverse experiences and needs, not using us to advance partisan agendas.

Jewish students deserve an approach that serves their safety, not a so-called "war on wokeness" that doesn't represent their needs or values. We expect policymakers to

follow evidence and to respond to Jewish experiences without political grandstanding. The current approach will decimate our ability to access the education we deserve. Our parents and grandparents fought for the right to a quality education for Jews and for all Americans. The actions of this administration are divisive and they erode the civil rights and basic freedoms that have allowed American Jews to flourish. Our right to a thriving, equal future depends on your commitment to protect the values of pluralism and democracy in which Jews and all Americans can thrive.

Sincerely,

Meirav Solomon

**For Your Reference**

[A Campus Guide to Identifying Antisemitism in a Time of Perplexity: The Nexus Project](#)

[S.4091 - Countering Antisemitism Act](#)

[The US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#)

[Republicans say they're standing up for Jewish college students against campus antisemitism. They're not.](#)

["We've Been Essentially Muzzled": Department of Education Halts Thousands of Civil Rights Investigations Under Trump](#)