

ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE

Survey of US Members
of ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ
SPRING 2021



**The Louis D. Brandeis Center
for Human Rights Under Law**

CONDUCTED BY: Cohen Research Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

	Insights	Implications
01 Anti-Semitism is pervasive at or at college despite COVID-19	Two thirds of students experienced or were familiar with acts of anti-Semitism over the past 120 days on campus or in virtual campus settings.	Despite relative student isolation during the pandemic, anti-Semitism continued at college while some of it moved online. <i>This is prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.</i>
02 Students are feeling unsafe, concerned about being verbally or physically attacked as Jews.	More than a quarter of students, increasing with college year, say they have felt unsafe as Jews on their campus or in virtual campus settings. As many as 10% were aware of physical attacks against Jewish students.	Instead of college being a time of increasing freedom and self-exploration, students are also learning over time at college that just being Jewish draws new threats.
03 As a result, students are actively hiding their Jewish identity	Again, increasing with college year, 50% of Jewish students hide their Jewish identity and more than half avoid expressing their views on Israel.	At an impressionable age, young adults are concluding that to avoid anti-Semitism they must view their religion and Jewish identity as something to hide, not celebrate.

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Insights

01

Anti-Semitism @ College

How common, and how recent, are verbal and physical acts of violence during the pandemic?

02

Feeling Unsafe

How does anti-Semitism affect Jewish student views of their college environment and their physical and emotional safety?

03

Hiding Their Jewish Identity

What steps are Jewish students taking to protect themselves from anti-Semitism?

RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights warned that campus anti-Semitism had become a serious problem.

A 2013 Pew Research Center survey of Jews found that experience with anti-Semitism is more prevalent among young adults.

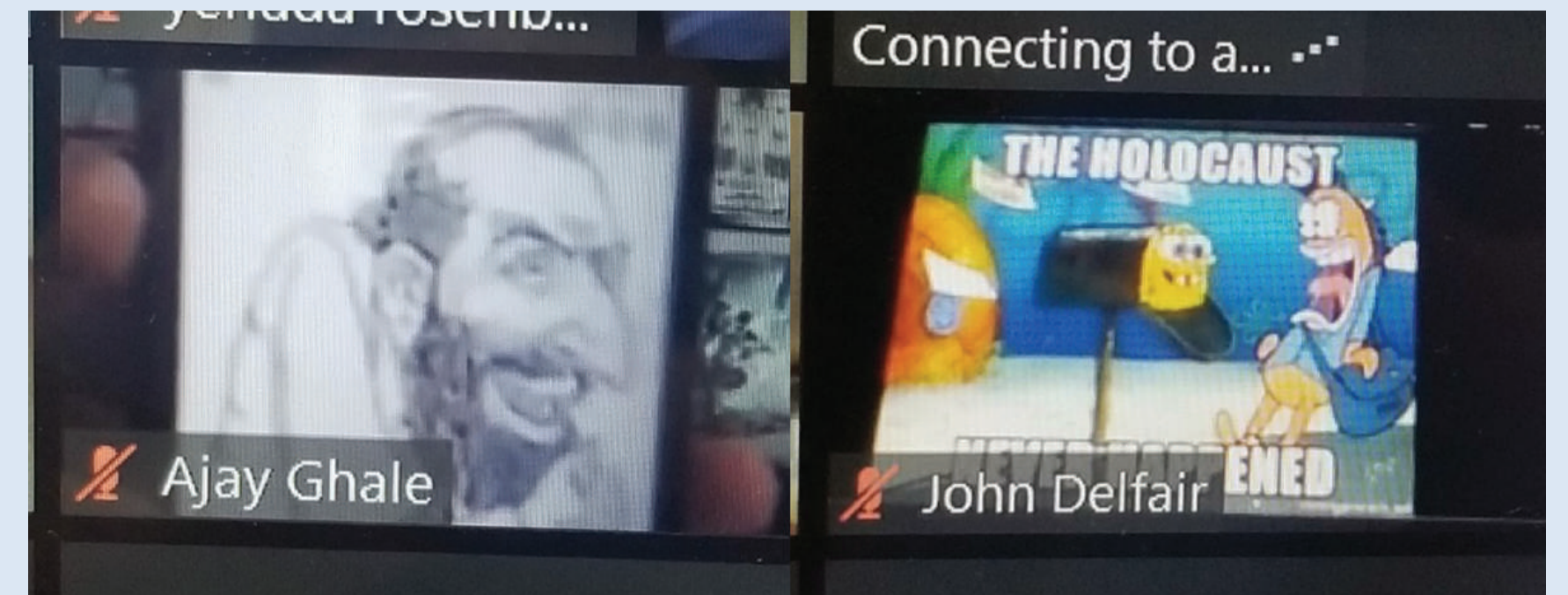
The LDB-Trinity College study a year later found it was pervasive on college campuses.

Despite COVID-19, and the transition to remote learning by many colleges, anti-Semitism is still a serious problem and widespread in college and online.



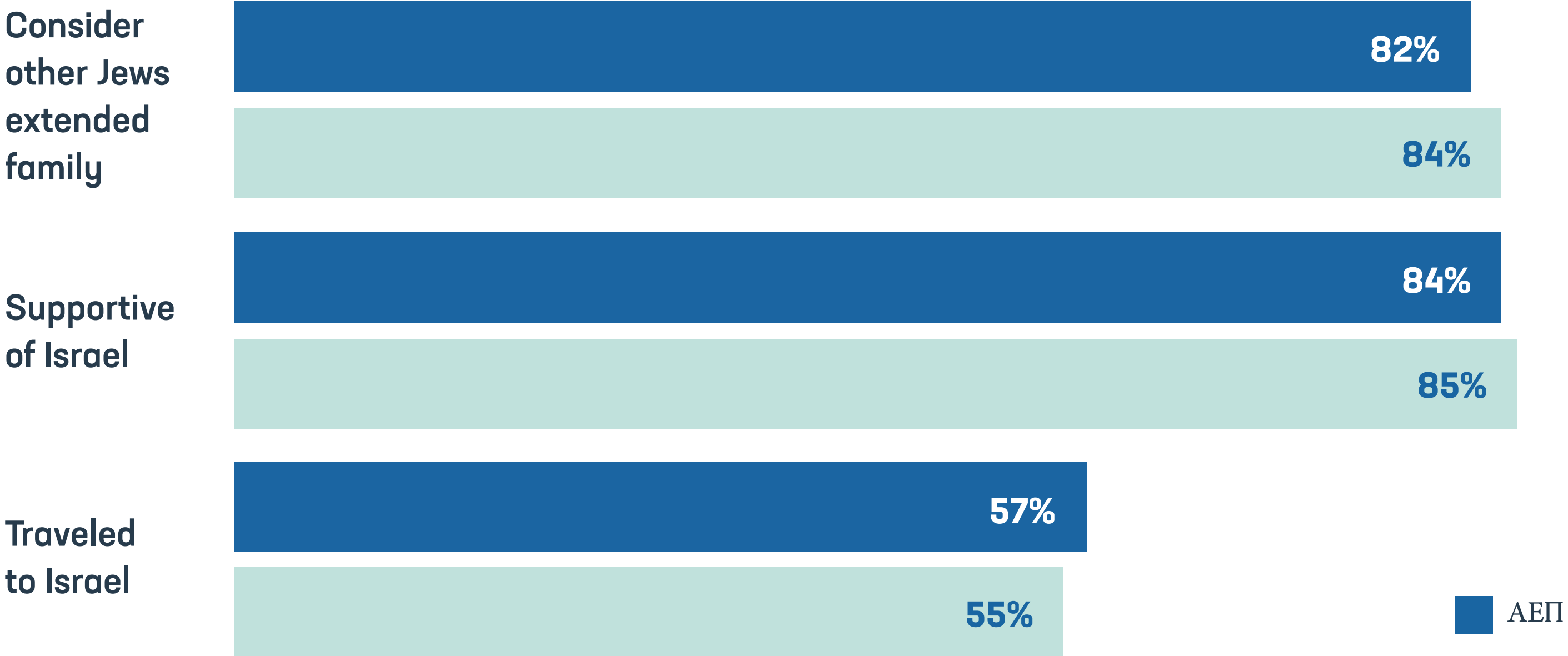
TOP: Arson destroys the University of Delaware Chabad center in early September 2020.

BOTTOM: Example of anti-Semitic "Zoombombing" messages during a student leadership presentation at Yeshiva University on March 31, 2020.



RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

Members of ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ feel a strong sense of Jewish identity and connection to Israel.



The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.



More than three in five ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ members said they *also* belong to Hillel (62%, 63%, respectively) and almost half to Chabad (49%, 47%).

01

Anti-Semitism @ College

ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ Jewish members often are experiencing, observing, and hearing about verbal and physical abuse at college and in virtual campus situations.

Most Jewish students surveyed have first- or second-hand experience with verbal acts of anti-Semitism on their campus or online

Most common: Offensive statements about Jews and the Holocaust, including referring to Jews as being "greedy," "cheap," or having other negative qualities, assigning to all Jews collective responsibility for actions by Israel, and using pejorative nicknames.

1 in 2

50% of ΑΕΠ members

2 in 3

69% of ΑΕΦ members

personally experienced an anti-Semitic verbal attack in the past 120 days. Even more observed or heard about them happening on or @ their college campus.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.



AZCentral: Several of these anti-Semitic posters were found on the Arizona State University campus.

ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE **VERBAL ACTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

Most common verbal acts of anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish students in the past 120 days

Anti-Semitism on campus is most often experienced through words and offensive statements targeted at Jews as a community. Persistent prejudices such that Jews are “greedy” or “cheap” are commonplace on campus. The notion that Jews have a collective responsibility for Israel’s military actions was relatively common despite the study being completed before the latest conflict with Gaza.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

OFFENSIVE JOKES ABOUT JEWS



NEGATIVE WORDS



JEWS ARE “GREEDY” OR “CHEAP”



OTHER NEGATIVE WORDS TO DESCRIBE JEWS



JEWS HAVE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISRAEL'S ACTIONS



■ AEP
■ AEF

ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE **VERBAL ACTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

Other verbal acts of anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish students in the past 120 days

Many ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ students experienced various forms of prejudice on and @ campus such as being called "untrustworthy" or having too much "political power" over policymakers in the United States. Recently, this category has expanded to include blanket derogatory statements about Jews and Zionism in terms of white supremacy or responsibility for the "Nazi" treatment of Palestinians in Israel.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

ISRAEL TREATS PALESTINIANS HOW THE NAZIS TREATED THE JEWS



DEROGATORY STATEMENTS (EXAMPLE: "ZIONISTS ARE MURDERERS")



THE "JEWISH LOBBY" HAS TOO MUCH POWER IN THE UNITED STATES



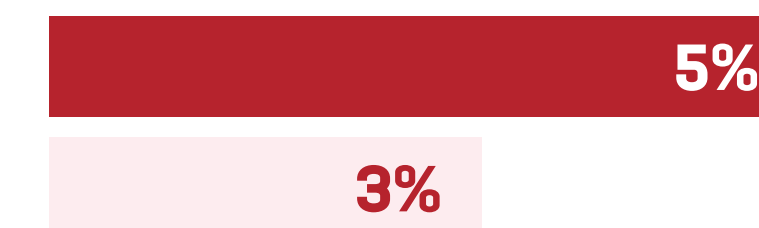
ZIONISM IS A FORM OF WHITE SUPREMACY



JEWS ARE UNTRUSTWORTHY



JUDAISM IS A FORM OF WHITE SUPREMACY



ΑΕΠ
ΑΕΦ

Many Jewish students surveyed have personal or second-hand knowledge of other anti-Semitic acts at their schools

This category includes more aggressive verbal actions such as accusing Jews or Israelis of unethical behavior, shouting or name-calling at Jews, deliberately spitting on Jews, and actual or threatened physical acts of anti-Semitism on Jews, including attacks with weapons.

1 in 4

26% of AEP members

1 in 6

17% of AEP members

personally *experienced, observed or heard about* an anti-Semitic act of abuse in the past 120 days on or @ their college campus.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.



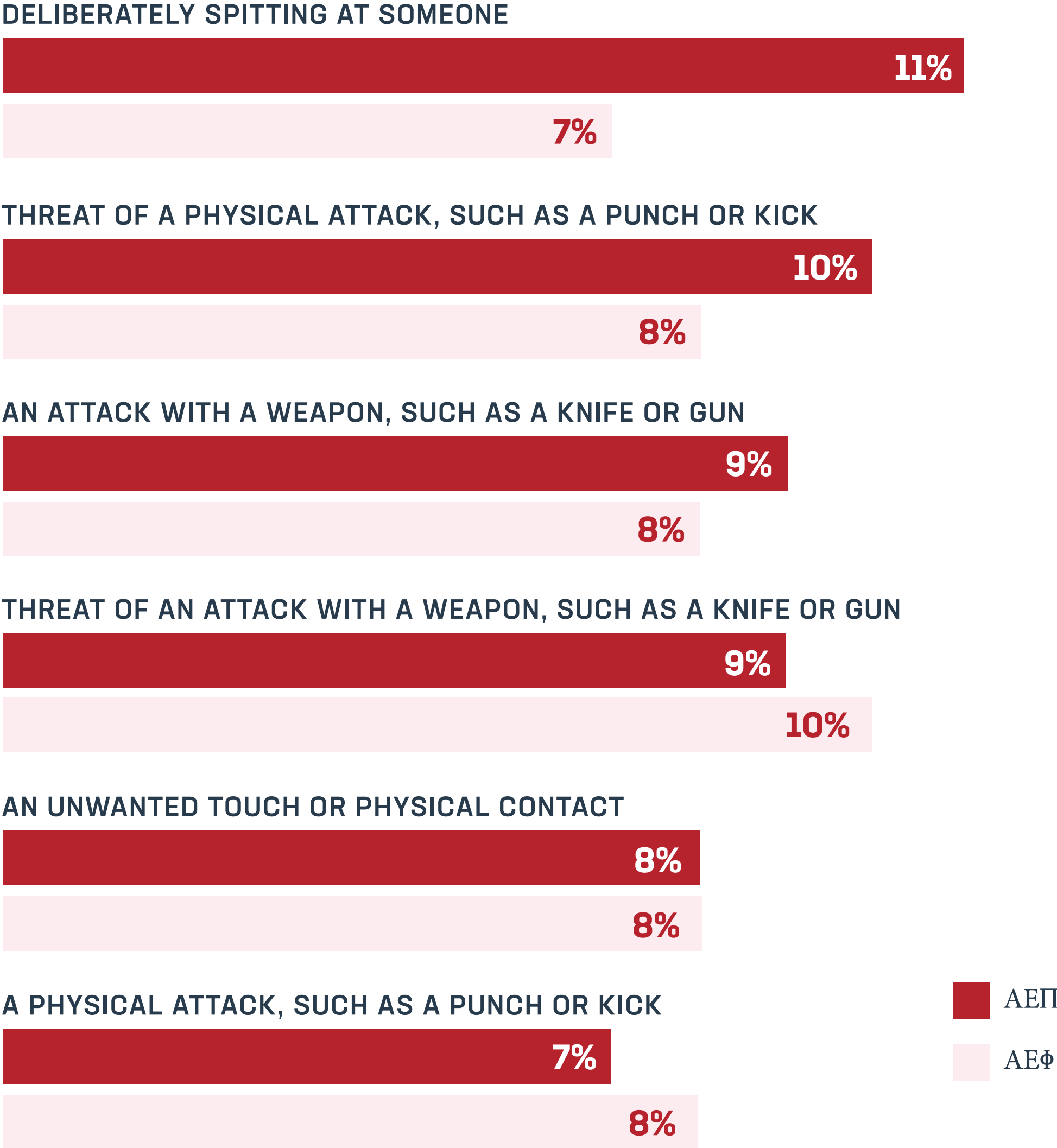
ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE **ACTS OF ABUSE**

Awareness of physical acts of anti-Semitism against Jewish students in the past 120 days

While the students we interviewed rarely experienced these acts or threatened acts of anti-Semitic abuse themselves, many were very aware of it happening on their campus or in virtual campus settings, creating an environment where being targeted for being Jewish is a part of their college experience.

Note: Separately, and not included in the above graph, 15 ΑΕΠ members and 1 member of ΑΕΦ personally experienced being spit upon for being Jewish.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.



ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE **ACTS OF ABUSE**

Awareness of public verbal acts of anti-Semitism toward Jewish students in the past 120 days

Aided by social media and, in some cases, official platforms, anti-Semitism and prejudice have become more public. Many ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ students reported experiencing, seeing, or hearing about acts of verbal abuse on campus and online such as aggressive shouting or name-calling or accusing Jews of unethical behavior.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

Awareness = observed or heard about an incident.

ANY DEROGATORY REMARKS ABOUT JEWS



IN PUBLIC: MAKING A NEGATIVE JOKE ABOUT JEWS



SHOUTING AT SOMEONE OR NAME-CALLING



IN PUBLIC: ACCUSATIONS OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR BY ISRAELIS



IN PUBLIC: ACCUSATIONS OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR BY JEWS



■ ΑΕΠ
■ ΑΕΦ

02

Feeling Unsafe

The longer students are on campus or in virtual college situations, the more they feel concerned about being verbally attacked, excluded, bullied, or harassed online, or even marginalized by professors.



Most students surveyed have felt unsafe as a Jew at some point while on campus or in virtual campus settings

Anti-Semitism is influencing students' feelings of safety at college and online while enrolled in classes or participating in organized activities.

More than
3 in 5

64% of ΑΕΠ members

More than
2 in 3

67% of ΑΕΦ members

have not felt safe as a Jew on their campus or in virtual campus settings often, sometimes, or rarely.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

FEELING UNSAFE BY COLLEGE YEAR

Concern about safety increases between freshman and senior year in college

Students in their first year feel safer as Jews on campus and online than those who have experienced four years at their college.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

Felt unsafe as a Jew on campus or in virtual campus settings...

		FRESHMEN	SENIORS	Difference
ΑΕΠ	SOMETIMES	17%	29%	+12%
	NEVER	46%	30%	-16%
ΑΕΦ	SOMETIMES	14%	35%	+21%
	NEVER	46%	26%	-20%

FEELING UNSAFE **SPECIFIC CONCERNS**

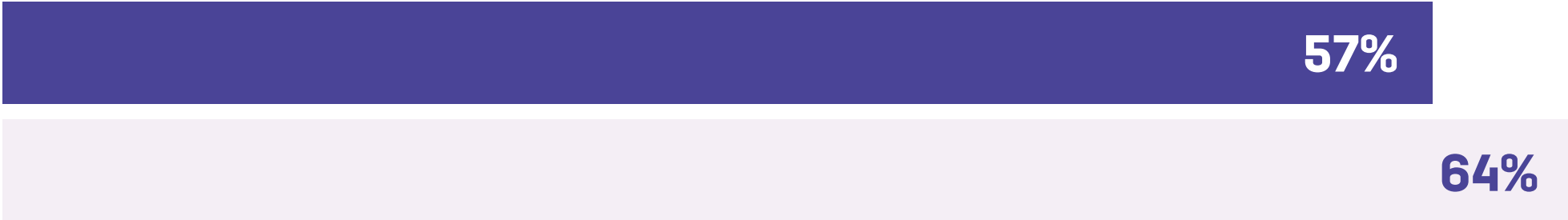
Students who felt unsafe are concerned about being attacked verbally, socially, and physically

While AEP and AEP Jewish students who felt unsafe are most concerned about being verbally attacked, about three in ten are concerned about being marginalized or penalized by their college professors.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of AEP and 211 members of AEP Jewish students who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.

CONCERNED ABOUT BEING VERBALLY ATTACKED



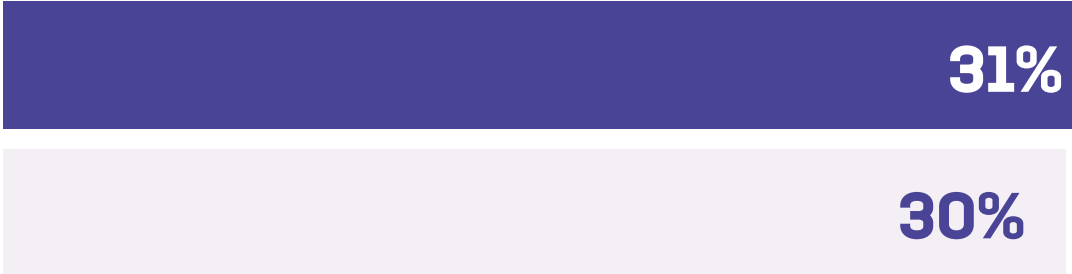
CONCERNED ABOUT BEING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED ONLINE



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING MARGINALIZED OR PENALIZED BY A PROFESSOR



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING PHYSICALLY ATTACKED



■ AEP
■ AEP Jewish

FEELING UNSAFE **SPECIFIC CONCERNS**

Specific safety concerns increase the longer Jewish ΑΕΠ students spend time in college

One-fifth of seniors fear that they will be physically attacked.

	FRESHMEN	SENIORS	<i>Difference</i>
VERBAL ATTACK	46%	57%	+9%
SOCIALLY EXCLUDED	39%	39%	=
BULLIED OR HARASSED ONLINE	28%	36%	+8%
MARGINALIZED OR PENALIZED BY PROFESSOR	22%	38%	+16%
PHYSICAL ATTACK	17%	20%	+3%

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of ΑΕΠ who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.

03

Hiding Their Identity

As a result of their personal or shared experiences with anti-Semitism on campus or online, many feel the need to hide their Jewish faith and culture.

As a result, a majority of students surveyed felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity while on campus in-person or online

Experiencing campus anti-Semitism first-hand and through others teaches students to be concerned about being targeted for being Jewish.

49%

of AEP members

have felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity while on campus in-person or in virtual campus settings.

50%

of AEF members

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.



"An anti-Semitic speaker came to our school." - AEP member

"A professor was pushing anti-Israel bias in a geography class." - AEP member

"In the fall of 2020, a fire was deliberately set to our campus' Chabad." - AEF member

"People don't like Jews." - AEF member

HIDING THEIR IDENTITY SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Students who felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity were concerned about being attacked verbally, socially, and physically

While AEP and AEΦ Jewish students who felt the need to hide their Jewish identity are most concerned about being verbally attacked, about three in ten are concerned about their college professors.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of AEP and 211 members of AEΦ who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.

CONCERNED ABOUT BEING VERBALLY ATTACKED



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED ONLINE



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING MARGINALIZED OR PENALIZED BY A PROFESSOR



CONCERNED ABOUT BEING PHYSICALLY ATTACKED



- AEP
- AEΦ

HIDING THEIR IDENTITY BY COLLEGE YEAR

The longer Jewish students are enrolled, the more they feel the need to hide their identity

Even though respondents did not say that they "often" feel the need to hide their identity - they said that they "sometimes" feel the need to hide their identity.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

How often they felt the need to hide their Jewish identity while on campus in-person or in virtual campus settings...

		FRESHMEN	SENIORS	Difference
ΑΕΠ	OFTEN	2%	3%	+1%
	SOMETIMES	13%	22%	+9%
ΑΕΦ	OFTEN	2%	2%	=
	SOMETIMES	10%	24%	+14%



Implications and challenges for the return to campus

- The pandemic was not a panacea for anti-Semitism on college campuses, as most Jewish students reported experiencing verbal acts of anti-Semitism in-person or online, and a significant group was aware of more aggressive acts of anti-Semitism, including threats of, or actual, violence.
- The college experience is being undermined by anti-Semitism. In the face of acts of anti-Semitism on their religion and identity in and out of the classroom Jewish students are learning to hide their identity to ensure their safety from verbal, social, and physical acts of anti-Semitism.
- Students are experiencing both traditional anti-Semitism in the form of traditional anti-Semitic tropes and a newer form of anti-Semitism as it relates to Israel. It is significant that the anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism reported in this survey was experienced before the recent Israel-Gaza hostilities. It is likely that had the survey taken place in May instead of April, the number of anti-Semitic incidents relating to Israel would have been higher and the percentage of students expressing fear of being targeted would have been greater than reflected in the survey.

METHODOLOGY

Goals: The goal of this study is to understand the prevalence of acts of anti-Semitism at U.S. colleges and universities and in virtual campus settings through interviews with enrolled students who are members of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity (ΑΕΠ) and the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority (ΑΕΦ), two predominantly-Jewish college Greek organizations.

Research Methods: We worked with both organizations to invite all currently active members by email to participate in an internet survey commissioned by The Louis D. Brandeis Center. The survey was conducted by Cohen Research Group April 14-21, 2021. Two email invites were sent four days apart and students were paid with a \$10 Amazon gift card for their full participation in the research.

Respondents: Students were eligible for the survey if they self-reported being Jewish or had close family relatives who consider themselves to be Jewish. The results highlighted in this presentation are of 710 members of Alpha Epsilon Pi and 317 members of Alpha Epsilon Phi.

Confidentiality: Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, in addition to survey industry policies and practices, individually identifying information was not shared with LDB, ΑΕΠ or ΑΕΦ unless they opted-in to being contacted further to discuss their experiences. The full set of questions and cross-tabulations are available upon request.



The Louis D. Brandeis Center, Inc. (LDB) is an independent, non-partisan institution for public interest advocacy, research and education. The Center's mission is to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and to promote justice for all;



Cohen Research Group, led by Michael D. Cohen, Ph.D., a 25-year veteran of the industry, offers custom research and mobile technology solutions to help clients make better decisions;



Alpha Epsilon Pi (ΑΕΠ) is a Jewish college fraternity, operating chapters on more than 170 college campuses in six countries. While non-discriminatory, the fraternity's mission - developing the future leaders of the Jewish community - is demonstrated every day through acts of brotherhood, Tzedakah, social awareness and support for Jewish communities and Israel.



Alpha Epsilon Phi (ΑΕΦ) is a Jewish sorority dedicated to helping women become the best they can be. The sorority prizes individuality, encouraging each member to discover and develop the talents and abilities that make her unique.

About the Louis D. Brandeis Center

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 conducts research, education, and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses.



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