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**President, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**  
**Testimony before the**  
**United States House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Education and Workforce**  
**May 7, 2025**

Good morning, Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee.

For the past 14 years, it has been my privilege to serve as the President of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California.

At Cal Poly, we emphasize a “Learn by Doing” approach, providing hands-on, practical experience. Our approach includes learning from experiences and constantly getting better.

Over the past 18 months, questions have been asked about how higher education institutions confront, prevent and combat antisemitism that escalated after the 2023 Hamas attacks against Israeli citizens.

The October 7 attacks on innocent men, women, and children were horrific. The violence perpetrated that day must be condemned without equivocation.

And the targeting of Jewish students on campuses across the U.S. that followed was terrible and unacceptable.

Both as a university president and a human being, this is a matter I take particularly seriously. We have to do better.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee. No leader wants to have to acknowledge potential gaps or find it necessary to look back on some actions with regret for what more could or should have been done in a sensitive situation.

At Cal Poly, when people do not live up to our commitment to prohibit prejudice and bias, we hold them accountable. We have dealt with antisemitism and other forms of discrimination by faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

We do not tolerate threatening activity; we deploy campus police whenever there is the potential for trouble; and they make arrests and file criminal charges when justified.

In addition, when alleged antisemitism or harassment occurs, we investigate and impose appropriate university discipline.

At Cal Poly, we have enjoyed a vibrant Jewish community for many years. Stakeholders rate Jewish life on our campus at a high level, and the number of Jewish students has doubled since 2011.

Hillel and Chabad are registered Cal Poly student organizations, and I am invited to and proudly participate in some of their activities.

I am grateful to the Hillel and Chabad student leaders who traveled across the country to sit with me and support Cal Poly today, Avi Shapiro and Mia Kaplan Kirstensen.

In addition to those longstanding partnerships, we have been working with the ADL and other Jewish leaders on several initiatives.

- First, we have spoken out to clearly oppose antisemitism.
- Second, we are enhancing our mandatory student orientation and biennial employee training to provide greater education and awareness about antisemitism.
- Third, we are establishing a new Presidential Antisemitism Task Force that will develop an action plan focused on Jewish student life, antisemitism education, and cultural awareness.
- Fourth, we are endowing a chair in Jewish studies and building an interfaith center that includes Jewish students. Our efforts to support Jewish students and combat antisemitism have made progress. I want to emphasize that our goal is continuous improvement.

We will continue to work to give each student the safest possible environment, free from discrimination and religious intolerance, so they can learn, grow, and succeed. We will continue to strongly confront any antisemitic conduct or threats.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for your work on this important issue and pledge my continuing support.