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BRANDEIS CENTER WARNS MICROSOFT: TREAT YOUR JEWISH EMPLOYEES EQUALLY OR WE'LL SEE YOU IN COURT

Microsoft's Refusal to Provide Jewish Employees Equal Access to Employee Resources Violates Federal Law, Impedes Fight Against Anti-Semitism at Microsoft

Washington, D.C., May 14, 2025: [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#) today warned Microsoft in a [letter](#) to its CEO and Chief Diversity Officer that if it continued to distribute professional benefits and advantages through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) on the basis of ethnic or racial identity, while denying these benefits to Jewish and other employees, the Brandeis Center would file a charge of discrimination with the EEOC and seek to proceed immediately to a lawsuit in federal court alleging a violation of federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Microsoft's nine ERGs are company-recognized, sponsored, and supported organizations of employees within the company based around a particular identifying characteristic, such as ethnicity, that affords members of that ethnic group extra opportunities for professional development, career advancement, and the ability to collectively oppose discrimination in the workplace. Microsoft doesn't recognize religion as a category of identity permitted to establish an ERG, and refuses to recognize the ethnic characteristic of Jewish identity; thus, Microsoft refuses to recognize a Jewish ERG, denying Jewish Microsoft employees benefits that are provided to others. This violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"Providing all employees equal access to professional benefits and opportunities, including Microsoft's Jewish employees, is the right thing to do and is compelled by various federal and local anti-discrimination statutes," stated Kenneth L. Marcus, chair of the Brandeis Center and a civil rights appointee for President George H. W. Bush and President Donald Trump. "This discrimination must stop."

Employees who participate in Microsoft's ERGs receive benefits that materially advantage participating employees' careers, including substantial financial support to engage in mentoring, professional development and advancement; access to senior executives for networking and relationship building; and funding for charitable organizations serving their communities.

Microsoft is also depriving its Jewish employees of the opportunity to band together to combat persistent anti-Semitic discrimination, harassment, and alienation – issues that have plagued Jewish employees at Microsoft for years. These include anti-Semitic comments on Microsoft's internal chat platform posted after the October 7 massacre that promoted violence against Jews and advocated for the eradication of the state of Israel and criticism voiced in meetings that Jews complain about anti-Semitism too much. Moreover, the company has refused to acknowledge Jewish Heritage Month and other Jewish calendar events, scheduled significant Microsoft community and essential work events on major Jewish holidays, denied Jewish employees equal opportunities to offer Jewish-

themed programming and speakers, particularly concerning anti-Semitism, and failed to offer training on combating workplace anti-Semitism.

“Instead of dictating the terms of Jewish identity to its Jewish employees, Microsoft should listen to them and accept that to be Jewish is to be part of a people, not merely a faith,” said Hon. Rory Lancman, director of corporate initiatives and senior counsel at the Brandeis Center, who sent the letter to Microsoft. “Microsoft’s Jewish employees have the same professional needs and aspirations as other ethnic minorities at Microsoft, and can’t be denied those same opportunities to express themselves collectively about anti-Semitism, seek a better working environment, and achieve professional advancement.”

The Brandeis Center is representing Jewish Microsoft employees who are members of The Louis D. Brandeis Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism, a nonprofit voluntary membership corporation. The Coalition’s mission is to combat anti-Semitism and defend the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. When appropriate, the Coalition works with legal counsel to represent the interests of its members to effect systemic change through advocacy, negotiation, and if necessary, in litigation and administrative proceedings. Individuals interested in joining the Coalition can reach out to Emma Enig, the Coalition’s Executive Director, at eenig@ldbcoalition.org.

The Brandeis Center recently formed a new public interest litigation group, [The Center for Legal Innovation \(CLI\)](#), to litigate all forms of anti-Semitism, such as anti-Semitism that occurs in such sectors as the workplace, housing, healthcare, public accommodations, government services, unions, academia, and corporations. Advisory board members include U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr, Solicitor General Paul Clement, and renowned litigators Davida Brook, Brad Karp, Thomas McCarthy, Jason Torchinsky, and Erik Jaffe. Victims seeking pro-bono counsel and support can reach out to David Dince, Brandeis Center Director of Litigation, at ddince@brandeiscenter.com or 917-509-1203 (mobile), 202-559-9296 (office).

***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. More at www.brandeiscenter.com*