



The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all.

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U.S. Department of Education Officially Opens Civil Rights Investigation into University of Pennsylvania and Wellesley College; UPenn Case Complaint Filed by Brandeis Center and Wellesley Complaint Filed by Brandeis and Jewish on Campus

Brandeis Center Seeks Detailed Remedies to Address Emboldened Anti-Semitism on College Campuses

Washington, D.C. (November 16, 2023) – Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education announced it would open an investigation into the University of Pennsylvania and Wellesley College for their failure to address pervasive incidents of campus anti-Semitism. The investigation follows two separate Nov. 9 complaints filed by the Brandeis Center seeking immediate and specific action to address increasing discrimination against and harassment of Jews in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Kenneth L. Marcus, founder and chairman of the Brandeis Center and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, states: “The swift response to our complaints reaffirm how severe the anti-Semitism crisis is on college campuses and sends an important signal to university leaders. We’re encouraged to see the investigations into UPenn and Wellesley move forward and we thank Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon and her team at OCR for their prompt attention to this matter.”

The Nov. 9 complaints against [UPenn](#) and [Wellesley](#) allege that failure to adequately respond to these unnerving incidents put the universities in violation of OCR guidance, which specifies that Title VI – which prohibits schools that receive federal funding from allowing harassment, bias or discrimination on campus – protects Jews on the basis of their “actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.” The filings include statements from students that explain how they were harassed and/or subjected to discrimination. The Wellesley complaint specifically contains harrowing personal accounts from Jewish students collected by advocacy organization Jewish on Campus.

Julia Jassey, co-founder and CEO of Jewish on Campus, said, “The swiftness of this process is a strong indicator that OCR is committed to the prompt attention needed to address the rise of

antisemitism on campuses around the country. If this step is progress, the next step must be accountability. Jewish on Campus is grateful to the brave Wellesley students who came forward to share the hate they experienced, and we stand ready to support our peers across the country, too many of whom are witnessing inaction in the face of antisemitism.”

In addition, in just the past two weeks, Brandeis Center founder and chairman Kenneth L. Marcus has submitted separate live testimonies before the [House Judiciary Committee](#), a [Senate roundtable discussion](#) and the [House Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Workforce](#) on the need for the sort of decisive action that the prompt opening of this investigation reflects.

About the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. LDB engages in research, education, and legal advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses, in the workplace, and elsewhere. It empowers students by training them to understand their legal rights and educates administrators and employers on best practices to combat racism and anti-Semitism. The Brandeis Center is not affiliated with the Massachusetts university, the Kentucky law school, or any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice. More at www.brandeiscenter.com.

About Jewish on Campus

Jewish on Campus is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded and run by Jewish college students, for Jewish college students. Since its founding in 2020, JOC has collected stories of anti-Semitism from thousands of students around the world and has assisted in creating change on campus.