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Tufts Student Government Member Threatened with Impeachment, Disciplinary Action for Publicly Expressing His Jewish Identity

Legal Advocates Demand Tufts President Intervene Immediately

Washington, D.C., February 23: Tufts Community Union Judiciary (TCUJ) member, Max Price, was provided a complaint seeking to have him removed from office for expressing Jewish identity. Lawyers from [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#) (LDB), who are representing Price, [demanded](#) Tufts university promptly intervene and halt the proceedings.

“Mr. Price has been subjected to anti-Semitic harassment targeting him on the basis of his ethnic and ancestral Jewish identity. This harassment reached a peak a week ago, when Mr. Price was provided with a complaint filed by Tufts Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) seeking to have him removed from the TCUJ,” wrote LDB lawyers to Tufts President Anthony Monaco, Tufts General Counsel Mary Jeka and Tufts Provost Nadine Aubry. “SJP’s position would mean that Black students may not participate in student government discussions related to race, Catholic students may not evaluate student government resolutions related to religion, and Jewish students must be precluded from discussing anti-Semitism.”

The complaint comes after a months-long campaign of intimidation, harassment and discrimination against Price for speaking against SJP’s attempt to include a Deadly Exchange Campaign referendum on the student election ballot. During the course of SJP’s referendum campaign, SJP members repeatedly accused Price of bias, bullied and harassed him, and pressured him to recuse himself, and they are now threatening him with a disciplinary hearing and removal from office for no reason other than he has publicly expressed his Jewish identity. As a result of SJP’s demands, Price was forced to sit through multiple hour-long interrogations by Tufts student government leadership about his personal beliefs and identity as a pro-Israel Jew. Even after the TCUJ determined that there was no evidence of bias and no need for Price to recuse himself, he was unlawfully silenced and placed on “mute” for the entire final Zoom meeting where TCUJ members considered the referendum. A Tufts Community Union Senate hearing to review SJP’s complaint against Price has been scheduled for February 28.

Members of the TCU Senate, which is set to preside over Price’s hearing, have made statements that utilize anti-Semitic tropes about money and power, indicate explicit support for SJP and its hateful referendum, and demonstrate personal bias against Price.

“As someone who has spoken out for racial justice and against police brutality, I was appalled SJP was attempting to spread blatantly baseless claims, to the entire student body, that Israel and Jews are responsible for institutional racism and police brutality in the U.S.,” stated Price. “As soon as I spoke up to correct the misinformation and the lies, I was targeted and marginalized, called a racist, a fascist, a Nazi, an enemy of progress, slandered in the student newspaper, told I had to recuse myself from my

elected position, and most recently, threatened with impeachment and removal from the student government.”

Deadly Exchange, launched by SJP Tufts in Spring 2018, blames Israel and its Jewish American supporters for fueling racist conduct in U.S. law enforcement. The campaign seeks to link Israel to white supremacy and police brutality. By mischaracterizing the purpose and content of American-Israeli law enforcement exchange programs, the Deadly Exchange Campaign spreads the false notion that Jews are responsible for systemic racism in the U.S. The campaign utilizes anti-Semitic tropes associated with Jewish power and Jewish conspiracies and promotes a modern blood libel, the baseless claim that Jews and Israel are responsible for tragic deaths of unarmed people of color by American officers.

“Harassing, marginalizing, demonizing, and excluding these Jewish students on the basis of the Zionist components of their Jewish identity is just as unlawful and discriminatory as attacking a Jewish student for observing the Sabbath and keeping kosher,” wrote LDB lawyers in their letter to Tufts officials. “It is imperative that the university take prompt and effective steps to protect Mr. Price by halting the upcoming disciplinary hearing and ending the harassment and discrimination that has infringed on Mr. Price’s freedom of speech, denied him due process, and deprived him of equal opportunity and equal access to university programs in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Tufts University’s stated institutional policies regarding freedom of speech, including academic freedom, as recently incorporated into regulations of the U.S. Department of Education.”

However, despite being made aware of all the details of this harassment, the Tufts administration dismissed this letter and abdicated its responsibility to protect Jewish students.

Silencing Price during the TCUJ deliberations of the Deadly Exchange Campaign denied the free speech that the First Amendment secures against government suppression. In addition, Tufts is legally obligated to protect Price under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Tufts own Non-Discrimination Policy. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in educational institutions that receive federal funding, and forbids discrimination against Jews on the basis of their actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. As clarified in Executive Order 13899, Title VI is to be enforced “against prohibited forms of discrimination rooted in anti-Semitism as vigorously as against all other forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VI.” The Executive Order references the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, which makes clear that denying Jewish people’s right to self-determination in their historic homeland—i.e., anti-Zionism—is a contemporary form of anti-Semitism.

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