

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 15, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Cardona:

We write today demanding you provide Congress with an outline of how you are protecting Jewish and Pro-Israel students from persecution on college campuses nationwide, amid growing protests. We are also calling for the Department to create and distribute a best practices guide for universities showcasing the schools that have appropriately handled the recent increase in protests on their campuses.

Given the growing number of radical encampments on college campuses and the harassment of Jewish students, we are concerned about their safety and ability to freely voice their views and practice a faith of their choice. At Northeastern University in Boston, administrative officials said their campus had been “infiltrated by professional organizers,” who do not appear to have any affiliation with the school, and some of the radical protestors were using antisemitic slurs, including “Kill the Jews.”<sup>1</sup> Similar situations have unfolded nationwide. On the campuses of Yale University and George Washington University, police arrested numerous students and sought to disband encampments following protestor efforts to trespass and or protest outside the school presidents’ homes.<sup>23</sup> At the University of California, Los Angeles, hundreds of anti-Israel protestors gathered and ignored the university’s directive to disband and leave. At the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison, students and faculty<sup>4</sup> outright ignored calls from the university to remove the illegal encampment. Two student organization at UW organized a chalking event outside of the Wisconsin State Capitol, where students wrote antisemitic, discriminatory words in support of Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis—written messages included “Al-Qassam you make us proud, kill another soldier now,” “Down with ‘Israel’ down with ‘USA’” and “All cops are Zionists.”<sup>5</sup> Faculty at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill are also threatening to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/college-student-protesters-demonstrations-israel-hamas-war-grow/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/live/college-protests-palestine-updates>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/protesters-march-to-gwu-presidents-northwest-home-over-unmet-demands>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.wisc.edu/chancellor-mnookins-faculty-senate-remarks-on-library-mall-encampment/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dailycardinal.com/article/2024/05/antisemitic-chalkings-promoting-hamas-hezbollah-houthis-found-at-dane-county-farmers-market-alongside-rhetoric-endorsing-violence>

withhold grades from all students if their administration holds student protestors accountable for their actions.<sup>6</sup>

Not all campuses have failed to enforce the law. While we strongly disagree with the sentiments of many of these protests, several campuses have seen protests that abided by both state and federal laws and did not result in discriminatory behavior from its participants. Other schools have been led by administrations that have successfully disbanded protests that go beyond the scope of free speech, like the University of Florida,<sup>7</sup> which released a statement that their campus “is not a daycare, and we do not treat protestors like children – they knew the rules, and they’ll face the consequences.” The Department should compile a list of suggested policies and actions of universities that have safely protected the rights of all students and release best practices nationwide in order to encourage all universities to take the correct approach to this surge in protests.

As Congress holds hearings and continues to investigate the presidents of universities who have harbored and allowed these violent protestors to target Jewish students on their campuses, the Department must respond directly.

Given the severity and increase of violence against Jewish and pro-Israel students on college campuses, we are urgently requesting you provide us with an outline how you intend to ensure the safety of all students. Please reply by June 1, 2024.

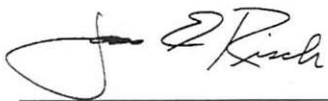
1. What is the Department’s plan for protecting students of all faiths while ensuring their right to free speech?
2. Has the Department provided any information or guidance to schools on how to best handle these protests?
3. Is the Department aiding the FBI and local authorities in their investigations into the antisemitic violence as a hate crime?
4. What criteria does the university have for determining when a protest is considered antisemitic?
5. How is the Department handling reports from students at universities who have experienced antisemitism?
6. Is the Department working with universities to provide accommodations to Jewish students who are concerned for their safety?
7. Is the Department taking any action against universities that have tolerated, without punishment, discriminatory behavior on their campuses?
8. Will the Department penalize any universities for their actions?

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<sup>6</sup> <https://abc11.com/unc-responds-to-demonstrators-asking-for-students/14776609/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/media/u-florida-praised-saying-school-not-daycare-agitators-who-break-rules-face-consequences>

Sincerely,



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James E. Risch  
United States Senator



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Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



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Russ Fulcher  
United States Representative



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Mike Simpson  
United States Representative