



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Protecting Students on Campus Act (S.163) and the Antisemitism Awareness Act (S.558)

Dear Chairman Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists (AAJLJ), we write to express our strong support for the Protecting Students on Campus Act of 2025 (S.163) and the Antisemitism Awareness Act of 2025 (S.558). These legislative measures represent essential progress in protecting the civil rights and personal safety of Jewish students, as well as in fostering a learning environment grounded in respect and equity for all.

The AAJLJ is a voluntary bar association that engages with legal issues having an impact on the Jewish and broader world through the lens of Jewish values and tradition. The AAJLJ educates and advocates around issues such as civil rights, human rights, religious freedom, access to justice, social justice, the defense of Israel, responses to antisemitism, the rule of law, Holocaust restitution, and Jewish Law. Through its members, the AAJLJ works to safeguard human rights and combat antisemitism.

We are alarmed by the escalating incidence of antisemitic harassment and threats on college campuses, which has created an increasingly hostile climate for Jewish students and faculty. Left unaddressed, such conduct undermines the educational mission of these institutions and threatens to marginalize members of the Jewish community in spaces meant to cultivate dialogue and scholarship.

The Protecting Students on Campus Act (S.163) would bolster transparency and accountability by requiring colleges and universities to report incidents of antisemitic and

other forms of harassment. The data collection and reporting provisions of this bill are critical to understanding the scope of the problem and developing effective institutional responses. AAJLJ urges Congress to ensure appropriate funding and staffing of OCR to carry out these directives.

The Antisemitism Awareness Act (S.558) ensures that the Department of Education considers the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism when investigating civil rights complaints. This definition has broad international support and offers a clear and consistent standard for identifying antisemitic conduct, including when it manifests in coded or veiled forms. Importantly, nothing in this definition proscribes speech or other expression protected by the First Amendment.

Together, these bills demonstrate a bipartisan commitment to combating antisemitism and reaffirming that all students deserve to feel safe and respected in their learning environments. We urge the Senate HELP Committee to support and advance these important legislative initiatives.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent issue and welcome the opportunity to support your efforts to uphold civil rights on campus.

Respectfully,



Robert Garson
AAJLJ President



Richard T. Foltin
AAJLJ Executive Director