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Brandeis Center/ADL/StandWithUs Expand Helpline on Antisemitism in K-12 Schools to Massachusetts and New York

Boston, MA, September 30, 2024 ... The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, ADL (the Anti-Defamation League), and StandWithUs, along with a coalition of leading law firms, today announced the launch of a helpline in K-12 schools to provide pro bono legal assistance to parents whose children are experiencing antisemitism in Massachusetts and New York. The helpline follows a successful pilot program in California, the first state for which the hotline was launched after a series of troubling antisemitic incidents in the state's K-12 schools.

Antisemitic incidents in elementary, middle and high schools in MA and NY have increased significantly over the last year. Reported [incidents in K-12 schools in MA](#) nearly doubled in 2023 -- 101 (up from 53 incidents in 2022) while [incidents in K-12 schools in NY](#) climbed to 173 (up from 53 incidents in in 2022).

The alarming rise in both the sheer number and intensity of antisemitic incidents in K-12 schools in New York and Massachusetts have made it clear that parents, students and educators need an option for legal help, said **Peggy Shukur, ADL Vice President, East Division**. "Particularly in situations where responses to antisemitism are inadequate or worse, access to high-quality legal assistance is a crucial tool to ensure a safe learning environment. By providing these legal efforts, this helpline will empower Jewish students, teachers and parents to take action to fight against antisemitic harassment and bigotry."

"Day after day, students across our state are facing a barrage of antisemitic incidents in K-12 schools," said **Scott Richman, ADL NY/NJ Regional Director**. "Increasingly, those incidents have required legal assistance. Alongside our impactful anti-hate education programs, this pro bono legal helpline is a welcome addition to the arsenal of tools at our disposal to fight the antisemitic prejudice that we see in our schools."

As a result of the California K-12 pilot program, in February 2024, Brandeis and ADL filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) against the Berkeley school district for failing to take action to end the nonstop bullying and harassment of Jewish students by peers and teachers. Since its launch, the CA hotline has received an influx of K-12 incidents. These include a wide variety of antisemitic incident reports including Jewish students being harassed, intimidated, and threatened with violence because of their religion.

"The barrage of anti-Semitic harassment, intimidation, and attacks against Jewish students is unfortunately not contained within the campus gates," stated **Brandeis Center Vice Chair and General Counsel Rachel Lerman**. "Coast to coast, Jewish K-12 students have been verbally and physically bullied, threatened, and assaulted by peers who absorb anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric from some of their teachers. They have been told they are hated and should all be killed, spat on, called dirty Jew, told to go to the gas chambers, slandered, and threatened with violence. Administrations cannot be allowed to turn a blind eye to the intimidation, bullying and anti-Semitic rhetoric their students endure within their

schools. Our team of lawyers stand ready to use the law to hold schools accountable to enforce their own rules as Jewish students are subjected to a virulently hostile environment. This must stop."

Parents, teachers, and other interested adults in MA and NY can use the [Legal Protection K-12 Helpline](#) to report incidents of antisemitic discrimination, intimidation, harassment, vandalism or violence that may necessitate legal action. Lawyers will conduct in-depth information-gathering interviews with persons who file reports. In some instances, they may provide pro bono representation on behalf of victims or provide referrals to organizations that can provide non-legal assistance. The lawyers will also, with permission of the individuals involved, use the reports to better understand the scope of the problem and report it to officials responsible for ensuring the laws are followed. If schools do not take action, they will be held accountable.

"CJP's Center for Combating Antisemitism is excited to support this important hotline as a proactive resource for parents, educators, and students," said **Melissa Garlick, Senior Director, Combating Antisemitism and Building Civic Engagement at Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP)**. "This initiative will serve as a valuable tool for our community to help address and prevent antisemitism, offering guidance, support, and solutions to foster safe and respectful learning environments. By working together, we're empowering school communities to not only respond to incidents but to build a culture of inclusion, understanding, and mutual respect."

"Consistent with our longstanding commitment to combating antisemitism in schools, on campus, and within the community, StandWithUs remains proud to be part of this coalition dedicated to protecting K-12 students from antisemitic harassment and discrimination, **said Carly Gammill, Director of Legal Policy at the StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department**. "The expansion of the initiative into Massachusetts and New York comes at a time when antisemitism continues to plague students in our nation's schools and will help ensure broader access to legal resources for students seeking to address attacks against their Jewish identity.

This expansion builds upon continued efforts to address antisemitism in a variety of educational settings. In November 2023, Brandeis and ADL, along with Hillel International, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, and other leading law firms, launched the [Campus Antisemitism Legal Line \(CALL\)](#), a helpline to assist students and faculty experiencing antisemitism on college campuses. More than [650 college students and faculty](#) have used this important resource to report incidents and request assistance.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits educational institutions that receive federal funding from discriminating against, or allowing others to discriminate against, students on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, and national origin. Title VI protects Jews based on their shared ancestral and ethnic identity. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights recognizes that harassing, marginalizing, demonizing, and excluding Jewish students based on the Zionist component of their Jewish identity is unlawful under Title VI.

To report an incident at a K-12 school, click here: <https://www.legal-protection.org/k-12>

To report an incident at a college or university, click here: <https://www.legal-protection.org/>

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.

ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all. More at www.adl.org.

StandWithUs is an international, nonprofit, and non-partisan Israel education organization that works to inspire and educate people of all ages about Israel, as well as challenge misinformation and fight against antisemitism. Through university fellowships, high school internships, middle school curricula, conferences, materials, social media and missions to Israel, StandWithUs supports people around the world who want to educate their schools and communities about Israel. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the organization has chapters and programs throughout the U.S., Israel, the UK, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Australia and the Netherlands.

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