



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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BRANDEIS CENTER COMMENDS MICROSOFT, CONGRATULATES MICROSOFT'S JEWISH EMPLOYEES ON MICROSOFT'S DECISION TO EQUALIZE RECOGNITION OF ITS "JEWS AT MICROSOFT" EMPLOYEE NETWORK

The Brandeis Center had [Warned Microsoft](#) of Legal Action on Behalf of Microsoft's Jewish Employees; Microsoft's Move Follows the Decision in May to Fully Recognize a Jewish Employee Resource Group at Adobe, Whose Jewish Employees the Brandeis Center Also Counseled

Washington, D.C. - [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#) today commended Microsoft on its decision to equalize its treatment of its Jewish employee network, "Jews at Microsoft" (JAMS), alongside other recognized and funded ethnicity-based employee networks, and congratulates its JAMS members on whose behalf the Brandeis Center warned Microsoft's CEO and Chief Diversity Officer of potential legal action asserting violations of federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Microsoft's nine top-tier employee networks, designated as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), were company-recognized, sponsored, and supported organizations of employees within Microsoft based around a particular identifying characteristic, such as ethnicity, that afforded members of that ethnic group extra opportunities for professional development, career advancement, and the ability to collectively oppose discrimination in the workplace. **Microsoft hadn't recognized religion as a category of identity permitted to establish an ERG, and refused to recognize the ethnic characteristic of Jewish identity; thus, Microsoft refused 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.

Microsoft advised its various employee groups today that it is restructuring its employee network program so that all employee groups are equally recognized and funded, including JAMS.

"The Brandeis Center applauds Microsoft's Jewish employees on achieving equality with other employee groups," said **Kenneth L. Marcus, chair and CEO of the Brandeis Center and a civil rights appointee for two presidential administrations.**

"Microsoft must provide all of its employees, including Jews at Microsoft, equal employment opportunities. We will not hesitate to take legal action on behalf of Jewish employees whenever equal rights are denied."

"Microsoft's Jewish employees showed great courage and determination in insisting on their right to equal treatment and on defining Jewish identity on their own terms," said **Hon. Rory Lancman, director of corporate initiatives and senior counsel at the Brandeis Center, and a former member of the New York State Assembly and New York City Council, who sent the warning letter to Microsoft.** "Microsoft's Jewish employees will now have the same professional and organizational opportunities as other ethnic minorities at Microsoft, and the same opportunities to act collectively to combat anti-Semitism at Microsoft."

The Brandeis Center has significantly expanded its scope in combating workplace anti-Semitism, representing a range of workers and union members in active cases in federal courts and before the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and National Labor Relations Board. These include claims brought on behalf of [janitorial employees](#) harmed by the unlawful takeover of Hamilton Hall at Columbia University, [attorneys and union members](#) at prominent legal services organizations, and [Jewish professors and teachers](#) opposing anti-Semitic discrimination on college campuses and in K-12 schools. The Brandeis Center has also expanded its policy reform efforts through congressional briefings on important workplace anti-Semitism topics, training for the corporate and legal community, and [forums with leading policymakers](#), including, for example, with now-Acting Chair of the E.E.O.C., Andrea Lucas.

The Brandeis Center represented 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).

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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.