



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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Federal Anti-Semitism Complaints Filed Against Three California Schools – Scripps, Cal Poly, and Etiwanda District

Brandeis Center, ADL, StandWithUs, Jewish on Campus Allege California Schools Willfully Ignored Severe Anti-Semitic Harassment & Intimidation, Urge Feds to Intervene

Washington, D.C., March 6, 2025... [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#), today, announced it has filed three federal complaints with the U.S. Department of Education against California State Polytechnic, Scripps College, and California's Etiwanda School District alleging the schools are in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Brandeis Center is joined by leading Jewish organizations in each of the complaints.

“While an increasing number of schools recognize that their Jewish students are being targeted both for their religious beliefs and due to their ancestral connection to Israel, and are taking necessary steps to address both classic and contemporary forms of anti-Semitism, some shamefully continue to turn a blind eye,” stated Brandeis Center Chairman Kenneth L. Marcus, a civil rights expert appointed by Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump to run the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education. “The law and federal government recognize Jews share a common faith *and* they are a people with a shared history and heritage rooted in the land of Israel. Schools that continue to ignore either aspect of Jewish identity are becoming dangerous breeding grounds for escalating anti-Jewish bigotry, and they must be held accountable.”

Harvard University, in response to a [lawsuit](#) filed by the Brandeis Center, recently took [significant measures](#) to protect its Jewish students from contemporary anti-Semitism. The university will apply the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism with its examples to its non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, recognize the centrality of Zionism to Jewish identity, and explicitly state that targeting Jews and Zionists constitutes a violation of school rules. Other [schools](#) have also settled recent complaints with similar concrete action.

Cal Poly

According to the complaint filed today against California State Polytechnic (Cal Poly), Humboldt by the Brandeis Center and Jewish on Campus, Jewish students have been attacked verbally and physically, excluded and forced out of areas on campus, and subjected to vicious anti-Semitism. Anti-Israel campus protestors have thrown fake blood on Jewish students; spray painted anti-Semitic graffiti; shouted anti-Semitic slurs at Jewish students; vandalized campus property, including frightening acts of violence like shattering glass doors; and harassed Jewish students celebrating a Jewish holiday by shouting anti-Semitic invectives at them through a megaphone, glorifying Hamas and chalking inflammatory anti-Semitic messages.

Instead of addressing the anti-Semitism, Cal Poly's administration has encouraged Jewish students to hide their Jewish identity to avoid being targeted. In one instance, a Cal Poly student approached the Chabad, a Jewish student group that was tabling at a club fair. He began shouting that the Jewish students were baby killers, genocide supporters and land stealers. The student grabbed items off the table and blocked other students from approaching the table with his intimidating rhetoric and by placing his body in front of the table. The perpetrator also inserted himself physically between the rabbi and students who were engaged in discussion, blocking their conversations. Instead of addressing the

anti-Semitic incident, the Associate Dean for Student Life told the Jewish students that they should pack up and leave the fair. In another instance, a ritual item was stolen from Jewish students and, instead of addressing the anti-Semitic act, the administration told the Jewish students they should take additional steps to avoid further theft. These are just two examples of many where the university encouraged Jewish students to keep their heads down and retreat. According to the complaint, “[t]he message from the University to Jewish students is clear: downplay your Jewish identity on campus or hide to avoid being targeted because the University will not protect you.” Jewish students report fearing for their safety and being denied opportunities. Some have left campus.

“Jewish students deserve consistent support from their university administrators, not calls to hide their Jewish identity,” said Jewish on Campus CEO Julia Jassey. “On campuses across the country, Jewish students have faced an unprecedented rise of antisemitism since the October 7th massacre, including at Cal Poly. We urge a swift investigation and a campus climate where no student has to endure such intimidation.”

Scripps College

The Scripps complaint, filed recently by the Brandeis Center, ADL and Arnold & Porter, alleges Scripps repeatedly abandoned Jewish and Israeli students targeted by anti-Semitic harassment. A student wearing a Star of David was told to remove her Jewish necklace. That student hears anti-Semitic comments two to three times a week, including that Jews are immoral and “rich and control the media.” Her peers have ostracized her, and she has lost friends for attending weekly Shabbat dinners and studying Torah with the campus rabbi. Multiple articles in the Scripps student newspaper contain shocking examples of anti-Semitic tropes. And the Motley Coffeehouse, the primary location for Scripps students to study together, socialize, and host events, described as the heart of the Scripps College campus, has repeatedly discriminated against and become an unwelcoming place for Scripps Jewish students.

The Motley staff were overheard boasting that they refused to hire a “Zionist.” Its student employees complained they did not want to associate with “crazy Zionists.” The coffeehouse has been plastered with anti-Israel flyers and the Motley staff hung a Palestinian flag on its walls, yet they refused to hang an Israeli flag. Requests to host Jewish events at the Motley were ignored or rejected, while anti-Israel student organizations were permitted to hold weekly meetings. The Motley refused to allow its space to be used for a vigil to honor the victims of October 7, yet it closed for an entire day in memory of a Hezbollah terrorist. “[R]ich Jewish donors” and “Zionists” were blamed when the Scripps Administration closed the Motley. Scripps failed to correct this blatantly false information, and anti-Semitic tropes spread like wildfire across campus.

While Pomona College, another member of the Claremont College Consortium, banned Scripps students who vandalized buildings and disrupted classes during a demonstration venerating the October 7 Hamas attacks, and referred those students to Scripps for disciplinary action, Scripps bent over backward to ensure Pomona’s bans would have as limited an impact on them as possible. According to the complaint, “Scripps’s failure to condemn and discipline—coupled with its active scrambling to support the anti-Semitic protesters—sends a message of support for the purveyors of anti-Semitism.” As one Jewish student stated: “I felt like maybe it’s best if I don’t engage with my Judaism here, so I don’t feel ostracized.” Jewish students have transferred from Scripps and chosen to study abroad or graduate early to escape the hostile environment. One Jewish student who stayed at Scripps noted she learned to hide her Jewish identity and suppress her views. In her words: “I stopped wearing anything that would identify me as a Jew. I regret not transferring to a school that takes the concerns of Jewish students seriously.”

Etiwanda

The Etiwanda complaint, also filed today by the Brandeis Center, ADL and StandWithUs, involves a 12-year-old girl who was subjected to repeated anti-Semitic bullying, harassment, and discrimination that continued to escalate due to inaction from the school. Outdoors on school grounds, a student struck her repeatedly with a stick and then with her bare hands. When the Jewish student called out for help, she was told to “shut [her] stupid Jewish ass up.” She was then pinned against a table and choked for several seconds, until she escaped, red-faced and coughing. Subsequent harassment based on her Jewish identity went on to occur in her classroom. She was humiliated and marginalized by a different peer and told, “This wouldn’t be an issue if you weren’t Jewish.” She was then bullied by yet another student who purposefully harassed and taunted her with a Hitler joke. The bullying took place over several weeks and in public in front of the girl’s peers. The school was aware of the incidents but failed to discipline the offenders or take steps to prevent further targeting. This is the first complaint brought through the Brandeis, ADL, StandWithUs [K-12 helpline](#), a pro-bono service open to parents and students.

“ADL and our partners will not sit idly by as Jewish students are attacked for their identity – from our college campuses to our K-12 schools, our educational institutions have an obligation to protect their Jewish students and ensure that all its students receive an education free of harassment and discrimination, said James Pasch, ADL’s Vice President of National Litigation. “Students and parents continue to reach out to ADL, Brandeis and StandWithUs through our expanded K-12 helpline, and we will continue to use administrative filings and the courts to ensure the safety of all Jewish students.”

"Too many of our nation's young minds are being corrupted by the disease of antisemitism. It is the duty of K-12 educators and administrators to provide the necessary education to inoculate them—not indoctrinate them," said Roz Rothstein, CEO and co-founder of StandWithUs. "As long as students continue to find themselves on the receiving end of anti-Jewish hate and bigotry from their peers or teachers, and their appeals to administration continue to fall on deaf ears, we will continue to show up and support them in holding their schools accountable."

The Brandeis Center, ADL and StandWithUs, along with the American Jewish Committee, recently prevented the Santa Ana Unified School District from teaching ethnic studies courses developed in secret and infected with anti-Semitism.

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.

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.

StandWithUs (SWU) is an international non-partisan education organization that inspires people of all ages about Israel, challenges misinformation and fights against antisemitism. SWU empowers people around the world to educate others through social media, print and digital materials in different languages, through educational programs and conferences, weekly newsletters, data and analytics, and missions to Israel. It takes legal action through the StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department. It empowers hundreds of student leaders annually through its college Fellowship and high school Internship. SWU provides schools and educators with vital tools through its IsraelLINK middle school program, Holocaust Education Center, and K-12 Fairness Center. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Los Angeles, StandWithUs has chapters throughout the U.S., and the world. <https://www.standwithus.com/>

Jewish on Campus (JOC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by Jewish college students, for Jewish college students. Jewish on Campus empowers Jewish student leaders to combat antisemitism on college campuses.

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