



**Opening Statement of Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-CA), Chairman
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections**

**Hearing: “Combating Workplace Antisemitism in Postsecondary Education:
Protecting Employees from Discrimination”**

June 26, 2024

(As prepared for delivery)

Since the evil, horrifying October 7 attack by Hamas terrorists on Israeli men, women, and children, America has witnessed a deeply disturbing rise in antisemitism. Following the attacks, the Anti-Defamation League reported a 388 percent rise in antisemitic incidents.

This has continued in the weeks and months since, across different regions of the country and different facets of society—as the heinous events outside a Los Angeles synagogue this last week made painfully clear. Yet it is in one particular setting—at colleges and universities—where the problem has been most troubling.

We have seen institutions of higher learning gripped by one of the world’s most ancient and retrograde prejudices. We have seen scenes that shock the conscience. We have heard from students who have lived through an absolute nightmare, who’ve been targeted, attacked, denied access to campus or buildings—all because of their heritage. We have seen university leaders stand by as this horror played out on their campuses, even in some cases catering to those who promote antisemitism and celebrate terrorism.

In response, the House Education and the Workforce Committee, under the leadership of Chairwoman Foxx, has worked to expose and combat this disgraceful reality. We are using every available tool to protect the safety and civil rights of students – to compel our universities to take immediate action, and undertake systematic reform.

Today, the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections will examine another dimension of this crisis: employment-based discrimination in higher education. We will hear about the experience of Jewish faculty and staff at universities that have allowed illegal harassment and discrimination to go unchecked.

Universities are often a state's largest employer. In my home state, the University of California system has nearly 200,000 employees, making it the single largest state-based employer in the United States.

I take great pride in the University of California system and its world-class schools. While many services in our government are substandard, and while our universities have had their challenges, the UC, CSU, and community college systems have remained tremendous assets to our state.

However, the events that we have witnessed on certain campuses, in California and across the United States, could not be more antithetical to the values of our state and country.

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is a particularly troubling case. Three students have filed a lawsuit against UCLA for violating their rights by allowing the "Jew Exclusion Zone" encampment and related antisemitic harassment. Chancellor Gene Block testified before this Committee last month regarding the encampment, which was eventually broken up, but the university showed an inability to take decisive action and protect the rights of Jewish students or employees. The Chancellor refused to answer questions about whether students had been suspended or faculty disciplined.

On May 6, at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), an illegal encampment eventually led to the arrest of 64 individuals, including 40 students. Professor Brian Keating will testify about how this encampment was anything but peaceful and aimed to foment hate against the Jewish people. He will share testimonials from other university employees, one who said she doesn't "know how much longer I can do this. I can't work at UCSD, I can barely live here—and I have learned, brutally and painfully, where my life ranks for the people I'm surrounded by every day."

At Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California, Geography Professor Dafna Golden endured vile harassment from a fellow professor and students, including being called a “violent Zionist” and being called a former soldier in the Israeli Defense Forces, even though this wasn’t even true. She will testify today to her experience as a professor under such hostile conditions.

I applaud Professor Golden for coming forward with her story, and I look forward to the testimony of all our esteemed witnesses. Universities’ inadequate responses to this harassment only underscore the urgent need for stronger protections and accountability, and your insight today on how we can achieve this goal will be invaluable.

Specifically, Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* protects employees from antisemitic discrimination. Therefore, an important purpose of today’s hearing is to examine the extent to which universities are failing to fulfill their legal obligations to faculty and staff, and what corrective measures may be needed to uphold the law.

College may be out for the summer for the most part, but the rise of antisemitism remains a grave risk to students, faculty, and American higher education. It is, simply put, an alarming state of affairs. It cannot be tolerated.

One way we can assure the rights of Jewish Americans are protected is by upholding Title VII and remaining resolute in our commitment to fighting antisemitism and all forms of discrimination.