



**Opening Statement of Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT), Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Hearing: “Confronting the Scourge of Antisemitism on Campus”
November 14, 2023**

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you for joining us today for this very timely and consequential hearing. I want to begin by expressing sympathy for the Jewish members of our community who have felt endangered, discouraged, and disappointed by the exposure of antisemitism throughout the country. I also want to thank our witnesses for coming forward to testify and working with our Committee during this difficult time of upheaval.

This Committee is convening today to address the scourge of antisemitism spreading like wildfire on college campuses. As a first step toward eradicating this evil, this Committee has invited Jewish campus and community leaders to help us understand the source of its proliferation.

I recognize that antisemitism is not a new problem. It has taken on various forms throughout history: the most noted, prior to October 7th, were the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. Both will forever remain a stain in the annals of human history.

The modern form of antisemitism is more subtle, for it is often disguised under progressive political innuendos. For example, Offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion steeped deeply in the doctrine of Marxism are anything but inclusive for Jews. Evidence shows that campus DEI bureaucracies play a major role in propagating the spread of antisemitism.

There is a dirty little secret at the heart of DEI, as it seeks to dismantle systems of oppression. It divides the world into “oppressors” and “the oppressed,” ascribing collective guilt to the oppressors and collective innocence to the oppressed.

But what does that mean for the Jewish people? You would think the DEI industry would be sympathetic to the Jewish people’s history of oppression, persecution, and wholesale slaughter.

But no, the DEI hierarchy places the Jewish people at the very bottom of its “oppression” spectrum.

A study from the Heritage Foundation explains how diversity officers fuel the antisemitic fire. After searching through the Twitter feeds of 741 campus DEI personnel, Heritage’s Jay Greene found that 96 percent of Israel-related tweets were either critical of Israel or explicitly antisemitic.

DEI programs are ideologically antisemitic because they ascribe collective guilt to the entire state of Israel for its mere existence. The core principles of the Marxist ideologue are not diversity, equity, or inclusion. They are instead discrimination, intolerance, and bigotry towards individuals thought to belong to the wrong group.

So rather than curbing discrimination on campus, these DEI bureaucracies stoke racial tensions. A report from the National Association of Scholars found that “DEI offices routinely organize race-segregated events, race-exclusionary affinity groups, race-segregated spaces such as Black-only dorms, and race-specific training.” You literally can’t make this stuff up. If this reminds anyone of the hate-fueled 1960s, the days of deep south Jim Crow segregation and roaming gangs of KKK bullies, that’s because, it is.

Hopefully, our witness from Yale, Ms. Tartak, can speak more about her experience with campus DEI and if it made her feel “included.”

I cannot think of a time since the 1960s when a group of students was more blatantly targeted, harassed, bullied, intimidated, and physically assaulted than Jewish students in the last month.

Swastikas graffitied on campus. Jewish students being segregated in classrooms by their professors. Jewish students at New York City's Cooper Union being forced to lock themselves in the college library, and later escorted out a back door. What is at the core of this problem? A gang of face-covering, cowardly bigots who feel no shame, and who have no fear of accountability from college administrators, where this hate is being taught.

Chants for genocide ring loudly. A Cornell history professor called the pure evil terrorist attack on civilian innocence "exhilarating."

While antisemitic speech might be free, it deserves our moral condemnation. With respect to all free speech, this Committee fully supports students' right to political expression. What we do not and will never support is terrorism and threats of violence. And we can no longer support the use of taxpayer dollars to cultivate, nourish, and grow hate on our campuses.

I look forward to hearing our witnesses' accounts of exclusiveness and divisiveness that are now being promoted throughout our country. DEI definitely plays a large role in fomenting antisemitic hate, but in what other areas should we look to hold universities accountable?