

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 2, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Cardona:

In March, we wrote you with grave concerns the Department of Education (the Department) has enabled taxpayer funded antisemitism to take place on college campuses, and we requested an update from your office¹. To this day, regardless of the severe uptick in antisemitism on college campuses, we have yet to receive a reply.

Many Jewish and pro-Israel students have felt unsafe in their institutions of higher education, especially following Hamas' attack on Israel. At Cooper University in New York City, Jewish students were locked in a library during a pro-Palestinian rally.² At Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, a professor said he was "exhilarated" by the Hamas attack³. Also at Cornell, an anonymous post was shared that threatened Jews.⁴ In Washington, DC at George Washington University, campus buildings were projected with pro-Palestinian messages, which made some students on campus feel unsafe.⁵

While we were already concerned about antisemitism on college campuses, the events of the last month have made it clear the Department owes both the Senate and the American people answers as to whether taxpayer dollars are in anyway funding these antisemitic programs, speakers, or activities. In addition, it owes parents an explanation for how it is protecting their kids and their freedom of speech and religion.

We are eagerly awaiting your reply to our previous letter, which should include an outline for the Department's plan to ensure programs and professors on college and university campuses receiving HEA Title VI funding are in compliance with federal requirements requiring diverse perspectives. In addition to our previous questions, we would like answers to the following:

¹ https://www.risch.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/a/d/ad1db0b9-31a2-4295-bd21-45cfe29af6a0/BDA5AB39BB404B2F10913FD1ADD33C72.letter-to-dept-of-education-on-taxpayer-funded-antisemitism-final-version-risch.pdf

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/cooper-union-pro-palestinian-rally-jewish-students-library/>

³ <https://www.foxnews.com/media/cornell-professor-exhilarated-hamas-attack-takes-leave-absence-university>


⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/cornell-university-sends-officers-jewish-center-after-violent-104470799>

⁵ <https://wjla.com/news/local/accusations-of-anti-semitism-on-george-washington-university-campus-after-projection-of-pro-palestinian-messages-student-group-students-for-justice-in-palestine-jewish-israel-hamas-war-dmv-washington-dc-community>

1. Is the Department aiding the FBI as it investigates a potential hate crime at Cornell University?
2. Is the Department aiding the investigation into the antisemitic drawing left on a Jewish student dorm at Stanford University?
3. What active investigations into antisemitic hate crimes is the Department helping with?
4. How is the Department monitoring increased antisemitic attacks, programming, and lecturing on college campuses?
5. How is the Department protecting the rights of Jewish and pro-Israel students, specifically how is it ensuring their right to freedom of speech and religion are not diminished by pro-Palestinian groups and professors?

Given the severity of the violence against Jewish students and your administration's acknowledgement of growing antisemitism on campuses⁶, we are requesting answers urgently. Please reply by November 15, 2023.

Sincerely,



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/30/politics/biden-administration-college-campuses-antisemitism/index.html>