



Contacts: Brandeis Center, Nicole Rosen, 202-309-5724
ADL, Todd Gutnick, 212-885-7755, adlmedia@adl.org
StandWithUs, Jennifer Kutner, 310-245-4109, jenniferk@standwithus.org

BRANDEIS CENTER/ADL/STANDWITHUS LAUNCH PRO BONO K-12 ANTI-SEMITISM HELPLINE

Washington, D.C., Feb. 29, 2024: The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, ADL (the Anti-Defamation League), and StandWithUs, along with four leading law firms, today announced a new pilot helpline to provide pro bono legal assistance to parents whose children are experiencing anti-Semitism in California's K-12 schools. The pilot program selected California as the first state given a series of troubling incidents of anti-Semitism in the state's K-12 schools.

Dozens of Jewish families have requested transfers out of California school districts because of severe and persistent anti-Semitic bullying. Earlier this week, the Brandeis Center and ADL filed a [complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights against the Berkeley Unified School District for its failure to address severe and persistent bullying and harassment of Jewish students by peers and teachers. Jewish students report being worried about mob violence, including being "jumped" at school. Many have said they remove their Stars of David and no longer wear Jewish camp t-shirts, and that they are learning to keep their heads down and hide their Judaism while they move through their school days in fear.

In the three months after the Oct. 7 Hamas massacre, ADL recorded a total of 256 antisemitic incidents in U.S. elementary, middle and high schools. This represents a more than 140 percent increase from the 105 incidents reported during the same time period the previous year.

Parents and other interested adults in California can go to the [Legal Protection K-12 Helpline](#) to report incidents of anti-Semitic discrimination, intimidation, harassment, vandalism or violence that may necessitate legal action. Lawyers will conduct in-depth information-gathering interviews with persons who file reports. In some cases, they may provide pro bono representation on behalf of victims and provide referrals to organizations that can provide non-legal assistance. The lawyers will also, with permission of the individuals involved, use the data they obtain to better understand the scope of the problem and report it to officials responsible for ensuring the laws are followed. If officials do not take action, they will be held accountable.

"Frankly, school principals and administrators should themselves be cracking down on the surge in anti-Jewish bullying we are witnessing. That is what the law requires," stated Kenneth L. Marcus, founder and chairman of the Brandeis Center and the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education for the George W. Bush and Donald Trump administrations. "However, far too many are failing in their legal responsibilities and choosing to sweep escalating anti-Semitism under the rug. Our legal team stands ready to step into this gap and demand the protections Jewish students are guaranteed under the law."

"With reports of antisemitism in K-12 schools rising significantly since the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel, we wanted to ensure that parents and students have a place to turn to for legal help when they need it," said Jonathan Greenblatt, ADL CEO. "If this pilot helpline is successful in California, ADL and our partners will look toward expanding it to other states where antisemitism in schools is surging."

"Spikes in antisemitic incidents in the K-12 schools, coupled with the failure of administrators to respond with meaningful corrective action, has created the need for a more unified and coordinated educational and legal response," said Carly Gammill, director of legal strategy at the StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department. "All students deserve an educational environment free from discrimination and harassment based on their protected identities. StandWithUs is proud to partner with this coalition to achieve this goal and further protect Jewish and other Zionist students."

The law firms that have stepped up to assist the Jewish organizations in providing pro bono legal protections are Covington & Burling, Dechert LLP, Akin, and Davis Polk.

In November 2023, Brandeis and ADL, along with Hillel International, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, and other leading law firms, launched the [Campus Antisemitism Legal Line \(CALL\)](#), a helpline to assist students and faculty experiencing anti-Semitism on college campuses. More than 400 college students and faculty have reached out to report incidents and request assistance. And the Brandeis Center, ADL, AJC, the Potomac Law Group, and Covington & Burling filed a [lawsuit](#) in September 2023 challenging the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) on grounds that it failed to abide by the open meeting laws in order to introduce courses with anti-Semitic content into its ethnic studies curriculum.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits educational institutions that receive federal funding from discriminating against, or allowing others to discriminate against, students on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, and national origin. Title VI protects Jews based on their shared ancestral and ethnic identity. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights recognizes that harassing, marginalizing, demonizing, and excluding Jewish students based on the Zionist component of their Jewish identity is unlawful under Title VI.

The Department of Education is currently investigating Brandeis Center complaints filed against [Wellesley](#), [SUNY New Paltz](#), the [University of Southern California](#) (USC), [Brooklyn College](#), and the [University of Illinois](#), and the Brandeis Center recently filed federal complaints against [American University](#) and the [University of California](#) for anti-Semitism on UC Berkeley's campus.

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.

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. More at www.adl.org.

StandWithUs is an international, nonprofit, and non-partisan Israel education organization that works to inspire and educate people of all ages about Israel, as well as challenge misinformation and fight against antisemitism. Through university fellowships, high school internships, middle school curricula, conferences, materials, social media and missions to Israel, StandWithUs supports people around the world who want to educate their schools and communities about Israel. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the organization has chapters and programs throughout the U.S., Israel, the UK, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Australia and the Netherlands.