



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.

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South Carolina House Approves Landmark Bill to Address Growing Anti-Semitism *First State To Take This Critical Step*

Washington, D.C., March 10: [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#) (LDB) today applauded the South Carolina House of Representatives for its overwhelming approval of legislation that will help combat the growing threat of anti-Semitism on state college campuses.

“Anti-Semitism is on the rise across our nation. In the past few weeks, many hateful acts have been committed against the Jewish community. According to the FBI’s latest reporting, there were more incidents of anti-Semitism than all other religious hate crimes combined. And the situation is worst on college campuses where the threat to Jewish students is escalating at a rapid and frightening rate,” stated LDB president Kenneth L. Marcus, who testified at the South Carolina House Judiciary Subcommittee hearing on the bill. “We applaud the South Carolina legislators for standing up against this growing anti-Jewish bigotry, and in a way that fully protects free speech on campus. We particularly commend Representative Alan Clemmons who authored this bill and has been a tremendous leader in protecting Jewish students and all students. We congratulate Representative Clemmons, his colleagues in the Israel Allies Caucus and the Israel Allies Foundation for their successful efforts to fight discrimination on campus.”

“The House today voted 103-3 in overwhelming support to pass H. 3643, after a particularly powerful floor speech by the great Rep. Alan Clemmons (available for viewing [here](#)). The timing could not be more appropriate, given the targeting of Jewish schools and community institutions we are now witnessing almost daily. This unprecedented bill will give South Carolina’s state educational institutions the ability to ensure that incidents of anti-Semitism are properly responded to while simultaneously protecting free speech rights. For the past few years South Carolina, and specifically Rep. Alan Clemmons, have been bravely leading the way with badly needed legislation like H. 3643. It should be noted that Clemmons and South Carolina lead the nation in efforts to legislatively combat the BDS Movement, and it is certainly our expectation that additional state legislatures will now again follow suit and stand squarely against other manifestations of anti-Semitism as well,” stated Joseph Sabag, U.S. Director for Israel Allies Foundation.

The South Carolina bill, [H.3643](#), passed the South Carolina House by a vote of 103 – 3 yesterday and received unanimous consent in its final approval today. It will now move to the Senate for consideration. The bill ensures crucial legal protections to the rights of Jewish students. It provides South Carolina public post-secondary institutions with a proper definition of anti-Semitism to use to identify and fight discrimination of Jewish students. The definition included in H. 3643, the U.S. Department of State’s definition of anti-Semitism, is the single most authoritative definition of anti-Semitism in the U.S. and across Europe. In addition to defining classic forms of anti-Semitism, the State Department definition is careful to clarify the confusion surrounding the line between anti-Semitism and legitimate criticism of the State of Israel. The U.K. recently adopted an almost identical definition to combat anti-Semitism and 50 countries across the globe endorse it.

“Anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise across America and especially on our college campuses,” stated Representative Clemmons, bill author and chief cosponsor. “I believe this is an overdue and appropriate response that will strengthen our state’s preparedness to deal with acts of anti-Semitism. I wish to thank the professionals at the Israel Allies Foundation and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for their important legal and policy assistance. This bill would not be where it is today without their expertise and resourcing. I am a proud of the South Carolina

legislature's leadership role in this battle.”

The South Carolina bill is careful to protect students' First Amendment rights. H. 3643 in no way regulates or restricts free speech and/or academic freedom. Rather, the bill ensures that authorities consider the U.S. Department of State's definition of anti-Semitism in instances when it is necessary to determine the intent of *unprotected* activities, including assault, battery and vandalism.

Anti-Semitism is an urgent and compounding problem across the nation. Jewish hate crime victims, totaling 664 in 2015 according to the [FBI's Hate Crime Report](#), outnumber victims of all other religious groups combined (580 victims). A [Brandeis Center-Trinity College study](#) found that 54 percent of Jewish students reported experiencing or witnessing anti-Semitism in 2014. And the situation is getting worse. An [AMCHA Initiative study](#) reports a 45 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the first half of 2016 as compared to the same period in 2015.

There has been significant work on the federal level to tackle discrimination of Jewish students. Sens. Tim Scott (R-SC) and Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced and unanimously passed the bipartisan Anti-Semitism Awareness Act in the Senate in early December. This Act will assist the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in deciding whether harassment was motivated by anti-Semitic intent. Reps. Peter J. Roskam (R-IL) and Ted Deutch (D-FL) introduced the companion bipartisan House bill (H.R.6421), but it was too late in the congressional term to achieve passage. Congress is expected to take action this year.

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About The Louis D. Brandeis Center: The Louis D. Brandeis Center, Inc., or LDB, is an independent, nonprofit organization established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. The Brandeis Center conducts research, education, and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses. It 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.

About Kenneth Marcus: Marcus formerly served as staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and head of the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. He is also an award-winning author of two books — *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford University Press: 2015) and *Jewish Identity and Civil Rights in America* (Cambridge University Press: 2010), associate editor of the *Journal for the Study of Anti-Semitism* and a recognized anti-Semitism and civil rights scholar.