

**NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE
RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND
SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
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Wednesday, April 30, 2025

U.S. SENATE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:30 p.m., Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Rick Scott, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senator Scott, Tuberville, Moody, Gillibrand, Kim, and Alsobrooks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICK SCOTT, CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN. The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging will now come to order. As a reminder, disruptions of this hearing will not be tolerated. Should you disrupt this congressional hearing, you will be removed pursuant to D.C. Code 221307. Under the code, we can ban you from attending future hearings for one year.

Today, we are gathered to address an issue that has been weighing heavily on the hearts and minds of many. One that affects a significant portion of our aging population, Antisemitism.

This hearing is especially timely as we reflect on Passover and the time of renewal for the Jewish community and prepare to recognize Jewish American Heritage Month in May. The recent surge in Antisemitic incidents including harassment, violence, and vandalism has become an alarming trend, especially impacting elderly Jewish Americans, including Holocaust survivors.

These individuals, many of whom have already endured the horrors of persecution, are now facing renewed threats that re-traumatize and destabilize their lives. Antisemitism is not a distant historical issue. It is an ongoing reality that continues to rise in our society. I remember when my daughters were teenagers, we took them to Auschwitz and Birkenau, and you can read everything you want to read. You can go to a Holocaust Museum.

Going there and seeing the systemic way they just completely murdered Jews. It is just hard to believe that anybody could have a lack of humanity. Older Jewish Americans overwhelmingly recognize the increasing threat of Antisemitism.

In fact, according to the American Jewish Committee's 2024 State of Antisemitism in America Report, 96 percent of Jewish Americans over the age of 65 recognize that Antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. today. More than 94 percent of Jews Ameri-

cans aged 50 to 64 reported an increase in Antisemitism over the past five years.

Forty-three percent of Jewish Americans over 50 have avoided wearing Jewish symbols or public identifying as Jewish out of fear. These statistics are not just numbers. They represent lives, families, and communities being impacted by fear and violence. This should not be happening.

Beyond the statistics, elderly Jewish individuals have faced direct acts of aggression. In recent years, reports have surfaced of elderly Jewish individuals being harassed in public, attacked at protests, and even killed in an Antisemitic instance. A Holocaust survivor in New York was spat on and verbally abused.

In California, Paul Kessler, a 69-year-old Jewish man, was struck on the head with a megaphone by a pro-Hamas protester, was hospitalized in critical condition, and eventually died from blunt force trauma. That is absolutely despicable. Such incidents have highlighted concerns among older Jewish communities, particularly Holocaust survivors, for whom these events re-traumatize past experiences of persecution.

In my home State of Florida, we have a large population of both seniors and Jewish individuals, so this is deeply important to me, and many, many, many in my State. In our first hearing of this Congress, I outlined my priorities for the Committee to ensure the wellness of American seniors and broke it down to four key issues, achieving physical and mental health, establishing financial stability, living in a safe community, and securing family and community support systems.

If you are afraid of being targeted just because you are Jewish, how could you possibly achieve these things? If you could be attacked on the street simply because you are wearing a star of David or a yarmulke and you don't feel safe going out for a walk or out to the gym to exercise, do you really have strong physical and mental health? Can you really say that you are able to live in a safe community, or that you can build a community support system when you feel isolated?

When you think about the true impacts that Antisemitism or any hate has on people every single day, you realize it disrupts every part of their lives. As we face these challenges, it is crucial that we listen to those directly affected.

Today, we are very fortunate to hear from remarkable witnesses whose experiences, expertise, and commitment to the safety and prosperity of the older Jewish community and Jewish community at large provides invaluable insights into this growing crisis. Their voices will help us understand how we can better protect our elderly Jewish citizens and ensure their safety in their communities.

We will hear from individuals who have witnessed and lived through these horrors, including a Holocaust survivor, who will share their personal stories and perspectives. These stories are not just a reminder of our shared history. They are a call to action urging us to stand together as a country and as a congressional body and work to eliminate the rising tide of hate.

I believe that this issue is not just one for Jewish communities to address, but one that requires our collective action. This is a bipartisan issue that requires a unified response, and today we will

explore the steps Congress can take to combat Antisemitism and protect seniors.

We must act with urgency because every day that we allow hate to grow unchecked, we risk the safety and dignity of our fellow Americans, especially our most vulnerable senior population. I want to take a moment to recognize a few groups that are here today, AIPAC, the Republican Jewish Coalition, the Zionist Organization of America, the Endowment for Middle East Truth, and members of George Washington University's Jewish community.

I also want to recognize former Congresswoman and my friend, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. I thank all of you for being here for this important hearing, for all you do for our Jewish community all over the United States.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and working with my colleagues across the aisle to take meaningful action against this persistent threat. Now, we will hear from the Ranking Member. Ranking Member Gillibrand.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, RANKING MEMBER**

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Chairman Scott, for holding today's hearing. It couldn't come at a more important time for our Nation, for New Yorkers, for people all across this country, and frankly, people all around the globe. I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. Each of you are experts in this issue.

I thank the work you do for your congregants, the work that you do in your communities, and I particularly want to thank David Schaecter for giving us his personal testimony, which I can't imagine how difficult it is to tell stories like that over and over again across your lifetime. It makes a huge difference that you are here for us.

Not only do American Jews feel less safe in the wake of October 7th, but I have heard from so many constituents that their anxiety levels are constantly off the charts, that there are macroaggressions and microaggressions, but the feeling of Antisemitism and the feeling of being attacked and the feeling being isolated is prevalent.

These are not normal times, and since October 7th, we have seen violence against Jews continue to grow. We have seen incidents of Antisemitism heighten. We have seen students on campus be so isolated and so personally attacked that they can't learn. This is not the United States that we are proud of.

We need a United States that holds up the equality and civil rights of all of its citizens, and by speaking out today on these issues of Antisemitism, we are creating a record about what is happening and what needs to be done. Now, we know that people who have survived decades and decades of violence and Antisemitism have experienced the worst kind of Antisemitic hate and violence.

We have used the phrase, never again, but do we really mean never again? We have used the phrase, never forget, but have we really meant never forget? What happened on October seven is the most egregious nightmare, the most disgusting, horrific, inhumane, barbaric attack that I have ever, ever heard testimony about or seen video footage of. Satanic, evil, disgusting.

We witnessed what happened in 2018 with the Tree of Life synagogue. Worshipers, people in the safety of their own religious community, the safety of their synagogue being absolutely destroyed by someone who had murder and evil on their mind. Many of the victims were older adults who could not flee, who could not walk quickly, who could not take cover.

Federally funded activities like the not-for-profit security grant program which helps organizations like synagogues and churches and places of worship secure their buildings, hire security personnel, have barriers, that money is essential, and we have to continue to fund that program to its fullest.

We have to work in Congress to provide top-down policies and resources that promote learning, allow for the effect of prosecution of hate crimes, and empower law enforcement and communities to strengthen the ability to protect our neighbors. As a mom with college-aged children, I can tell you no campus should be unsafe for people because of what they believe, because of their faith, because they are Jewish.

I call on every college campus to prioritize the safety of its students, and I think accountability is important. I do not agree that taking away NIH funding or research funding is the right approach, but I will stand with the students to make sure that these college campuses are safe no matter what.

I look forward to the testimony of these witnesses. I thank the chairman for holding such an important hearing, and I look forward to the conversation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Gillibrand. I would like to welcome our witnesses today, all of whom bring important perspectives on the challenges facing the elderly Jewish population in light of the rise in Antisemitism.

We are honored to be joined by Miami-Dade County Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz, who has been a powerful force and an important voice in the fight against Antisemitism in South Florida.

As two of her constituents are serving as witnesses before the Committee today, I would like to recognize Sheriff Rosie to introduce her fellow Floridians from Miami-Dade County, Mr. David Schaecter and Rabbi Mark Rosenberg.

Ms. CORDERO-STUTZ. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Rick Scott, Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand, and members of the Senate Special Committee on Aging. Thank you for inviting me to introduce Mr. David Schaecter, who is a Holocaust survivor and President of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA, and Founder of the Holocaust Memorial on Miami Beach.

David has devoted countless hours to educating students nationwide and advocating on behalf of the Jewish community about the horrors of the Holocaust and the Antisemitism wave worldwide.

We will not allow your story, and the six million innocent lives lost to be forgotten ever. I would like to thank David's wife, Sydney, for traveling with him to be here today. It is a true honor to introduce to you, David Schaecter. You may begin your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID SCHAECTER, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR
AND FOUNDER, HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MIAMI
BEACH; PRESIDENT, HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
FOUNDATION USA, MIAMI, FLORIDA**

Mr. SCHAECTER. Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, members of the Aging Committee, my name is David Schaecter. I am 95 years old and a proud American and a proud Jew, and a survivor of two Nazi concentration camps.

I am a witness to the greatest act of Antisemitism, where six million Jews were killed for no other reason other than being a Jew. I was born in a small town in Slovakia, Czechoslovakia in 1929. In 1940, my father was taken away from our family by the government.

That was the last time I saw him. A year later, when I was 11 years old, the rest of my family were rounded up and placed into train cattle cars. The cars fit no more than 50 people, and they put in 80. There was nowhere to sit.

We could only stand or fall on top of each other. Sanitary facilities were limited to one bucket. Approximately 25 percent of the people were dead or dying when we arrived at Auschwitz. When we arrived at Auschwitz, the Nazis separated us. My mother was holding the hands of my two little sisters, Leah and Miriam, when they were taken away. This was the last time I saw them.

Someone told my brother, Yaakov, to have me stand on his feet to appear taller, and I did. At 11 years old, I was shaved bald and given a tattoo on my left arm. We were assigned to a work detail. We rose every day at 6:00 a.m. and walked two to three kilometers to our jobs, cleaning the rail cars that we arrived in. The floors were covered with human feces, urine, blood, and corpses. I can still smell and taste the filth and the chemicals we had to use.

The Nazis were not selective on how and who they beat or who they killed. Yaakov, my brother, would take beatings meant for me, and he shared his food with me; he did small things to help me survive. For example, the grease canister for the axle of the trains were as big as me. Yaakov tried to get smaller canisters of grease for me to carry. Yaakov and I were in Auschwitz for more than two years before being transported to Buchenwald in Germany, Nazi Germany in 1943. I was about 13 years. By this point, the war was not going well for the Nazis. I remember the air I was breathing was horrendous. It was the smell of burning flesh and smoke.

We knew what the Nazis were doing. They also poisoned the water pipelines. We knew to boil the water to keep from getting sick. One day I saw Yaakov, my brother, drinking the water without boiling it. "I don't want to live anymore," he said. The next day he was sick from dysentery, frail and weak.

They marched us to work, but I could not pull him up and I could not stop because the guard pushed his gun besides my head. I let go of Yaakov and he just laid there, as we continued—and we continued.

About ten seconds later, I heard the sound of a gunshot. I knew they had shot him, and I never saw Yaakov after that. After almost a year, around November 1944, I was placed on another rail car. Along the route near Passau in Bavaria, the U.S. Air Force bombed

the train. I was alone without my brother to protect me, but I jumped out of the train car and ran like hell to the forest.

After eight days, I was found by the Czech partisans. I was almost 15 years old and weighed 83 pounds. After recovering at the hospital, at the end of the war, I returned to my hometown. I had hoped to find comfort, but instead I found more Antisemitism. I had to hide in a barn on my family's farm before making my way back to the train station, to go back to Prague. Other Jews that returned had been killed.

Many years passed before I learned my father had survived the Mauthausen concentration camp—it was actually a salt mine but had died three days after the liberation of typhoid. Before the war, we lived on a farm that was in our family for seven generations. I had lost 105 family members, siblings, aunts and uncles, and cousins - all murdered. Our land was taken, and I was an orphan. I came to America in 1950.

I learned English in nine weeks and went to college. Upon graduation, I married and started a family. Today, I have two children and five grandchildren, and four-great grandchildren. I wish I could say that Antisemitism stopped after World War II, but it rages on. On October 7th, 2023, we saw Hamas kill 1,195 Jews. It has been over 570 days, and we still have hostages.

These atrocities are and were barbaric. To say they were traumatizing to survivors, barely scratches the surface. Protests on college campuses that intimidate and threaten Jewish students are not benign and cannot be ignored. I remember vividly when a Slovakian classmate taunted Jewish kids like me, and what is happening today looks like and feels like the same.

Most recently in Pennsylvania, the Governor's residence was burned by arsonists during Passover. I spend my days going to schools, talking about my experiences, and teaching children about the dangers of Antisemitism.

Eighteen states in the United States, including Florida and New York, have a law requiring Holocaust education. A recent survey shows widespread ignorance about the Holocaust, especially among U.S. Millennials and Gen Z, and we must do everything possible to educate our young people, on the subject of restitution. We survivors have been pressing for years to ensure restitution of looted assets, such as stolen art, which is critical to documenting the realities of the Holocaust. That is why survivors, and our families strongly support amendments to HEAR Act and other legislation that will enable families to recover their property from those who still want to profit from the Holocaust.

This is also important because part of Shoah's terrible legacy is that for the past several decades, nearly half of all the survivors lived and died in poverty, without adequate food, medicine, or home care.

Survivors suffer from extreme physical and mental health challenges due to the long-term effects of starvation, beatings, disease, malnutrition, and the murders of our loved ones. I am here reminding everyone that there are still thousands of survivors alive today who are in desperate need and who cannot be forgotten.

Thank you for having this hearing on Antisemitism. It has been a problem, and God Almighty, it still is a problem. Thank you.

Ms. CORDERO-STUTZ. Now, I would like to welcome my dear friend and fellow Floridian, Rabbi Mark Rosenberg, who is my Senior Advisor, as well as a Senior Chief Chaplain of the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office.

He is also Chief Chaplain of the Florida Highway Patrol and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Rabbi Rosenberg has dedicated his life to serving the Jewish community, especially in times of crisis.

Particularly, Rabbi Rosenberg was a passionate voice of hope and comfort during the Surfside Tower collapse back in 2021, where 91 lives were tragically lost.

His leadership in Florida has helped to bridge the gap between law enforcement and Jewish communities, ensuring that cultural competency and safety are priorities in dealing with the acts—with acts of hate.

Thank you for being such a strong voice for the Jewish community in the State of Florida. You may begin your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF RABBI MARK ROSENBERG, SENIOR ADVISOR
AND CHIEF CHAPLAIN TO MIAMI-DADE SHERIFF; CHIEF
CHAPLAIN TO FHP AND FDLE; DIRECTOR, CHESED
SHEL EMES FLORIDA, MIAMI, FLORIDA**

Rabbi ROSENBERG. Thank you, Sheriff. Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, members of the Committee, good afternoon, and thank you for inviting me to speak on this pivotal issue.

As a law enforcement Chaplain and Director of Chesed Shel Emes, I work with many in the aging population, particularly during end-of-life crises. The rise of Antisemitism is an issue that is discussed far too often as people are genuinely concerned about their safety in this online cesspool of hate.

When hate is allowed to simmer, it spills into the streets, confirming people's worst anxieties, but there is one group whose fear is more palpable than others, the elderly. The aging population held on to the hope that the hatred they witnessed in their youth was a subject of history, a burden they need not and should not pass on to their descendants, so, they stayed silent. Why stress their children and grandchildren if the present reality doesn't reflect the trauma of the old world? But on October 7th, the elderly saw their grandchildren slaughtered for being Jewish. They came face to face with the horrific news that the past they thought they left behind will be the future.

Perhaps the burden they thought was unnecessary to carry was just an illusion, and the iron grip of evil will once again take hold of the world. Why do the elderly have more trepidation than everyone else? Because they have seen this movie before. They know how this starts.

They saw Jews barred from colleges and Jewish businesses boycotted in 1933. Are we not seeing the same in 2025? The Holocaust didn't start in 1941. The tracks to Auschwitz were laid much earlier. I am not claiming there will be another Holocaust in our years, but if we are being honest, the Holocaust didn't start in the 1900's.

It was the conclusion of Antisemitism that had fermented for centuries. After the war, the elderly thought that the Holocaust was the final chapter in the story of Antisemitism. They believed

the greatest country in the world had given them and their descendants unprecedented freedom.

That is why they raised their children in the United States without passing on the trauma of their youth. Now, the aging population is not just worried about the Antisemitism their grandchildren face today. They fear that the country that gave them freedom of religion could be overtaken by a sinister agenda.

If you had to ask them before October 7th whether a Holocaust or a Spanish Inquisition could ever happen again in America, the answer would be a resounding no. Now, such an assertion seems far less certain. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but perhaps one day.

What happens in 40 years when college campuses is the new Government? They never thought they would see this movie again, but here we are at the opening scene. The question is, will we drive the train off its tracks before it reaches Auschwitz? I know this sounds intense, but these are the very real concerns of the elderly.

After all, who knows the movie better than they do? What will calm their fears? Consequences before it is too late. If my child runs into the street and I remain silent, I may not support it, but I can guarantee it will happen again. If there are no consequences for those who intimidate and bully under the guise of free speech, they will be emboldened to take more ground until we reach a dark place.

For too long, people filled with hate had lived safe enough to show up at synagogues, educational facilities, and public spaces spewing hate and Antisemitism. They have bullied, intimidated, harassed, terrorized, and threatened in the hope of provoking a reaction.

In Florida, the laws hold such acts and provide consequences for those who harass based on religion or ethnicity, and even imposes felony charges. If we take legitimate action, we can stop hate and Antisemitism before it spirals out of control, as it has so many times in history. Winston Churchill famously stated, the farther backward you can look, the further forward you are likely to see.

Now, evil will always have a home in the human psyche. The question is not whether we can eliminate it, but what those in power will do to stop the spread. We can show our aging population that trauma will not be their grandchildren's burden. We can show them that America is not just the land of the free, but also the land of consequences, so in conclusion, we must accept that never again is now.

We must accept silence enables those who hate. We must accept that the aging community is reliving the trauma that should have never happened, let alone forgotten. We must accept that Holocaust deniers exist, and we cannot deny their existence.

We must also accept that the atrocities of October 7th, murder, rape, burning of families and babies actually happened, and that we cannot allow these crimes to be suppressed. We must accept that 250 hostages were taken, including Holocaust survivors, and many are still waiting for their grandchildren to be returned from the Hamas terrorists.

We must guarantee the elderly that the world they are leaving their children is better than the one they found. Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank each of you. First off, Sheriff, thank you for the introductions. Mr. Schacter, thank you for your powerful testimony. Rabbi Rosenberg, thank you for your testimony.

Next, we are pleased to welcome former Congressman, Mr. Ted Deutch from the great State of Florida, the CEO of the American Jewish Committee. Mr. Deutch brings invaluable experience in advocating for Jewish communities, including his work here in Congress where he was instrumental in pushing for legislation to combat Antisemitism.

Under his leadership, the AJC continues to be a leading voice for Jewish Americans in the fight against rising hate and discrimination. Thank you for being here, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TED DEUTCH, FORMER
CONGRESSMAN AND CEO, AMERICAN JEWISH
COMMITTEE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. DEUTCH. Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, members of the Committee, I am honored to be here alongside my distinguished fellow panelists, especially my dear friend, David Schacter.

I want to thank you, first of all, for giving us the gift of David's testimony. I am the CEO of American Jewish Committee, a global, nonpartisan advocacy organization that stands up for Israel, that confronts Antisemitism, and that upholds the democratic values that we cherish.

I note that in this Committee's history, there has never been a hearing on Antisemitism. This hearing, unfortunately, is both necessary and historic. I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for holding this hearing, and I applaud your commitment to tackling Antisemitism in a nonpartisan and bipartisan manner. Earlier this year, AJC released our annual State of Antisemitism in America Report.

The top lines are startling, 73 percent of American Jews feel less secure than they did a year ago. Fifty-six percent have changed their behavior because of fear of Antisemitism. In short, your constituents are deciding not to be openly Jewish because they fear they will be targeted. That is not the America any of us want.

Of the 1.6 million American Jewish seniors, including more than 30,000 Holocaust survivors, 43 percent are worried that they will be victims of Antisemitism, and more than half worry that their loved ones will be, and they have reason to worry. They see Antisemitic hate online.

They saw posters of Holocaust survivors torn down just last week in New York. They hear from their grandkids about campus Antisemitism. It doesn't matter who is targeting Jews, whether it is the far left or the far right.

For us, the hatred and the fear are the same. Any time a Jewish person is under threat, it affects every Jew because we are all interconnected. The rising Antisemitism isn't just a Jewish problem. It is a crisis for our democracy and our society. Antisemitism divides us. It weakens our social cohesion.

It impedes our ability to solve the challenges that we face. This moment demands bold actions from our leaders, so what can Congress do to fight Antisemitism at its roots? Well, in order to fight the foundation of Antisemitism, we have to stamp out misinformation about the Jewish community. We do that by educating people about the Holocaust and about Antisemitism.

AJC's Translate Hate is one such resource. Building off the success of the reauthorization of the Never Again Education Act, we also urge Congress to pass the HEAL Act to direct the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to ensure that every student in America understands why we say never again.

To counter the scourge of Antisemitism that has rocked campuses and classrooms across the country, we urge Congress to pass the Antisemitism Awareness Act and the Protecting Students on Campus Act. Both are bipartisan bills that would help identify Antisemitism and empower students to report Title VI violations they experience.

We urge Congress also to work with the Trump Administration and support the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, including by providing at least \$162 million in the Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations process.

I also point out that closing more than half of the OCR regional offices and cutting the number of Title VI investigators means that fewer cases will be investigated and thoroughly and timely dispensed with. Students deserve to know that the Federal Government will be there for them and will step in when their rights are violated.

In order to combat the inferno of online Antisemitism, we urge Congress to consider a targeted and narrowed reform of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to tackle online Antisemitism that leads to violence in the real world, and social media companies should enforce their own rules meant to prevent harassment and hatred on their platforms.

It is also imperative to protect the Jewish community from the threats we are facing now, and we urge Congress to immediately work with the Trump Administration to unfreeze vital funding associated with the nonprofit security grant program and provide necessary funding so that the security of non-profits like synagogues and Jewish community centers are met.

Finally, to best guarantee these efforts are as effective as possible, we urge Congress to work with the Trump Administration to counter Antisemitism by taking a whole-of-government approach in its fight, and just as we fight Antisemitism and protect the Jewish community, so too must we lift up the voices and lived experiences of Jewish Americans. Tomorrow marks the start of Jewish American Heritage Month.

Congress should codify this month into federal statute to ensure that the contributions and sacrifices that Jewish Americans have made to our country are celebrated every year, and I urge each of you, I urge you and all of your Senate colleagues to recognize Jewish heritage, Jewish life, and Jewish contributions to American society during the month of May.

Meet directly with Jewish constituents. Hear their stories and their experiences. Understand that our contributions to America,

our lives in America contribute to the richness of our diversity and the greatness of our Nation.

My father, the late Bernard Deutsch, who earned a Purple Heart fighting the Nazis at the Battle of the Bulge, always taught us that we are Jews, and we are Americans, and we couldn't be more proud to be both.

Jewish seniors, those who have done so much for our Nation, deserve to live out their remaining lives, celebrating their family and community, and observing their faith openly without worrying if their children or grandchildren will be victims of Antisemitism.

They deserve the freedom that is promised to them and every American, and AJC looks forward to working together with all of you toward safeguarding that foundational promise for our seniors whose contributions and whose sacrifices have built the America that we are all blessed to live in. Thank you again for having me.

The CHAIRMAN. Congressman, thanks for being here. Thanks for your testimony, and thanks for what you do. Now, I would like to recognize Ranking Member Gillibrand to introduce the next witness.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Chairman Scott. I want to introduce Rebecca Federman. Ms. Federman serves as the Senior Director of the Intelligence Desk for the Community Security Initiative in New York.

In this capacity, she manages the intelligence collection, monitoring, and investigations related to the safety and security of New York's Jewish community.

Ms. Federman works closely with law enforcement partners in both state and federal agencies to provide critical intelligence on known threat actors and impending threats. You may begin.

**STATEMENT OF REBECCA FEDERMAN, SENIOR DIRECTOR,
CSI INTELLIGENCE DESK, COMMUNITY SECURITY
INITIATIVE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Ms. FEDERMAN. Thank you, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, and members of the Special Committee on Aging for inviting me to speak with you today. My name is Rebecca Federman, and as Senator Gillibrand mentioned, I am privileged to serve as the Senior Director of the Intelligence Desk for the Community Security Initiative of New York, or CSI.

In 2019, in the wake of the deadliest attacks against American Jews, 15 Jews murdered in 14 months across Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City, and Monsey, many of whom were elderly individuals, the umbrella Jewish organizations in New York founded CSI as our way of actualizing never again.

CSI is a comprehensive program designed to protect and enhance security for the 1.8 million Jews in New York and Southwest Connecticut. We help ensure Jews are never again murdered in our synagogues, schools, or grocery stores. I lead our intelligence desk, a team of four analysts whose main goal is to detect, investigate, and disrupt violent threats targeting the Jewish community.

The investigations we undertake are politically and ideologically agnostic. We have thwarted violent neo-Nazis, ISIS-inspired individuals, and other variants of Antisemites with weapons. We spend our days knee deep in the sewers of the internet, scouring it for threats.

It is important to note that our focus is not on the albeit vile, but nevertheless first amendment protected Antisemitic speech, but rather on credible threats that meet a higher threshold, including an explicit expression of violent intent, such as, I am going to shoot up a synagogue, an indication of possessing weapons with intent to use them, or an expressed allegiance to a U.S. designated terrorist organization.

In 2024 alone, we elevated a total of 221 life-threatening instances to law enforcement and partner organizations at home and abroad. This is undeniably a profoundly disturbing number.

Just two months ago, one of my analysts detected a post on X in which the user indicated his intention to visit Central Synagogue, a prominent synagogue in Manhattan, naming the exact location, date, and time.

In a subsequent post, he evoked Adolf Hitler and pledged to kill tenfold as many Jews if he was stopped. Working closely with the NYPD and New Jersey State Police, the individual was intercepted as he was in route to New York City. This is but one of many examples of the threats the CSI team has helped to thwart.

Based on our analysis, the most acute threats against the Jewish community today stem from three main sources, individuals radicalized by the current Israel-Hamas war, ISIS-affiliated or inspired actors, or those fueled by white supremacist and neo-Nazi beliefs. Indeed, recent plots corroborate our triple threat assessment.

In July 2024, a Canada-based ISIS supporter planned a mass casualty attack against Chabad's world headquarters in Brooklyn. In January 2025, based on a tip from CSI, a white supremacist in Massachusetts was arrested with weapons and a Nazi flag after he posted online that it was time to kill Jews, and of course, as David said, just a few weeks ago, Governor Josh Shapiro's home was firebombed during Passover, an act allegedly motivated by the Governor's pro-Israel stance. A large-scale attack like one of these is not the only threat. Every day, Jewish Americans are victims of Antisemitic incidents that range from vandalism and harassment to assault.

Just last week, the Anti-Defamation League released its 2024 audit of Antisemitic incidents, recording a record-breaking 9,354 incidents. Assaults increased by 21 percent, and 58 percent of the incidents contained elements of anti-Israel bias perpetrated by both anti-Israel organizations and individuals, and white supremacist groups.

Particularly concerning is the 84 percent increase in Antisemitic activity on college campuses. Since October 7th, Jewish students face intimidation, harassment, and disruptions to campus life.

In response, CSI launched our campus security initiative working with Campus Hillels, Chabad Rabbis, and campus security professionals at 25 universities from Boston to Washington D.C.

We provide everything from event security funding and personal safety apps for students, to weekly intelligence reports detailing trends, incidents, and upcoming protests. While not all campuses have seen the same level of disturbing activity, what we are witnessing on some is no longer mere protesting.

At George Mason University, a student plotted an ISIS-inspired attack on the Israeli consulate in New York City. At the University of Pittsburgh, Jewish students were assaulted during a demonstration, and at Columbia University, Jewish students have been spat on, shoved, and chased off campus by mobs chanting. We don't want no Zionists here.

This is not activism. It is dangerous and growing more brazen by the day. To address the rise of Antisemitism for the entire community, including the elderly, CSI recommends the following.

Increased funding to \$500 million for the nonprofit security grant program, the passage of the Antisemitism Awareness Act, and a fully funded office for civil rights within the Department of Education to effectively and efficiently investigate Title VI complaints.

Thank you for your bipartisan leadership in fighting Antisemitism. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Federman, thank you for your testimony. Thanks for what you do and for the lives you have saved, so, thank each of you for being here today. Now we are going to go to questions. Let me start with Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of you for being here and your heartfelt statements. Very much needed.

Before I start my questions, I want to read a statement here from a good friend of mine. His name is Coach Bruce Pearl, who is currently in Jerusalem and will be there for a couple of weeks.

He would have loved to have been here. Shalom from Jerusalem. I am an American Jewish college basketball coach visiting my ancestral homeland. Yesterday was Israel's Remembrance Day. Today is Israel's Independence Day. This is a very emotional time for everyone here because this country has been at war since birth.

Hours ago, I left Knesset, where I was in attendance, along with Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Herzog, and about 1,000 citizens honoring the fallen. I am angry. I am very angry. What I would ask of this Committee is the courage to speak to our educators. We must teach our children.

I am very proud that in the State of Alabama, we have mandatory Holocaust education for middle school students. If we choose not to teach them, somebody else will. None of us can explain. They can't explain it or understand why the Jewish people have been targeted.

We have to do two things. We have to protect ourselves from those who want to kill us, and we have to try to live exemplary lives so that maybe the uncertain won't hate us. Our educational institutions want to stay neutral, leaving our young people to find out the truth on their own. I am proud to be an American.

This country saved my family's life rescuing my grandfather from a turnip hole in 1929. I will be forever grateful. God bless. Coach Bruce Pearl, Auburn University. The issue we are seeing today on college campuses, and this is from me, is being reinforced by the culture and values being taught on all the campuses.

Good people in this country are being taught that Palestinians are the freedom fighters and the people who are being oppressed. They are being taught the facts on the ground of the Middle East are not true.

Why is this happening on university campuses? It is the same reason why our players would kneel for our flag and the national anthem. Because they are not being taught to love this country. They have been taught that they are oppressed. They have not been taught to appreciate the opportunities this country gives them.

They have not been taught what is really going on in the Middle East. Young people want to have a cause, and they have now chosen to stand against freedom because of lies and propaganda.

Congressman, we have unfortunately seen Antisemitic attacks spike since October the 7th, Hamas terrorist attack. Many of the victims of these attacks have been elderly Jewish Americans. How can the U.S. Government better protect its citizens, particularly the elderly, from such attacks?

Mr. DEUTCH. Senator Tuberville, thank you. First of all, I appreciate you reading that statement from Coach Pearl, who stopped at AJC Global Forum in New York on his way to Israel.

We, as I am sure you are, are quite proud of his leadership on these issues. There is an enormous amount that Congress can do. It is important, though, to emphasize that facts really matter here, and what you said is so important. Some of the protests that we saw, the ones that happened on October 8th and 9th, were not protests about anything that Israel was doing.

The IDF, the Israeli Defense Forces hadn't even gone into Gaza to defend the people of Israel and the Jewish people. The people who took to the streets immediately with signs that had a terrorist and a hang glider as their call to action where they are going to do one thing, which is to support the Hamas terrorists who slaughtered 1,200 Jews and whose goal is the destruction of Israel and the massacre of Jews.

Congress can play a vital role both in helping to keep seniors, Jewish seniors, and all Jews safe by focusing on security and non-profit security grants. Congress can play an important role in helping everyone understand and identify what Antisemitism actually is for those who don't spend time thinking about this the way that we believe the country should in passing the Antisemitism Awareness Act.

We think that Congress can play a really vital role in making sure that on those campuses, that when the civil rights of Jewish students are violated, when anyone's Title VI rights are violated, that the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education has the funding necessary to actually conduct the investigations and hold those who committed these acts accountable. Accountability matters.

On campuses across America, Jewish students have the right to speak out and feel safe like every other group on campus.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Rabbi, I am proud that we now have the most pro-Israel and pro-Jewish President of my life back in the White House.

President Trump has made it clear. If universities continue allowing Antisemitic propaganda on their campuses, they will lose their federal funding. Outside of this, what steps do universities and school administrators need to take to put an end to all this?

Rabbi ROSENBERG. Well first, they need to follow the law, and I hope that if the law is on their side, why don't we see college campuses go rob 14 stores every day? Why don't we see iPhones, Android phones, go missing every day? Why?

Why don't the 7-Elevens around the colleges don't have a problem with people coming into the stores? Because there is law and order, and I strongly believe that if what my friend Ted over here said, that if we do that, we are not going to have an issue. If people are taught to love like young children, they need to know what is right and what is wrong.

Right now, it is right. It is a movement. It is cause. I have been to college campuses myself and, you know, for 40 plus years I grew up in upstate New York. I never experienced anything whatsoever.

We all got along. Now, at this time of my life, I have to walk into college campus and feel weird that I am wearing a yarmulke. I don't feel that I am going to be robbed. I feel that I am going to be identified because I am a Jew.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. My time is up, but I appreciate you all coming and speaking the truth, and as my buddy and fellow coach Bruce Pearl would say, I think one of the biggest answer to this question is education. We need to educate people the right way. Thank you, and God bless you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ranking Member Gillibrand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. Ms. Federman, in 2024, New York led the Nation in reported Antisemitic incidents with over 1,400 reported. These incidents are not isolated. They reflect a broader, deeply troubling trend of rising Antisemitism in the Nation.

The not-for-profit security grant program, which has been instrumental in helping at-risk communities, particularly Jewish institutions, helps to bolster the safety and security of these institutions.

Congress recognized the importance of this program by increasing funding to \$305 million in the Fiscal Year 2025 Senate Appropriations Bill, and they approved an additional \$400 million in funding through the Fiscal Year 2024 National Security Supplemental.

Even with this increased funding, the not-for-profit security grant program is oversubscribed and less than half the applicants receive the funding they need. Ms. Federman, can you please speak about the importance of this program and why you recommend appropriating at least \$500 million dollars for it.

Ms. FEDERMAN. Yes, thank you so much for the question. Jewish community institutions are often the sources of Jewish life in a community, including synagogues, schools, and community centers, and they are increasingly targets of harassment, vandalism, violent threats.

Whether it is bomb threats, whether it is swastika graffiti, or something more nefarious. In 2023, despite the \$274.5 million dollars that were funded in appropriations, only 43 percent, less than half of grant applications, were funded and this leaves a significant number of at-risk institutions without access to critical security enhancements.

Expanding this investment in the same way will ensure that vulnerable nonprofits, synagogues, churches, etcetera, will have the

necessary resources to harden potential targets, train for emergency scenarios, and protect their communities for those who seek to do them harm.

If I may just give an example as to how imperative these grants are and the work they actually do. In May 2024 in Brooklyn, an individual attempted to run over Jewish students at a religious Jewish school in Brooklyn. He drove his car up on the curb, saw students outside, and tried to run them over.

Now, they received NSGP funding, and we have helped them put up a fence, and this is going to ensure that never again will their students be at risk in the same way from a vehicle ramming attack, and so it is imperative that NSGPs is funded further.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you. You also mentioned in your opening remarks CSI's Campus Security Initiative, where you work with Hillel and Chabad to ensure their security.

Throughout this work, what have you learned about the Jewish community on campuses need to help mitigate the effects of Antisemitism on campuses? Have there been any policy decisions made by campus administrations to help address these incidents?

Ms. FEDERMAN. Yes, so on a tactical level, campuses have asked us for extended funding for events, security guards in place, particularly for events about Israel featuring Israeli soldiers or Israeli individuals that tend to be targeted, or large scale holidays, right. A Passover Seder, Rosh Hashanah services.

We have also actually provided, and this came directly as an ask from the rabbis, from their students because they felt unsafe, we provided students with escorts to and from their dorms on Passover of last year because they were so concerned that they would be assaulted, harassed on their ways to and from.

In a general sense, students just want the ability for normal campus life. They want to be able to attend classes, whether about the Middle East or on otherwise innocuous subjects, and not feel that they can't speak their mind, they can't be Israeli in school.

They won't be able to walk-through campus without being subjected to vitriol, and they want to be able to go to their Hillels and Chabad houses and feel safe and secure there. In terms of policy decisions that campus administrators can make, we have actually seen a success at NYU. They have, since the spring of 2024 when all of the encampments were popping up, they changed their code of conduct to include the term Zionist as a dog whistle.

We know that very frequently someone will use it instead of saying Jew to sort of couch their—alleged they are not Antisemitic, but NYU has explicitly changed their code of conduct, and it says, if you are going to use coded language, if you are going to call for the death of Zionists, if you were going to exclude Zionists from a campus event or a place on campus, that then violates their code of conduct, and they are able to—

Senator GILLIBRAND. I would argue all of those are incidents of Antisemitism.

Ms. FEDERMAN. Correct.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Congressman Deutch, can you talk a little bit about the Antisemitism Awareness Act and how this Act could enhance the Federal Government's ability to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, particularly in educational settings, and why it is

imperative that the Senate has to pass this legislation and provide clear, actual definition of Antisemitism to the Federal Government.

Also, and I know I am out of time, but can you just talk a little bit about why we should be supporting more Holocaust education programs in the United States, since a lot of our students, 12 percent of U.S. Millennials and Gen Z have never heard or don't think they have ever heard the word Holocaust before.

Mr. DEUTCH. Sure. Just really quickly on your second point, Senator Gillibrand. I mean the answer is here with us.

The reason people need to let—kids need to learn about the Holocaust is because as fewer and fewer survivors are able to share their stories directly, we have to help provide that education. Every student in America should hear what David Schaefer shared with us today.

The impact that that has to change the way they view the world and understand what can happen when Antisemitism, when hate goes unchecked. That is why that is so critically important. As far as the Antisemitism Awareness Act, it is critical to have a standardized definition of Antisemitism.

The IHRA definition is an educational tool, and it is meant to inform policymakers, and police, and prosecutors, judges, to understand what Antisemitism can look like. It is not a speech code. I want to disabuse people of that idea, something that we have heard a lot about over the past couple of days.

It is not a speech code at all. It is meant to help people identify what speech that is Antisemitic looks like so that policymakers have the ability to decide how to combat it. Because the question isn't whether or not Antisemitic language is acceptable. It is not whether it is protected speech.

It is whether it is something that we should simply allow to continue that can lead to the kinds of instances that we have been—all of us here have been talking about on this panel. It is a really important tool in that fight, and it is a tool that policymakers should have, and that they will when Congress passes the Antisemitism Awareness Act.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member. Let's start with Mr. Schaefer. As a Holocaust survivor, you have experienced firsthand the horrors of Antisemitism. How has the current rise in Antisemitism in the U.S. impacted you personally? What do you see as the greatest threat to elderly Jewish Americans today?

Mr. SCHAEFER. Well, I don't know how to describe age, and these elderly, I don't think they possess the same stamina that I have at being 97 almost, but I don't want to be measuring what makes a guy understand when he is trying to escape, when he is trying to avoid, and he is trying not to be the guy who gets it all and who is the victim.

I for one, I speak to youngsters, I speak to children. I beg them to look at me, and do they think that I am someone to be scared of? They say no.

If the children say no, why should grown-ups? Why should grown-ups go ahead and have the right to demean and the right to attack the helpless and the ones who are the mostly, mostly the nicest of all time people.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Rabbi Rosenberg, you have worked extensively with law enforcement in Florida to bridge the gap between Jewish communities and those who protect our streets.

You have also been deeply involved in cultural competency training with law enforcement. How well-equipped are law enforcement agencies to recognize and respond to Antisemitic incidents, particularly those affecting the elderly Jewish population?

Rabbi ROSENBERG. That depends in which area. In areas such as South Florida, like Dade County, I would say that the law enforcement is—again, like you said, Senator, we do a lot of education to educate them.

We could do a whole lot more. Many times across the state, in different states, I find it to be that if they would know more, they would be able to do a much better job, and we simply, again comes back to what you were saying, everything else.

We need to educate, educate. The last time we did the 47-minute Hamas roll footage video, we did it through the state, and some people wanted to see it, some people were not that interested in seeing it. The ones who saw it said, now we understand.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Federman, what are some challenges organizations like yours have—what you face when tracking threats to the community through the deep dark web?

Ms. FEDERMAN. I would say that our biggest challenge is the volume of threats that we come across on a regular basis. We are reviewing thousands of alerts that we get with our tools that could indicate a life-threatening instance, and we have to consider every single one as a potential threat.

It is not just the deep and dark web. It is also the surface web, X, Facebook, Instagram, etcetera. The threats are incredibly pervasive, and the biggest impediment is having the ability to go through all of them.

The CHAIRMAN. Do the social media sites, are they helpful?

Ms. FEDERMAN. Not directly, for our purposes, right. We are looking for the threats. We are not inherently engaging with them to remove Antisemitic content. We are focused on, as I mentioned, that very specific high threshold of I am going to go commit violence, rather than general Antisemitic speech.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have the—does your law enforcement have the tools to be able to stop it?

Ms. FEDERMAN. Yes, we are very, very fortunate to work very closely, both at the local level, at the precinct level with the NYPD intelligence teams, with the New York State Police, and with our FBI partners, and they have been incredibly responsive in working to mitigate threats and in working with us, because they know that if we are elevating something to them, it could be imminent.

The CHAIRMAN. It is just hard to believe—it is just, you know, it is when you—it is just hard to believe people do it, right. It just doesn't—it doesn't make sense. None of this makes any sense, right, so, Senator Kim.

Senator KIM. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Schaecter, I wanted to just start with just saying thank you to you for just such an extraordinarily powerful testimony. I am just grateful for you.

I wish I was able to bring my two boys to be able to come and meet you and hear from you about your story, and I will be making

sure that they see your testimony. You know, when I was in college, I did extensive Holocaust studies there. I actually wrote my undergraduate thesis about the Holocaust.

I do think that we need to be doing more to be able to invest in that type of education with our youth here in the United States at this time, and the threat that you said, it is not just about what happened during the Holocaust and World War II, but what we have seen since October 7th.

Just about an hour ago, I guess a little over an hour ago, just got off the phone again with Edan Alexander's parents, talking to them directly about just the concern, the fear that they feel, and I can tell you how impactful that is to the Jewish-American community in my home State of New Jersey and just how fearful they are. It is not theoretical. They feel it on a visceral daily level.

Then with Edan Alexander's captivity still, it is still very much at the forefront of their minds. One thing that you said Mr. Schaecter, I wanted to ask this actually to Congressman Deutch because it was something that really stuck out to me. I wasn't going to ask about this but, you know, he said that thousands of survivors of Holocaust who need help.

That really stuck out to me because as we are talking about this on the Committee of Aging, you know, Congressman Deutch, there is a part of our government agency, the Administration for Community Living. I am not sure how familiar you are with them.

They have a program called the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, something that I worry right now that is very much under risk because there has been this reorganization at HHS determination of the administration for community living.

Is this something that you are tracking? Is it a real concern that this could very well take away resources from elderly Holocaust survivors in their time of need, as Mr. Schaecter pointed out?

MR. DEUTCH. Senator Kim, yes, we are tracking it very closely, but I can't let the moment pass to express appreciation not just for your advocacy for the Alexander family, but for speaking about it here.

A number of people have stopped me on my way and thought that I had some garbage on my jacket. It is a piece of tape that has the number of days now, 572 days that Hamas has held hostages, 59 hostages including Americans, including Edan Alexander.

Everyone, like you, Chairman Scott, has been a hero on this issue. Your voices in speaking out makes their stories real for everyone and keeps up the pressure to help bring them home.

I wanted to thank you for that, and yes, David is right. The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program is a critically important program, and are we tracking? Yes, and all that I would—all of our advocacy around this issue is very straightforward. This is a program that takes care of those whose needs are great and whose histories demand that we be there for them so that they can help—so that we can help them live out their lives in dignity.

Any changes that would result in cutting back on funding, any changes that would impede the ability to ensure that mission that I think we all have in caring for seniors and for survivors in particular is something that we should all work to prevent, and so, I

very much appreciate raising this. It is a vitally important issue, and we have to stand together.

Senator KIM. I wanted to make sure it didn't just fall by the wayside, and Mr. Chairman, I hope we can followup on this, because I think it is really at the intersection between elderly in this country, Antisemitism, Holocaust—you know, supported Holocaust survivors.

Congressman, you know, it was already talked about the non-profit security grant program. I am on the Homeland Security Committee. I am doing everything I can to be able to protect that as there is conversations about abolishing FEMA. I worry about the future of this. Yes, we want to preserve it. We want to increase the funds.

One thing I also hear is that, you know, from the synagogues, the temples that I have talked to, you know, it is not just one-off security that they need. This is not just something where, you know, they can have a capital project, increase security one year. You know, this is the top budget item for every single synagogue every single year, right.

Like how do we try to think about this in terms of persistent support? You know, not just like a one-off grant. Okay, it is important that they get that, but for them to get a non-profit security grant project, you know, once out of every x number of years is not enough, right? Like I just feel like there is something we need to do to be able to help with that persisting cost.

Mr. DEUTCH. Well, there is a lot that we need to do. I would just say that what my fellow panelists here spoke so clearly to is how urgent the needs are.

The Chairman was exactly right. Senator Kim, for those of us, all of us on this panel, for people who care about these issues and focus on them like the Chairman and like you do, we know—Senator Alsobrooks—we know that the challenges are enormous.

When you take a step back, as the Chairman said, it is not normal that every Jewish institution in America, every single one worries about the physical safety of the people who come through their doors, kids, seniors, people coming to synagogue to pray. That isn't normal.

Yes, we have to focus on funding, but it is the reason why—it is ultimately the reason this whole hearing is so important, why the fight against Antisemitism needs to be waged by everyone, everyone across Government and all of society.

The CHAIRMAN. Speak up. Everybody has got to speak up. Everybody.

Mr. DEUTCH. Everyone has to speak up. Chairman Scott, when—there can be zero tolerance for Antisemitism. When you hear something from, in your case, from a constituent, when we hear something from a neighbor, when we know something is said that isn't right, that is based in Antisemitic tropes, that it is meant to stir up Antisemitism, we all have an obligation to call it out just as we would against any other kind of hatred, because Antisemitism never stops with the Jews. Not in America, not in any country throughout history.

The CHAIRMAN. It is just the beginning. It is an attack against other people. It is just pure hatred.

Senator KIM. It builds within people the trauma that they carry as well, but just, you know, it gets so pervasive, I mean especially for the parents I have talked to in New Jersey. Just the fear every single day about their kids and their well-being, and it just continues to cycle, so.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, and they are trying to force these Jewish day schools to be shut down. They are trying to scare people that they shouldn't send their kids there, and so—to try to kill Jewish religion. I mean, it is just ongoing.

Senator KIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Schaecter, did you want to say something really quick?

Mr. SCHAECTER. Yes. I am almost embarrassed to make this question or answer it. Not every survivor is a college graduate. I am a college graduate.

I have benefited in this country because the opportunity. They didn't ask me what synagogue or what church I belonged to. They accepted me because I was told to take a test and take another test, and sure enough, I was accepted, and sure enough, I graduated, and sure enough, I did that.

When this thing called the high tech world became here in America like no other place on earth, and I was in that place called America, and I was given a job because my graduation was in the field of high tech, and high tech was the world, and I was there, and I, God Almighty, was so lucky.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Kim, did you have anything else?

Senator KIM. No. Thank you, Chairman. I appreciate it. Thank you for pulling this hearing together.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Alsobrooks.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and thank you so much as well to all who have come today to testify at this hearing. I want to begin by underscoring what I am sure all of my colleagues have already shared today, and that is that Antisemitism is a real and rising threat, not only in my State of Maryland, but it is rising throughout our country.

Any act of hate or form of discrimination is unacceptable and absolutely must be condemned. According to the Anti-Defamation League in Maryland, we saw a 211 percent increase in Antisemitic incidents in 2023, including harassment, vandalism, and even assault, and just last month, a Baltimore man was sentenced for setting fire outside the Jewish Museum in Maryland.

These acts are intended, as we know, to stoke fear, to stoke division, and they have no place in our State or in our country. Now, I want to thank Mr. Schaecter for—begin by thanking you so much, sir, for being here today. Your survival story, your lifelong commitment to educating others is powerful. It is inspiring. We are really, really honored to have you here today. I just have a couple of quick questions.

One of them is, I am a baby of the 70's. I was born in the early—in 1971 to be exact, and at the time that I was, I was born on the edge of the Civil Rights Movement. One of the things I can tell you happen routinely in my family is we sat at the kitchen table and had dinner each night was there was a very real discussion about

the Civil Rights Movement and the fact the African American community and the Jewish community were friends and allies, and that we would not have seen the successes that we did except for that allyship.

I would like to ask you, because I know that American Jews and Black Civil Rights leaders have long worked together in a struggle against discrimination in this country, how does finding shared values and building relationships across communities help to combat hate? How does it make our larger communities safer?

Mr. DEUTCH. Senator, I will switch—I am happy to jump in.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Sure. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. It is a really important question, and the importance of recognizing fundamentally that we are all in this together in America, it is the story of our Nation, and what you describe, and the history of the Civil Rights Movement speaks powerfully to that realization. It is the reason that there were so many in the Jewish community who recognized the importance of standing up during the Civil Rights Movement, understanding that discrimination against one group ultimately holds everyone down.

As we fast forward to where we are today, it is very much consistent with the exchange that we had just a moment ago about how Antisemitism is the world's oldest hate, which for thousands of years has plagued the Jewish community.

When it rises up as it has, when there is so much misinformation, when there are so many threats, there too is the opportunity for the rest of the community to stand with the Jewish community to push back against this hatred, to push against these lies, and to help set the record straight for the very same reason—that coming together during the Civil Rights Movement, as you pointed out, was so critical. Coming together in the fight against Antisemitism is so critically important at this moment.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you. Now, Mr. Congressman, the Administration for Community Living has invested nearly five million annually in a five-year initiative with the Jewish Federations of North America to expand person-centered, trauma-informed services for Holocaust survivors and other older adults with histories of trauma.

This program has supported 15,000 survivors and trained more than 10,000 professionals nationwide. Altogether, the Administration for Community Living ensures that older adults and people with disabilities can live in their communities with dignity, security, and the independence that they deserve.

Congressman, you used to represent a district with a large senior population, and I wonder if you might just be able to highlight, and I know I am running out of time, of how disrupting the services provided to seniors, including Jewish seniors, harm our most vulnerable communities.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Senator Alsobrooks. It is very much, as you point out, it is the issue of not just need, but trauma and what it means when we have this moment, this last moment to ensure that the now small number of survivors can live out their lives in dignity.

That means not having to revisit trauma. That means having the wherewithal to be able to celebrate their remaining years with

their children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and it means making sure that the means to do that aren't ripped away from them, and it is a really important point that you make, and I am glad you brought that up.

Senator ALSOBROOKS. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Congressman, we have seen disturbing instances where individuals, including licensed healthcare workers, have made threats online. Which is shocking, right. Implying that they would deny care or provide substantive treatment to Jewish patients. How would you respond to threats like these, particularly when they come from individuals in positions of public trust, like the healthcare sector?

Mr. DEUTCH. Chairman Scott—

The CHAIRMAN. It is hard to believe, right?

Mr. DEUTCH. Right, and it starts, again, with no tolerance for it. When someone makes clear that—let's just be clear about one thing. As Rebecca said just a little while ago, what we have seen, especially online, is the willingness to determine that somehow it is acceptable to just replace the word Jew with Zionist.

That just as people will acknowledge they can't get away with saying online or anywhere else that Jews aren't welcome, that Jews can't come, that Jews should be killed, that somehow when it comes to Zionists—and again, let's be clear. For the Jewish community, for the vast majority of Jews, Israel isn't just a country they care about. It is central to their religious identity, to their identity as part of the Jewish people.

When they are told by a doctor or someone whose trust we need to count on that they are not going to be accepted if they are Zionists, then they are being told that Jews can't come.

It is one of the reasons why at AJC we work with the social media companies to make sure that they understand that when you simply take Israel and Zionism and you put it in the place of Jew in order to fulfill the desires of the Antisemites who are doing it, that they have a role to play to make sure that doesn't happen, and that is exactly what we need to impress upon them.

The CHAIRMAN. If, let's say, in South Florida, a health care worker at a hospital, whatever hospital down there, said this. Said, you know, put out online, you know, if it is a Jewish patient, I am going to get them substandard care. What should everybody in the community do?

Mr. DEUTCH. If—and by the way, as you know, not everyone goes to a hospital voluntarily, Senator Scott.

The idea that there are—that there may be professionals who have said that if a patient comes in, that their care will be different, will be lesser, or will be shunned aside altogether because they happen to be Jewish, then that can't be tolerated.

It wouldn't be tolerated if someone made a comment like that about any other group, and I would think that the hospital, the practice, would take action to ensure that that person can't carry out those Antisemitic desires.

The CHAIRMAN. Let's take Miami. How many people live in Miami?

Mr. DEUTCH. I am going to turn to my Dade County Sheriff.

The CHAIRMAN. Sure. How many people live in Miami-Dade?

Ms. CORDERO-STUTZ. Miami-Dade County has 2.9 million residents.

The CHAIRMAN. 2.9 million people.

Ms. CORDERO-STUTZ. That is not counting our tourism.

The CHAIRMAN. If a hospital Miami-Dade had a healthcare worker that said that they were going to give Jews a substandard care, and 10,000 people sent a letter to the CEO of the hospital, what do you think would happen?

Mr. DEUTCH. I would expect that if—I would certainly expect that if someone in the hospital staff made a statement like that, that was publicized, and confirmed to be accurate, and people complained about it, that the hospital would want to take action on behalf of the entire hospital and all of the patients that it sees.

The CHAIRMAN. Right, but that is an example of what everybody can do, whether you are Jewish or not. All right, thank you all. I want to thank everybody for—all of our witnesses for being here today, sharing your powerful stories and expertise. The rising tide of Antisemitism in this country is a dire threat to the safety and dignity of our elderly Jewish population and to all Americans.

We have a moral obligation to protect those who are most vulnerable, especially those who have survived the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust. Every action we take today can make a difference, every law we pass, every policy we implement. Every conversation we have represents one step closer to ensuring that our elderly Jewish Americans, our parents, our grandparents, and Holocaust survivors can live in peace and security.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance solutions that will make a real impact in combating Antisemitism and protecting Jewish seniors, and I personally do not understand why anybody has an anti-Jewish statement. I just—it floors me.

We will keep the record open for additional questions and statements from Senators until next Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. Thank you all for being here. This meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Prepared Witness Statements

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

PREPARED WITNESS STATEMENTS

David Schaefer

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand and Members of the Aging Committee. My name is David Schaefer, I'm 95 years old, a proud Jew, and a survivor of two Nazi concentration camps. I am a witness to the greatest act of antisemitism where six million Jews were killed for no reason other than being a Jew.

I was born in a small town in Slovakia in 1929. In 1940, my father was taken away from our family by the government. That was the last time I saw him. A year later, when I was 11, the rest of my family were rounded up and placed onto train cattle cars. The cars fit no more than 50 people and they put in 80. There was nowhere to sit. We could only stand or fall on top of each other. Sanitary facilities were limited to one bucket. Approximately 25% of the people were dead or dying when we arrived at Auschwitz.

When we arrived at Auschwitz, the Nazi's separated us. My mother was holding the hands of my sisters, Leah and Miriam, when they were taken away. This was the last time that I saw them. Someone told my older brother Yaakov to have me stand on his feet to appear taller, and I did. At 11 years old, I was shaved bald, and given a tattoo.

We were assigned to a work detail. We rose every day at 6AM and walked 2-3 kilometers to our jobs cleaning the rail cars that we arrived in. The floors were covered with human feces, urine, blood and corpses. I can still smell and taste the filth and the chemicals we had to use. The Nazis were not selective on who they beat or who they killed. Yaakov would take the beatings meant for me, and he shared his food with me, and did small things to help me survive. For example, the grease canisters for the axles of the trains were as big as me. Yaakov would try to get the smaller canisters of grease for me to carry.

Yaakov and I were at Auschwitz for more than two years before being transported to Buchenwald in Germany in 1943. I was about 13. By this point the war was not going well for the Nazis. I remember the air that I was breathing was horrendous, it was the smell of burning flesh and smoke. We knew what they were doing. They also poisoned the water. We knew to boil the water to keep from getting sick. One day I saw Yaakov drink the water without boiling it. He said, "I don't want to live anymore." The next day he was sick from dysentery, frail and weak. They marched us to work, but I could not pull him up and I could not stop because the guard pushed his gun beside my head. I let go of Yaakov and he just laid there as we continued. About 10 seconds later I heard the sound of a gunshot. I knew they had shot him. I never saw Yaakov after that.

After almost a year, around November of 1944, I was placed on another railroad car. Along the route, near Passau in Bavaria, the US Air Force bombed the train. I was alone, without my brother to protect me, but I jumped out of the train car and ran like hell to the forest. After eight days, I was found by Czech partisans. I was almost 15 years old and weighed 83 pounds.

After recovering at the hospital at the end of war, I returned to my hometown. I had hoped to find comfort but instead I found more antisemitism. I had to hide in a barn on my family's farm before making my way back to the train station and back to Prague. Other Jews that returned had been killed.

Many years passed before I learned that my father had survived the Mauthausen concentration camp, but had died three days after liberation from typhoid.

Before the war, we lived on a farm that was in our family for seven generations. I had lost 105 family members: siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins - all murdered. Our land was taken, and I was an orphan.

I came to America in 1950; learned English in nine weeks and went to college. Upon graduation, I married and started a family. Today, I have two children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. I wish I could say that antisemitism stopped after World War II, but it rages on.

On October 7th, 2023, we saw Hamas kill 1,195 Jews. It's been over 570 days and we still have hostages. These atrocities are and were barbaric. To say they were traumatizing to survivors barely scratches the surface. Protests on college campuses

that intimidate and threaten Jewish students are not benign and cannot be ignored. I remember vividly when Slovakian classmates taunted Jewish kids like me, and what's happening today looks and feels the same. And most recently the Pennsylvania Governor's residence was burned by an arsonist during Passover.

I spend my days going to schools talking about my experiences, and teaching children about the dangers of antisemitism. 18 states, including Florida and New York, have a law requiring Holocaust education. This is important because a recent survey shows widespread ignorance about the Holocaust, especially among US Millennials and Gen Z, and we must do everything possible to educate our young people.

On the subject of restitution, we survivors have been pressing for years to ensure restitution of looted assets such as stolen art, which is critical to documenting the realities of the Holocaust. That is why survivors and our families strongly support amendments to the HEAR Act and other legislation that will enable families to recover their property from those who still want to profit from the Holocaust. This is also important because part of the Shoah's terrible legacy is that for the past several decades, nearly half of all survivors lived and died in poverty, without adequate food, medicine or home care. Survivors suffer from extreme physical and mental-health challenges due to the long-term effects of starvation, beatings, disease, malnutrition, and the murders of our loved ones. I am here to remind everyone that there are still thousands of survivors alive today who are in desperate need, and who cannot be forgotten.

Thank you for having this hearing on antisemitism. It has been a problem and is still a problem.

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

PREPARED WITNESS STATEMENTS

Rabbi Mark Rosenberg

I'm Rabbi Mark Rosenberg & I serve as the Chief Chaplain of the Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, Chaplain with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Senior Chaplain with the North Miami Beach Police, Clergy to the Miami Dade Medical Examiner's Office, Chairman of the Interfaith Advisory Board of Miami Dade-County and Senior Advisor to the Sheriff of Miami Dade-County, Sheriff Rosie Codero-Stutz. In addition to my role in these great agencies, I also serve as the Director of Chesed Shel Emes of Florida, aka CSE. Our main focus is to ensure that every Jew who passes away gets a proper burial in line with Jewish tradition but we are involved in every facet of Jewish life. Through this effort, and by dealing with end-of-life crises, I have direct interaction with the elderly population on very sensitive matters. Correspondingly, we have forged strong relationships with numerous synagogues/temples, Jewish Schools, old age homes, senior citizens centers, retirement communities, hospitals, & other institutions in addition to the countless individuals that we come across in our lines of work. CSE is always available to help families in times of crisis & with the daily needs of the communities as well. These efforts allow us to present an accurate portrayal of the Jewish collective & its considerations, concerns, & interests to those higher institutions whom I work for. I hope to present an accurate portrayal to the Senate Body as well.

The rise of antisemitism is a topic that is discussed way too often when speaking with individuals, community leaders, & establishments as people are genuinely concerned about their safety due to the online cesspool of antisemitism. When hate is allowed to simmer online, it often spills into the streets where there are incidents that confirm people's worst anxieties. But there is one community who's fear is more palpable than all others. The aging population has long held on to the hope that the hatred they witnessed in their youth was a subject of history. A burden that they need not & should not put onto their descendants. So, they stayed silent. Why stress your children & grandchildren if their present reality does not represent the trauma from the old world. But on October 7th, Holocaust survivors saw their grandchildren slaughtered for being Jewish. The elderly came face to face with the horrific news that perhaps the past they thought they left behind will be the future. Perhaps the burden they thought was an unnecessary load to carry was just an illusion & the iron grip of evil will once again take hold of this world. They worry about the college campuses & what their descendants will experience. They fear that the country that gave them unprecedented freedom of religion can be usurped by those with a sinister agenda.

What will calm their fears that the old world is not the new world? Consequences. It's simple really, if my child runs into the street & I remain silent - I may not support it, but I guarantee it will happen again. If there are no consequences for those that intimidate & bully under the guise of free speech, then they will be emboldened & take more ground until we get to a dark place. The Holocaust didn't start in the mid-20th century; it was the conclusion of antisemitism that had fermented for centuries.

- We must accept that NEVER AGAIN is now.
- We must accept that staying silent is really enabling those who hate.
- We must accept that the aging community is re-living the trauma that should've never happened, let alone forgotten.
- We must accept that there are Holocaust deniers, and we cannot deny the deniers existence.
- We must accept that the Oct 7th atrocities, murder, rape, burning of families & babies & other horrific acts actually happened. We cannot allow these crimes to be whitewashed as just another conflict in the Middle East.
- We must accept that 250 hostages were taken, some of them being elderly and Holocaust survivors, who are still waiting for their grandchildren to be released by the Hamas terrorist organization.

•We must guarantee the elderly that the United States Government will not allow this to continue.

For too long, people filled with hatred felt safe enough to show up to synagogues, educational facilities, & public spaces spewing hate & antisemitism in the name of free speech & there was no legal consequence to stop them. They would bully, intimidate, harass & threaten in the hope of provoking a reaction. In Florida, under the Governorship of Rick Scott, many laws have been instituted to help halt acts such as these. This includes Florida House Bill 269 - which has helped in a tremendous manner. It provides consequences for those that harass based on religion or ethnic heritage, it protects synagogues, schools, & campuses, & even includes felony charges for hate mail & projections of images onto buildings. The bill is referenced below. If we take legitimate action like this today, then we can stop hate & antisemitism before it spirals out of control like it has so many times in history. We can show our aging population that their trauma will not be their grandchildren's trauma. We can show them why America is the land of the free but also the land of consequences for those that deserve them.

Thanks to Chairman Rick Scott of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand, Senator Ashley Moody and the other members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to testify on this matter at the hearing on April 30th, 2025. I hope & I have full confidence that the Senate body will do whatever they can to implement the consequences necessary to ensure this runaway train of antisemitism is pushed off the tracks before it is too late. Once again, thank you to the Special Committee on Aging & the Senate body for ensuring "Never Again" actually never ever happens again.

Rabbi Mark Rosenberg

Florida House Bill 269

Harassing Based on Religion or Ethnic Heritage

784.0493, F.S.; providing definitions; prohibiting a person from willfully and maliciously harassing, threatening, or intimidating another person based on the person's wearing or displaying of any indicia relating to any religious or ethnic heritage; A person who violates subsection (2) commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable. A person who violates subsection (2), and in the course of committing the violation, makes a credible threat to the person who is the subject of the harassment or intimidation, commits a felony of the third degree.

Synagogues and Schools

871.01 assemblies.- 5. Subsection (1) of section 871.01, Florida amended to read:Disturbing schools and religious and other Whoever willfully and maliciously interrupts or school or any assembly of people met for the worship of God, any assembly of people met for the purpose of acknowledging the death of an individual, or for any other lawful purpose commits a misdemeanor of the first second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. (b) If a person commits a violation of paragraph (a) and in doing so makes a credible threat, as that term is defined in s. 784.048(1), he or she commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

Campus

810.098, F.S.; prohibiting a person who willfully enters the campus of a state university or Florida College System institution for the purpose of threatening or intimidating another person from remaining on such campus after being warned to depart. Whoever, without being authorized, licensed, or invited, willfully enters the campus of a state university or Florida College System institution for the purpose of threatening or intimidating another person, and is warned by the state university or Florida College System institution to depart and refuses to do so, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

Hate Mail

403.413, F.S.; prohibiting a person from distributing onto private property any material for the purpose of intimidating or threatening the owner, resident, or invitee of such property; providing criminal penalties; prohibiting a person from distributing onto private property any material which contains a credible threat to the owner, resident, or invitee of such property;If a person violates subparagraph 1. by intentionally dumping litter onto private property for the purpose of intimidating the owner, resident, or invitee of such property and such litter contains a credible threat, the person commits a felony of the third degree.

Projecting Images on Buildings

806.13, F.S.; prohibiting the display or projection of images onto a building, structure, or property without permission.

(a) A person who violates this subsection commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(b) A person who violates this subsection by displaying or projecting an image that contains a credible threat, as that term is defined in s. 784.048(1), commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 108 775.084.

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

PREPARED WITNESS STATEMENTS

Ted Deutch

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, Members of the Committee, it is a pleasure to be before you this afternoon to testify in the Senate, across the Capitol from where I served for seven terms.

I am honored to be here alongside my three other distinguished panelists, including a heroic Holocaust survivor and my dear friend, David Schachter. It is so important to hear their stories firsthand. Their experiences are an integral part of Holocaust education, as studies have shown that the more a person knows about the Holocaust, the less susceptible they are to antisemitic rhetoric.

Today, I am here in my capacity as CEO of American Jewish Committee (AJC), a global, non-partisan advocacy organization that stands up for Israel's right to exist in peace and security; confronts antisemitism, no matter the source; and upholds the democratic values that unite Jews and our allies.

I come to you today on the heels of AJC's annual Global Forum, where two thousand Jewish leaders from more than 60 countries convened to tackle the most pressing issues facing the Jewish people, America, Israel, and the world.

In the Senate Special Committee on Aging's nearly 65-year history, there has never been a dedicated hearing on antisemitism affecting our nation's seniors. Think about that. Today, we are, unfortunately, doing something historic. This hearing is a testament to the moment American Jews, and indeed the entire American people, are facing right now when it comes to the increased levels of antisemitism and hate that have become all too common in our society.

The State of Antisemitism in the Last Year

Earlier this year, American Jewish Committee released our State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report. The report is the first comprehensive data we have that captures the experiences with and perceptions of both Jewish and non-Jewish Americans with antisemitism one full year after Hamas's brutal terrorist attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, in which over 1,200 people were murdered and more than 250 were taken hostage, including 59 who are still held in captivity today, both alive and dead, but all deserving to return home now, after 572 days in captivity. What this report shows is that antisemitism has reached a tipping point in America, threatening the freedoms of American Jews and casting an ominous shadow across our society. The topline numbers are unsettling. 73% of American Jews feel less secure than they did a year ago. 56% of American Jews admit that they have changed their behavior over the last year because of the fear of antisemitism. Your constituents are deciding not to wear a Jewish star or a hostage pin like the one I have on because they fear they will be targeted with hate and violence. They aren't going to synagogues or visibly wearing kippahs because they think they may be targeted because of their identity as Jews.

The 1.6 million American Jewish seniors - more than 30,000 of whom are Holocaust survivors are acutely aware of the antisemitism emanating from every corner of society, and their fear is pronounced. 43% of Jewish American seniors are worried they'll be victims of antisemitism, and 53% are worried that their loved ones will be victims of antisemitism because they are Jewish. And they have reason to worry. American Jewish seniors are seeing an overwhelming amount of antisemitic hate online, they are seeing that posters of Holocaust survivors were torn down last week in New York City, they are hearing from their grandkids about what is happening on campus - chants like "go back to Poland" and threats that October 7th would happen "100 more times, 1,000 more times, and 10,000 more times" ringing on the quad - and they know about the death of Paul Kessler, a 69-year old man who in November 2023 died after being shoved by an extremist while he was simply trying to support Israel and uplift the plight of the hostages.

Seniors Are Experiencing Antisemitism

But it's not just statistics. Here are a few stories about how American Jewish seniors are experiencing this explosion of antisemitism.

Through the USC Shoah Foundation, our partners who catalogue testimony about contemporary antisemitism, we heard from Holocaust survivors in the U.S. who are deeply worried about the surge of antisemitism happening right now. Eva Perlman, who fled Berlin with her family to Paris, and then was sheltered by Righteous Gentiles in Lyon during the war, is afraid. She said that the antisemitism we are seeing "now is even worse than it was at the time. And it's everywhere." The time she is referring to? 1930s Europe. In her interview with the Shoah Foundation, she said of the current moment, I'm scared. I'm absolutely scared because [antisemitism] is a poison that has invaded the whole world. Which was probably latent, you know, it was dormant for many years, and now it's coming out in full force. And I don't know what will happen. I have no idea. Where will the Jews go if they are no longer wanted in this country?

Bob Koperwas parents fled east from Nazi occupied Krakow right before he was born. The rest of his family was rounded up and sent to concentration camps. After witnessing just six months of the antisemitism that had transpired since the October 7 attacks, he told the USC Shoah Foundation that, I'm glad I was born when I was born, because I don't want to be a young child today.

Antisemitism Must Be Fought in a Bipartisan Manner

This all-hands-on-deck moment we find ourselves in - American Jews and Americans of all religious and political stripes alike - is why it is so crucial that leaders are taking every angle to address this problem. No stone should be unturned. It does not matter who is perpetrating antisemitism and targeting Jews. We will be under attack no matter if it is from those on the far-left or the far-right, as they will find a way to make the Jews the culprits of whatever they deem to be the ultimate evil in their philosophy. It does not matter to us if far-left protestors call us "baby killers" when we are on our way to synagogue or if neo-Nazis deface a synagogue with swastikas and other hate symbols. For us, the hatred and fear we experience are the same. Anytime a Jewish person is targeted, it affects every Jew because we are all interconnected. But the rising tide of antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem. It is a crisis for our democracy and our society.

At its roots, antisemitism is interconnected with conspiracy theories. One of the oldest stories used to attack the Jewish community is that the Jews killed Jesus. Since then, no matter where Jewish people have lived, there has been Jewish hate. It has spanned borders and millennia; it has been a left-wing prejudice and a right-wing prejudice. Antisemitism has emerged due to concerns about communism or capitalism. Antisemitism is typically rooted in conspiracy theories about the Jewish people and is irrational in nature, unable to be explained by logic or sound reasoning. This hate flourishes when extremism is on the rise and democratic norms are being challenged. Whenever antisemitism surges, it leaves us divided and unable to deal with the problems facing our society. Addressing it is not only a defense of the Jewish community - it is a defense of democracy itself.

That is why it is so significant that the Special Committee on Aging is having this hearing now. And it is why, despite the partisan rancor in Washington reaching a boiling point, there is still room for productive discourse and bipartisan agreement to address antisemitism. We can take real steps, today, that will make a tangible difference to millions of American Jews. So, I thank Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Gillibrand once again for exercising bipartisanship on this deeply important issue that is so essential to the very fabric of our society.

To that end, I want to take a moment as a former member of Congress to speak candidly to the members on the panel. Right now, as antisemitism continues to rear its ugly head across society, as we saw recently with the targeting of Pennsylvania Governor Shapiro on the first night of Passover, I urge you to condemn antisemitism unequivocally and publicly, in all its forms, whenever and wherever it occurs. Name it. Call it out. Be strong. When an incident occurs, it matters when elected officials speak out loudly and use their broad reach, raising awareness that antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem, but an assault on American values.

I spent 16 years in politics; I understand the political implications of every statement you make. I understand that it is often easier to call out antisemitism when perpetrated by someone across the aisle, someone you are used to battling, and I know the challenge that comes with calling someone out within your own party when they do or say something you know is wrong. But every one of you knows that when you speak out against anyone, members from both parties, including your own, when they spew language that threatens others in your community, as antisemitism threatens the Jewish community, people will thank you. You will satisfy the enormous responsibility you have to your constituents. We cannot allow antisemitism - the world's oldest hatred - to become a partisan political issue and be used as a wedge to divide the Jewish community, because regardless of where it

comes from, whether from the right or left or anywhere in between, antisemitism hurts Jews and our country. I urge every elected official on this Committee to be mindful of politicization and reach across party lines to address antisemitism. The House and Senate Bipartisan Task Forces for Combating Antisemitism serve as examples of how Members can responsibly reach across the aisle to collectively push back against antisemitism. I am grateful that some of you already belong to the Senate Task Force, and I encourage every single Senator in this chamber to join.

Understanding Antisemitism

Key to standing up to this threat is truly understanding antisemitism. According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, 30% of Americans are not familiar with antisemitism, including 10% of Americans who have never heard the term before. That is why the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, which provides a clear and concise description of antisemitism in its various forms, is an important educational tool to help individuals and entities understand how antisemitism manifests in modern times.

How Congress Can Better Define Antisemitism

Congress should swiftly pass the Antisemitism Awareness Act (S.558), legislation with strong bipartisan support that would ensure the Department of Education continues to consider this useful tool when it seeks to protect students in educational spaces.

I also want to take a moment to address opposition to the IHRA Working Definition due to concern that it could be used to restrict free speech. Free speech is guaranteed under the First Amendment. However, if someone is espousing antisemitic rhetoric and invoking age-old tropes about Jews (some of which are outlined in AJC's Translate Hate Glossary), our laws also make it clear that free speech does not prevent us from identifying antisemitism when we hear it. The IHRA Working Definition and the examples it provides are meant to serve as a flexible educational tool to help people recognize antisemitism, depending on the context, not to restrict or limit speech. Critiques of the IHRA Working Definition on the basis that it could limit constitutionally protected speech misunderstand the working definition and its purpose, which is to help policymakers, civil society monitors, educators, and others understand what antisemitism can look like, in order to take proactive steps to address the issue and hold perpetrators of antisemitism accountable.

Jewish American Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month will start on May 1, the day after this hearing takes place. At a time when much of the public discourse regarding the Jewish community tends to focus on negative themes and stereotypes, Jewish American Heritage Month presents a valuable opportunity to shift the narrative. It is imperative for the public to understand that like every other American community, the Jewish American community has made numerous valuable contributions to our country. Jewish American Heritage Month is a great way to uplift these contributions to our country's successes in culture, law, medicine, sports, business, and all the ways we have valiantly served our country - including many folks from the past generations, such as my late father, who fought in the Battle of the Bulge against the Nazis in World War II.

Embracing Jewish American heritage is a key strategy in the whole-of-society fight against antisemitism. This approach educates business leaders about Jewish identity; pushes tech companies to combat the spread of antisemitism online and demands that social media platforms enforce their own rules against hate speech; and calls for strong legislation to clamp down on antisemitism wherever it might rear its ugly head. Allowing antisemitism to fester in any part of our society is wholly unacceptable, and it undermines the foundational values of our democracy. History has shown us that vibrant democracies are the only societies that allow the Jewish community and other minority communities to thrive, and allowing antisemitism to permeate our discourse is a threat to our way of life. Fighting antisemitism requires all of us, in our various capacities, to unequivocally call out and condemn this bigotry. Educating people across society about American Jewish history and all of the enormous contributions Jews have made to America, while also increasing American Jewish visibility, are essential steps in fostering empathy and understanding, which is crucial as ignorance often underpins prejudice and hate.

AJC's State of Antisemitism in America Report 2024 found that 59% of U.S. adults say antisemitism has increased over the past five years. What's more, 88% of this group say they are concerned by the rise in antisemitism. Corroborating that sentiment, 90% of the general public believe that not only does antisemitism affect society as a whole, but everyone is responsible for combating it. It is great that so many members of the general public understand the scale and scope of the scourge

of antisemitism we are facing. But, concerning, only 13% of non-Jewish U.S. adults know how many Jewish people live in the United States, demonstrating that despite concern and desire to act, the size and contributions of the Jewish community continue to be misunderstood. How Congress Can Embrace Jewish American Heritage

Congress established Jewish American Heritage Month, and elected officials continue to play a valuable role in lifting up this important honor. But there is more to be done. Congress should codify into federal statute May as Jewish American Heritage Month, ensuring this month and the countless contributions and sacrifices Jewish Americans have made to our country are celebrated. Members of this body, and indeed all members of Congress, should recognize Jewish heritage, Jewish life, and Jewish contributions to American society. This educates the public about who Jews are as a people and can help mitigate antisemitism. Having a Jewish person in your life, or even just knowing more about American Jews, can go a long way to combat hate. Our State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report found that 60% of U.S. adults say they personally know someone who is Jewish. We found that knowing someone Jewish has a deep impact on knowing what antisemitism is and thinking that it is a problem in America today. 81% of U.S. adults who know someone Jewish know the term antisemitism, whereas only 52% know the term if they don't know someone Jewish. It also affects thinking that antisemitism is a problem: 81% of Americans who know someone Jewish say antisemitism is a problem in America today, while only 58% of Americans who don't know someone Jewish say the same. This tells us how when people have any relationship or familiarity with Jews, they are more likely to be cognizant of the threat antisemitism poses today.

The Need For Holocaust Education

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum plays a vital role in teaching about the important history and lessons from the Holocaust, and I appreciate Congress's bipartisan commitment to ensuring this vital information is taught in our nation's schools. In our State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, we found that more than half of U.S. adults (53%) answered three or more questions about the Holocaust correctly, and those who did are more likely to know the term antisemitism and what it means; say that antisemitism has increased in the past five years; be concerned about the increase in antisemitism; and say antisemitism is a problem in the United States.

How Congress Can Bolster Holocaust Education

Congress has a vital role to play in improving education about the Holocaust and understanding of antisemitism. I was pleased that Congress reauthorized the Never Again Education Act at the end of last year, which empowers the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to provide Holocaust education, resources, and training, and urge this chamber to also pass the Holocaust Education and Lessons (HEAL) Act (S.332), which would direct the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to deepen our understanding of where the gaps in K-12 education are by conducting a study on Holocaust education efforts in states, local educational agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools nationwide. This information will inform policymakers as they discuss how best to address gaps in Holocaust education and what additional resources are needed to bolster curricula. Congress should also ensure, through the annual appropriations process, funding that supports Holocaust education and grants, including \$2 million for the Never Again Education Act, continues.

Antisemitism Online

Antisemitic rhetoric has exploded online. Online and on social media continue to be the places where American Jews experience antisemitism the most. According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, 67% of Jewish adults have seen antisemitic content online or on social media at least once in the past 12 months. While 20% of that group report that these incidents made them feel physically threatened, many people do not report the incidents. The number one reason given by Jewish respondents as to why they chose not to report antisemitism online or on social media was that they did not believe any action would be taken.

How Congress Can Fight Antisemitism Online

To mitigate these issues, there are several avenues Congress can take. Congress should pass fundamental reforms to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and hold social media companies accountable for the spread of antisemitic and hate-fueled violence on their platforms. Congress should ensure online platforms lose their special immunity if they utilize an algorithm to amplify or recommend content to a user that promotes violence and can impose stronger transparency requirements on online platforms that prevent algorithmic bias, improve moderation systems, and enforce community standards. And finally, Congress should pass legisla-

tion requiring social media companies to allow researchers access to the platform's data, while maintaining users privacy. Qualified, independent researchers can help Congress and the social media companies themselves better understand how the platform's algorithms are spreading antisemitism.

Experts from American Jewish Committee actively engage with social media companies on these issues, provide briefings and policy recommendations, and serve as a trusted flagger or early warning partner, which allows us to escalate harmful content and alert the companies to changing trends in antisemitism. AJC would be happy to brief Members of Congress to ensure you remain updated on the latest data and can develop comprehensive policies that can make these platforms safer for all users.

Antisemitism On Campus

Unfortunately, a large number of antisemitic incidents we have seen since October 7, 2023, have occurred on college campuses. At George Washington University, pro-Hamas phrases, including "Glory to Our Martyrs" were projected for hours onto a building in the heart of the campus. At Cornell University, a student threatened to kill Jewish students in an online forum. At the University of Maryland, students chanted, "there is only one solution - intifada revolution," with "Holocaust 2.0" found chalked on the ground at the time of the rally. In December 2024, a freshman at George Mason University was arrested and charged with plotting a mass casualty attack on the Israeli consulate in New York, which he referred to as "a symbol of Judaism in the world." These types of antisemitic incidents have continued well into the 2024-2025 academic year as schools have struggled to appropriately respond.

How Congress Can Counter Campus Antisemitism

In our State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, 32% of Jewish university students reported feeling uncomfortable or unsafe at a campus event because of their Jewish identity, a 75% increase from our study last year. Universities are not fostering an open and safe environment for their students. In the months following Hamas attacks, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights received almost three times as many Title VI complaints as the entire previous fiscal year. And we don't even know the extent of the problem because filing a Title VI case is not a process that many students know how to do. Congress should pass the Protecting Students on Campus Act (S.163), bipartisan legislation which would not only empower students to report Title VI violations they experience but also help ensure institutions of higher education are properly addressing discrimination complaints, so that safe learning environments are guaranteed for all.

I am concerned by the Administration's executive order on March 20, 2025, titled Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities, which was intended to begin the process of eliminating the Department of Education. These proposed cuts directly impact the Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which enforces civil rights laws in any educational institution that receives Department of Education funding. Without OCR, along with other critical Department of Education programs, the protections guaranteed for Jewish students by Title VI could be compromised if complaints are not investigated in a thorough and timely manner. Because of this, Congress should call on the Trump Administration to support the Office for Civil Rights, ensure adequate staffing levels in Washington, D.C. and in all regional offices, and provide at least \$162 million for OCR so that it can continue to carry out its important mission of keeping students safe. As more than half of the OCR regional offices were recently closed, a review must be undertaken to understand the impact of that decision. Additionally, there must be guidance on where the OCR's functions will be housed going forward in the federal government. Students deserve to know the federal government will be there to enforce the rights and protections afforded to them and step in when these rights are violated.

Addressing Security Threats

Just as we can do more to educate and train people to understand antisemitism, more also needs to be done to protect Jewish communities from physical threats. Our State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report data found that, for American Jews who are affiliated with a Jewish institution, 30% said their institutions were targeted by graffiti, threats, or attacks in the last five years. Nearly one-third of a minority group's institutions have been threatened. And as alarming as that number is, even more American Jews think their synagogue, their campus Hillel, their JCC, or their kosher deli might be next. For American Jews who are affiliated with a Jewish institution, 70% said their institutions have increased security measures since October 7, 2023.

How Congress Can Address Security Threats

Congress should support community-based violence prevention programs and encourage local law enforcement to build stronger ties with synagogues, Jewish community centers, Jewish day schools, and other Jewish institutions and organizations and vice versa. Through these relationships, Jewish communities can avail themselves of state and local-level training, technical assistance, and resources to bolster their security. And these local efforts should work in conjunction with federal programs such as the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP).

The NSGP provides funding for nonprofits at high risk of terrorist threats and attacks to increase their preparedness and support security needs. This essential program has been severely underfunded for years, only fulfilling 42% of requests in 2023. Since October 7, 2023, Jewish institutional applicants to the NSGP have increased as antisemitic attacks have surged, and fears about attacks have become pervasive. Funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently frozen, leaving hundreds of Jewish and other religious institutions increasingly vulnerable to attack. Congress should call on the Trump Administration to immediately unfreeze this vital funding and, further, ensure the program continues by providing \$500 million in fiscal year 2026. I want to thank Congress for its continued bipartisan support for this program. It is more vital now than ever before.

The Need For a National Coordinator to Counter Antisemitism

In the United States, while we have a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism in the U.S. Department of State, their focus is global. The efforts of the Federal Task Force to Combat Antisemitism can be streamlined and amplified by including all federal agencies. Additionally, having a point person solely focused on leading interagency coordination and building infrastructure around combating antisemitism, including leading and maintaining the process of sharing federal government efforts across agencies and with the Jewish community, will make countering antisemitism more efficient and effective.

How Congress Can Help Create a National Coordinator

Congress should work with the Administration to appoint a national coordinator to counter antisemitism so that our government continues to take a whole-of-government approach to fight the scourge of antisemitism.

Engage With Jewish Communities

I implore you to take the time to personally engage with the Jewish communities in your state. You could attend a local Shabbat dinner or participate in a roundtable discussion. Sit down with and listen to Jewish students about what they are seeing and encountering in their schools and on campus. You'll witness the challenges they face and the experiences that shape their lives. Let your staff and your constituents know that you stand with the Jewish community as they boldly describe what they have faced. There is no more important ally to our community than the people we elect to represent us in Washington. With our 25 regional offices nationwide, connecting with your local AJC office, Jewish Federation, and leaders of large synagogues is a great way to start building these meaningful connections.

Fighting Antisemitism Will Strengthen Our Democracy

This moment is not only about the Jewish community, but also about the society we live in, and we must find ways to work together in a bipartisan manner to protect Jewish seniors, combat antisemitism in society, and create a better future for our children and grandchildren. When I was in Congress, I swore to uphold the Constitution and worked hard to defend the families in my district. As the CEO of AJC, I lead a 118-year-old global organization dedicated to creating a world where Jews thrive and are safe. Right now, that starts with defeating antisemitism, and by working together, we can aggressively wage this battle and our victory will be protecting the Jewish community and strengthening our nation.

The hatred of Jews and antisemitism has plagued our world for thousands of years. It has led to Jews being vilified, isolated, harassed, chased, expelled, hunted, and murdered. At its core, antisemitism is a symptom of extremism and the fraying of our shared social cohesion. When antisemitism is tolerated, it means even more conspiracy theories have the air to bloom into something more dangerous and sinister. It means there is a rot gnawing at the foundation of our society and that we are at risk of democratic backsliding, extremism, and dehumanization. And it means that every one of us, not just the Jewish community, is worse off. Fighting antisemitism will not only protect the Jewish community in America but also protect our democracy.

For American Jewish seniors more than 30,000 of whom are Holocaust survivors, as well as veterans of our military who put their lives on the line to fight for our country's freedom, small and large business owners who contributed to our economy,

and the countless others who, in their own ways, gave all of themselves to the promise of America - the moment they are facing right now is scary. American Jewish seniors remember a time when Jews were often intentionally ostracized in our country. Through their tenacity and dedication to American and Jewish values, American Jews have experienced what some have deemed a "Golden Age" for our community. But now, with antisemitism on the rise, the acceptance we have enjoyed is at risk of going away. These seniors deserve to live out their many remaining years celebrating the successes of their family and community, and observing their faith openly without worrying about what happens if they are proudly Jewish in public or if their children or grandchildren will be victims of antisemitism. For these amazing American Jewish seniors, for the Jewish community, for the future of our democracy, we must all come together to fight antisemitism now.

Thank you.

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

PREPARED WITNESS STATEMENTS

Rebecca Federman

Thank you, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Gillibrand, and Members of the Special Committee on Aging, for inviting me to speak before you today.

My name is Rebecca Federman, and I am privileged to serve as the Senior Director for the Community Security Initiative of New York's Intelligence Desk. In 2019, in the wake of the deadliest attacks against American Jews - 15 dead Jews in 14 months across Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City, and Monsey, many of whom were elderly individuals - the umbrella Jewish organizations in New York, UJA-Federation and JCRC-NY, founded the Community Security Initiative as our way of actualizing Never Again. CSI, as the organization is colloquially known, is a comprehensive program designed to protect and enhance security for the 1.8-million-person Jewish community in New York and in Southwest Connecticut. We help ensure Jews are never again murdered in our houses of worship, schools, community centers, summer camps, or grocery stores.

I supervise our Intelligence Desk, a team of four threat intelligence analysts, whose main goal is to detect, investigate, and disrupt violent threats targeting the Jewish community. The investigations we undertake are politically and ideologically agnostic - we've thwarted violent neo-Nazis, disrupted ISIS-inspired individuals, and other variants of antisemites with weapons. We spend our days knee-deep in the sewers of the deep, dark and surface web, scouring the internet for threats.

It is important to note that our focus is not on vile, first amendment protected antisemitic speech, but rather a higher threshold, focusing on those threats that include: 1) an explicit expression of intent to commit violence, such as "I am going to shoot up a synagogue"; 2) an indication of possessing weapons with intent to use them; or 3) an expressed allegiance to a U.S. designated terrorist organization. And in 2024 alone, we elevated a total of 221 life-threatening instances to law enforcement and partner organizations both locally and globally for them to urgently respond. This is undeniably a profoundly disturbing number.

Fortunately, CSI works hand in hand with law enforcement partners at the local, state, and federal level and in many cases sharing of this threat information has enabled law enforcement to act and to disrupt potentially deadly threats.

Just two months ago, this past Valentine's Day, the CSI Intelligence Desk thwarted an attack against Central Synagogue, a prominent synagogue in Manhattan. One of my analysts detected a post on X in which the user indicated his intention to visit the synagogue, naming his location, date and time, and in a subsequent post, evoked Adolf Hitler, claiming if he was stopped, he would kill tenfold as many Jews as Hitler did. Working closely with our partners at the NYPD and New Jersey State Police, they were able to locate this individual as he was en route to New York City, arresting him as he attempted to enter the Lincoln Tunnel, a main thoroughfare connecting New Jersey to Manhattan. This is but one of many examples of the antisemitic terrorist threats the CSI team has helped to thwart.

The threat landscape facing the Jews in America and around the world is vast and diverse, particularly in the wake of Hamas' October 7, 2023 terror attack against Israel. Of the instances we elevated to law enforcement for which we were able to determine the online user's ideology, 60% were motivated by white supremacist ideology and 40% by jihadi ideology, such as individuals expressing their allegiance to ISIS or Hamas.

CSI assesses that another violent attack targeting the Jewish community in America is increasingly likely. Based on our analysis, CSI assesses the greatest threats to the Jewish community come from three main vectors: a homegrown violent extremist motivated by the current Israel-Hamas war; an individual associated with or inspired by ISIS; or a Racially and Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist fueled by white supremacist and neo-Nazi beliefs.

Indeed, recent thwarted attacks-some stemming from CSI Intelligence threat detection-corroborate our "triple threat" assessment. In July 2024, a Canada-based individual planned to target Chabad's world headquarters in Brooklyn, NY with a mass-casualty attack in the name of ISIS, which was fortunately thwarted by a joint

FBI-Canadian law enforcement operation. In January 2025, based on a tip from CSI to the FBI, a white supremacist in Beverly, Massachusetts was arrested with weapons, ammunition, and a Nazi flag after he posted online that it was time to kill Jews and that he had the addresses of every Jew in his neighborhood. And of course, just a few weeks ago, Governor Josh Shapiro's home was firebombed during Passover, by an attacker allegedly motivated by the current Israel-Hamas war and the Governor's pro-Israel stance.

A large-scale, violent attack is not the only threat facing the Jewish community in America. Every day, Jewish Americans are victims of antisemitic incidents that range from vandalism and harassment to assault. Just last week, the Anti-Defamation League released its annual audit of antisemitic incidents for 2024. Unsurprisingly, the 9,354 incidents recorded were the highest on record since ADL began tracking these statistics in 1979. Assaults increased by 21% over last year's data, and 58% of the incidents the ADL recorded in 2024 contained elements of anti-Israel bias, perpetrated by both anti-Israel organizations and white supremacist groups.

Also included in ADL's audit data, was an 84% increase in antisemitic activity on college campuses across the country. Since October 7th, Jewish students began feeling unsafe on their college campuses, often subjected to intimidation, harassment, and disruptions of their events, classes, and campus life. In response to the frequent vitriol and disruptive protest activity, CSI launched our Campus Security Initiative, working with Campus Hillels and Chabad Rabbis as well as Campus Security professionals at twenty-five universities along the Amtrak corridor from Boston to Washington, D.C. in order to meet their needs. On some campuses, our role is to provide guidance for Jewish campus professionals and students. For other campuses, CSI provides funding for security guards to protect events. For every campus, we offer a personal security app for students and my analysts prepare a weekly campus report detailing the key trends, incidents, and upcoming protest activities taking place on campuses.

Looking at the trendlines across the twenty-five campuses, we assess that campuses are no longer just centers of first amendment protected protest. While not all campuses have seen the same level of protest activity, harassment, and intimidation of Jewish students, in some cases, campuses have become launchpads for violence and hate. Late last year, at George Mason University, a student plotted an ISIS-inspired terror attack against the Israeli Consulate in New York. Also, during 2024, at the University of Pittsburgh, Jewish students were physically assaulted during a protest. And at Columbia University, during the past year, Jewish students were spat on, shoved, and chased off campus by mobs shouting, "We don't want no Zionists here." This is not activism-it is antisemitic violence, growing louder, bolder, and more dangerous by the day.

Policy Proscriptions - Keeping Jewish Americans Safe from Antisemitism and Terrorist Threats In order to address the rise of antisemitism, CSI proposes the following policy recommendations:

1. In light of the alarming rise in antisemitic threats and acts of violence across the United States, it is imperative that Congress takes swift and decisive action by increasing funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). Jewish community institutions-including synagogues, schools, and community centers-have become increasingly frequent targets of harassment, vandalism, and violent threats. In 2023, despite \$274.5 million in appropriations, only 43% of grant applications were funded, leaving a significant number of at-risk institutions without access to critical security enhancements. CSI, in partnership with the Jewish Federations of North America, respectfully urges Congress to include \$500 million in the final FY25 and FY26 appropriations bills for the NSGP. An expanded investment will ensure that vulnerable nonprofits have the necessary resources to harden potential targets, train for emergency scenarios, and protect their communities from those who seek to do them harm.

2. In addition, we strongly urge passage of the Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA). Following the October 7th terrorist attack by Hamas, Jewish students across the United States have experienced a disturbing increase in harassment and intimidation, particularly on college campuses. The AAA would require the U.S. Department of Education to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism when evaluating discrimination complaints under Title VI. The IHRA definition-endorsed by over 160 Jewish communities and organizations worldwide-provides concrete, internationally accepted examples to help distinguish protected free speech from unlawful, antisemitic conduct. Adoption of the Antisemitism Awareness Act will give the Department of Education a critical tool to combat antisemitism effectively while upholding constitutional rights, and it

will reaffirm America's commitment to protecting the safety and dignity of all students.

3. Finally, to protect students, safeguard campuses, and ensure a peaceful end to the semester, colleges must robustly enforce Title VI guidelines, including time, place, and manner restrictions, permitting requirements, and enforcing campus codes of conduct that protect Jewish students. Serious consequences, such as suspension, expulsion, and bans from campus events, including commencement, must be swiftly imposed. Congress has an important role to play here, ensuring that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Education, which handles Title VI investigations, receives the resources needed to conduct robust investigations.

Thank you for your bipartisan partnership and leadership fighting antisemitism. I look forward to your questions.

Questions for the Record

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

David Schaefer**Senator Dave McCormick****Question:**

The civil terrorists that vandalize synagogues, assault police officers, occupy buildings, and block roads often cite the Holocaust. They compare democratically elected leaders to Hitler and call Jewish people the new Nazis. As someone who survived the horrors of the Holocaust, what do you make of this framing?

Response:

Analogies of contemporary events or people to Nazism reflect a very serious misunderstanding of the vast scope of Nazi Germany's crimes. The Holocaust was the greatest crime in human history. Nazi Germany and its collaborators perpetrated murder and theft on an incomprehensible scale against the Jewish people, as documented in millions of archival records, and traumatic human experience and testimony. Whether through ignorance or malice, Nazi analogies are terribly misguided and dishonor the memory of six million Jews who were murdered, including one and a half million children under the age of twelve.

Comparisons of Israel with Nazis, or accusations that Israel is committing "genocide," are especially contemptible. We personally saw the world stand silent as our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were slaughtered. We actually had nowhere to go -- no possible place of refuge. No country would accept us even though world leaders knew full well that thousands of Jews were being murdered every day. There was no Jewish nation to which we could flee.

Accusing Israel of "genocide" today creates a completely false moral equivalency between Hamas's unspeakable atrocities against innocent Israelis, and Israel's right of self-defense against terrorists who use Palestinian women and children as human shields to wage war against Jewish people and try to destroy Israel.

The barbarity of the Hamas attacks of October 7, and grotesque accusations of "genocide" against Israel before and after October 7, including in the days before one Israeli soldier set foot in Gaza, remind us that hatred of the Jewish people is a cancer that will never be eradicated. It must be recognized, protected against, and crushed when it threatens. The shameful explosion of antisemitism that has followed, even in this great country and on campuses once considered "elite," is fueled by such hateful propaganda.

In the years leading to and during the Holocaust, similar lies and political propaganda were ignored and excused, at the same time they fostered unprecedented genocidal hatred - real genocide. I know -- I was there.

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

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QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Ted Deutch**Senator Dave McCormick****Question:**

Congress has a duty to do whatever it can to put a stop to the criminals and civil terrorists harming, intimidating, and attacking Jewish Americans. I agree with you that defining antisemitism is critical - not just for educating the public, but for giving government officials a framework for evaluating Title VI cases. To that end, why do you believe the IHRA definition of antisemitism is the most useful framework?

Response:

As the most widely adopted and used definition of antisemitism in the world, employed by over 100 entities, including over 40 governments, including within the U.S. government, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a clear and concise description of antisemitism in its various forms, including conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial and distortion, prejudices against Jews, and the rejection of Israel's right to exist.

Contemporary manifestations of antisemitism require a more thorough and nuanced approach when it comes to recognizing when antisemitism extends beyond explicit expressions of hatred. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism includes a series of examples that serve as illustrations of the various ways that antisemitism can manifest, depending on the context. These practical examples could help a police officer on the street recognize antisemitism as well as a graduate student in a classroom. With the context provided by the examples, the Working Definition is meant to serve as a flexible tool to help people recognize what might constitute antisemitism.

Senator Raphael Warnock**Question:**

On March 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order entitled "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities," which directs the Secretary of Education to close the Department of Education.¹

Can you describe the role the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education plays in protecting students from religious discrimination?

Response:

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces civil rights laws in any educational institution that receives Department of Education funding. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Students who experience religious discrimination often have few other options for a guaranteed free, unbiased examination into the complaint other than under Title VI. OCR is tasked with investigating complaints against educational institutions, and the office also works with these institutions to resolve these complaints and ensure a safe environment for students.

¹ Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, Executive Order No. 14242, 90 Fed. Reg. 13679, and Communities, White House (March 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/25/2025-05213/improving-education-outcomes-by-empowering-parents-states-and-communities>.

Question:

What are the potential consequences if the Office for Civil Rights does not have adequate funding or staffing?

Response:

In the months following Hamas's terror attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) received nearly three times as many Title VI complaints as in the entire previous fiscal year. However, we still do not fully understand the extent of the problem because many students are unaware of how to file a Title VI complaint, so the actual number of Title VI violations might be much higher. OCR was under-resourced at the start of this year and my concerns have only increased with reports that more than 200 of OCR's roughly 550 employees were laid off and more than half of their regional offices have closed. Without adequate funding or staffing, the OCR, along with other essential Department of Education programs, will be unable to investigate these complaints properly and in a timely manner. This jeopardizes the protections guaranteed for Jewish students under Title VI. Students deserve to know the federal government will be there to enforce the rights and protections afforded to them and step in when these rights are violated.

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

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APRIL 30, 2025

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Rebecca Federman**Senator Dave McCormick****Question:**

As someone who works closely with law enforcement, do you think law enforcement has the tools it needs to monitor and thwart antisemitic violence? w can Congress further support efforts to protect religious communities?

Response:

The Community Security Initiative is incredibly grateful that our law enforcement partners, including NYPD, New York State Police, and the New York FBI office, have been consistently supportive of our work and protecting the Jewish community in New York. The tools and the know-how are there, but the threat is so vast that having adequate resources and personnel to remain on top of antisemitic threats of violence is a constant challenge.

Congress can support efforts to protect religious communities by 1) increasing funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). An expanded investment will ensure that vulnerable nonprofits have the necessary resources to harden potential targets, train for emergency scenarios, and protect their communities from those who seek to do them harm; 2) passing the Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA), requiring the U.S. Department of Education to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism when evaluating discrimination complaints under Title VI; and 3) ensuring that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Education, which handles Title VI investigations, receives the resources needed to conduct robust investigations into antisemitic and other bias incidents that occur on campus.

Senator Raphael Warnock**Question:**

Your intelligence team monitors for antisemitic posts that may pose a threat to the Jewish community in New York.

Research shows that seniors use social media less than younger generations.¹ What can Congress do to help make seniors aware of and to protect seniors from online threats?

Response:

As you indicate, because seniors are less active on social media, the most effective way to protect seniors from threats to their lives that are made online is to ensure that they are safe within their Jewish institutions, including synagogues and community centers. Increasing funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) will help facilitate keeping seniors safe in the locations they frequent, providing critical resources to harden these targets.

¹Michelle Faverio, Share of Those 65 and Older Who Are Tech Users Has Grown in the Past Decade, Pew Research Center (Jan. 13, 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/01/13/share-of-those-65-and-older-who-are-tech-users-has-grown-in-the-past-decade>.

Statements for the Record

U.S. SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

"NEVER AGAIN: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AND SUPPORTING OLDER AMERICANS"

APRIL 30, 2025

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD

Jewish Federations of North America Testimony

Thank you for your work to address antisemitism and for holding the hearing, Never Again: Addressing the Rise of Antisemitism and Supporting Older Americans, on April 30, 2025. It is an honor to submit testimony for the record.

The Jewish Federations of North America proudly represents 146 independent Federations and a network of 300 smaller communities across the continent. Our mission is to build flourishing Jewish communities. We protect and enhance the well-being of Jews worldwide through meaningful contributions to community, Israel, and civil society. In 2024, Jewish communities experienced 8,354 reported antisemitic incidents - the highest number recorded in a single year according to the Anti-Defamation League. As we know, antisemitism affects us all, including older people in our community. Too often, older voices are not heard. This is why we work to give voice to Holocaust survivors and other older Americans. Here are some stories of how Holocaust survivors are experiencing antisemitism around the country.

Survivors Speak: Facing Antisemitism in America Today

In Chicago, Illinois, a Holocaust survivor's front door was vandalized with antisemitic language. A neighbor was the first to notice, and when they remarked that the survivor seemed relatively unfazed, the survivor said, "I cannot show fear. It's not an option. I cannot show them I'm afraid." She refused to take down her mezuzah and continued to live her normal life. On the other hand, the agency serving Holocaust survivors recently received a generous donation of mezuzot for their clients' doorposts. Almost no clients wanted one, presumably out of concern for identifying their home as a Jewish home.

A Holocaust survivor couple in Boca Raton, Florida, shared a story about their Jewish grandson who was harassed during anti-Israel protests at a university in the northeast. The grandson was pressured by his friends to join anti-Israel protests, and when he refused, he was shunned and antagonized for being Jewish and supporting Israel. It was devastating for him to learn he could not trust people who previously had been cordial and with whom he had enjoyed activities together. The Holocaust survivor grandparents were deeply affected.

Other survivors in Boca Raton articulated that "it feels like Germany all over again," retraumatized by current events in Israel and antisemitism. Survivors were saying, "It feels so much like Germany. It started with casual remarks, then rallies, we didn't think this would ever happen again and here it is."

A Holocaust survivor in Columbus, Ohio, applied for an Austrian Passport. "Even though I never thought I would ever go back to Austria after my father was taken away to the camps," he wrote, "I now look at Austria as a potential safe place to run to with the rise of antisemitism and destruction of all social services here in the U.S."

Several Holocaust survivors have stopped attending public events that have a Jewish focus because they are concerned about their safety. They have reason to be concerned. When the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra performed in San Diego, California, protestors blocked some cars with survivors in them from getting to the concert hall. The survivors were rattled by the experience.

While giving a speech at a Holocaust remembrance gathering in San Diego, a 90 year old Holocaust survivor shared how much anxiety she is living with because of what she sees and hears around her. She feels we are on a precipice of another Holocaust, as she once again experiences behaviors, rhetoric and propaganda that appears to blame the Jewish people for today's societal problems. Another survivor warned that "Never Again" is happening once more.

A prominent Holocaust survivor from Queens, New York, has been extremely traumatized by the increasing antisemitism. Seeing Jewish college students being accosted on the college campus has brought back terrible memories from the past. An elderly Bukharian victim of trauma living in Queens has heard about how people who are visibly Jewish have been verbally abused on the streets of New York.

Survivors have also drawn a parallel between the hostages being held in Gaza to people being held by the Nazis.

The wife and daughter of Holocaust survivors in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, said that every time she experiences antisemitism, she feels the urge to flee. When instances of antisemitism had become prevalent in Ukraine where she previously lived, she made the decision to leave within two days. When she hears about antisemitism now, she feels her trauma resurfacing.

There is a Holocaust survivor in Cincinnati, Ohio, who frequently shares her Holocaust story with public audiences because she knows how important it is to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. However, after she experienced antisemitism in some schools and public settings where she had been speaking, she is now worried about someone coming to her house to harm her.

As a group, Holocaust survivors in Cincinnati have taken action. Upon learning about antisemitism on college campuses, the survivors expressed their sadness and disappointment that after everything they lived through during the Holocaust, young people today were still experiencing this hatred. Guided by their belief in the resilience of the Jewish people, the survivors penned an inspirational letter to offer wisdom, comfort, and encouragement to the students. The University of Cincinnati Hillel invited the survivors to read the letter to students at a Shabbat gathering. The local news covered the event on TV, and the newspaper published the letter. Finally, the Holocaust survivors read the letter at Cincinnati's October 7th commemoration to a standing ovation. Through these activities, the survivors turned a feeling of helplessness into a feeling of power and influence.

Holocaust survivors in New York, NY, who attend a weekly virtual class together often reference the similarities between today and the antisemitism they experienced in Europe. They are shocked this is happening in the United States, the country that became their new home and provided safety and the ability to build a new life. They ask, "How could this be happening again? When will they leave us alone in peace? How could this country allow this?"

Also in New York, NY, members of a support group for children of Holocaust survivors shared how they are removing their mezuzot from their doorposts or not wearing their star of David necklace to try to protect themselves. One person expressed fear and worry about having a medical procedure done by someone who wasn't Jewish, and another specifically only sees doctors who are Jewish. Another shared that she was considering leaving her synagogue because antisemitism wasn't talked about, despite it being very present in the community, and as a result it made her feel very alone and isolated. Another group member talked about how she was bullied and ridiculed as a child for being Jewish in a school where she was one of the only Jewish people and this trauma is coming back up for her now.

These stories demonstrate how Holocaust survivors and their families have been re-traumatized. Many are avoiding public gatherings, concealing their Jewish identities, and planning their "escapes" from the antisemitism of the United States. Others are taking action. These are mechanisms to cope with the trauma.

From Survival to Support: Meeting the Needs of Holocaust Survivors Today

Holocaust survivors are resilient people who are once again having to face hatred and withstand fear because they are Jewish. The attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023, and the continued captivity of innocent hostages is excruciatingly painful to all Israelis, to all Jews, and to all of humanity. But for Holocaust survivors, the pain evokes deep torture from their past, laced with the sorrow and disappointment that the world did not learn their lessons.

Holocaust survivors need our continued love and care. They need outlets to channel their sadness into action, to help, to make a difference. And, importantly, they need to be able to access supports, especially those who are living in poverty, so they can age and live comfortably at this stage in their lives.

This is why JFNA runs the "national resource center for older individuals experiencing the long-term and adverse consequences of trauma," which is authorized in the Older Americans Act of 2020. JFNA's Center on Aging, Trauma, and Holocaust Survivor Care improves the quality of care for Holocaust survivors like the ones described, and all older people in this country.

This national resource center, which is funded in part by the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program (HSAP), has developed the person-centered, trauma-informed (PCTI) approach to care, using lessons learned from serving Holocaust survivors over decades. To be person-centered, trauma-informed means to recognize that a history of trauma impacts people as they age, and therefore develop services and supports that minimize the risk of re-traumatization.

Take, for example, a congregate meal serving older adults. For this meal to be person-centered, trauma-informed, you would have plated meals. You would not

have a buffet line, because the person at the end of the line may worry there will not be enough food by the time he gets to the front of the line. Due to ongoing or past experience with food insecurity - or in a Holocaust survivor's case, starvation - he may experience anxiety or re-traumatization waiting in line, and he may not even know why. But if he is uncomfortable, he will not come back for the next lunch program. He may go hungry, lack vitamins, or become socially isolated, which can lead to falls and a host of other health problems.

In a PCTI meal program, you would have plated meals, with Ziploc bags or containers already on the tables, so that everyone knows there will be an abundance of food and you are welcome to take it home.

This is a low-cost intervention. Plastic Ziploc bags are cheap. But the knowledge and training of staff to know to do this takes investment.

The investment is well worth it - keeping people healthier, avoiding hospitalizations, and enabling older Americans to live at home with their families and communities. Indeed, if the PCTI approach were universal, more older individuals would be able to access and thrive with the services.

The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program's (HSAP) role in supporting the Center and its work cannot be underestimated.

Over the last decade, the Center on Aging, Trauma, and Holocaust survivor care has funded over 400 PCTI programs across the country. Each of these grants takes a program that meets needs such as food, housing, or transportation and uses the PCTI approach in every aspect of the program - from intake, to service delivery, to program evaluation.

Since HSAP's inception, the Center has served approximately 48,000 Holocaust survivors, 19,000 older adults with a history of trauma, 9,000 family caregivers, and provided 23,000 professional service providers and volunteers with training - all using the PCTI approach.

Indeed, if the PCTI approach were universal, more older individuals would be able to access and thrive with the services. If services are not person-centered, trauma-informed, survivors and others will not access services. They will go without, and they will not get their basic needs met. They may end up in a hospital or nursing home. This would be costly.

We can't afford to offer services that people don't use - or don't respond well to.

In addition, families and friends who take care of Holocaust survivors and other older adults need to recognize that past trauma in their loved ones' lives impacts their ability to access and accept care today. Families need this training to best care for their loved ones. The market value for the labor provided by unpaid family caregiving is an estimated \$522 billion per year, according to an Administration for Community Living 2024 report to Congress. If the family and friend caregivers are not able to provide care in a PCTI way, and if they are not able to receive support for themselves in a PCTI way, they will not be able to keep giving their free labor. Health and quality of life will suffer. Our country cannot afford this.

PCTI services lead to more affordable aging and enable Holocaust survivors and other older Americans to age in place in their homes and communities, where people want to remain.

Oftentimes, if a provider does not use the concepts of PCTI care, the sights and sounds of medical settings and institutions can lead to re-traumatization in Holocaust survivors. On top of this inadvertent re-traumatization, Holocaust survivors and others are dealing with outright antisemitism in health care.

Antisemitism in the Healing Professions: A Threat to Care and Public Trust

Discrimination and bias against the Jewish community in the healthcare sector, including medical schools and major hospital centers, have grown to new heights since the October 7th attacks. Antisemitism in healthcare is a threat not only to those directly targeted but also to the entire medical care system, impacting medical students, practitioners, and patients who face harassment and exclusion based on their beliefs.

The Journal of General Internal Medicine found in a survey that 88.8% of Jewish medical professionals experienced antisemitism in the year after Hamas's October 7th terrorist attack on Israel, compared to 40% in the year prior - a dramatic and alarming increase. More than a quarter reported feeling "unsafe or threatened due to antisemitic incidents." A survey from the Journal of Religion and Health also found that nearly 75% of Jewish medical professionals had been exposed to antisemitism online.

In the mental health space, antisemitic bias has become increasingly apparent and institutionalized. A notable example is the emergence of the "decolonizing therapy" movement, which has at times advanced narratives framing Zionism as a form of mental illness and depicting Jews as inherent "oppressors." Such rhetoric

dangerously misrepresents Jewish identity and history, while also fostering animosity toward Jewish therapists and clients. This atmosphere compromises the safety and ethical foundation of therapeutic environments.

There have also been reports of Jewish individuals being dropped by their therapists following the events of October 7th, and "referral blacklists" have circulated aiming to exclude Jewish or Zionist providers. The organizer of a Facebook group for "anti-racist" therapists created a list of suspected "Zionist" therapists - Jews - to be blacklisted, accusing them of "white supremacy." Another Facebook group with 25,000 members requires members to be "Pro Palestine," a requirement apparently added after October 7th. These actions are clear violations of core ethical standards, professional responsibilities, and anti-discrimination principles.

Antisemitism within medical institutions remains a significant concern. Harmful statements made by influential figures have led many Jewish families to question whether their loved ones can expect fair and empathetic treatment. Jewish doctors and practitioners have felt increasingly ostracized within professional associations, prompting the formation of groups such as the American Jewish Medical Association, the Association of Jewish Psychologists, and Psychologists Against Antisemitism.

This kind of bigotry not only endangers the well-being of Jewish patients including older Americans but also erodes the ethical principles at the heart of medical practice, where commitment to the patient should be paramount. The presence of unchecked antisemitism in healthcare not only endangers Jewish professionals but corrodes public trust in medical institutions and violates the ethical foundation of the profession.

At a time when Holocaust survivors and others in the Jewish community are facing antisemitism, they are turning more and more to Jewish organizations, agencies, and providers to meet their healthcare needs.

Honoring The Lessons, Meeting Today's Challenge

In conclusion, Holocaust survivors and others in the community are experiencing antisemitism at alarming levels. We must listen when Holocaust survivors are telling us their experiences. We must fight antisemitism while caring for older people who are experiencing it. And our care must be person-centered, trauma-informed. Holocaust survivors are our teachers, and now their lessons are helping us to improve healthcare in homes, communities, and medical settings for everyone.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Eric D. Fingerhut

President & Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Federations of North America

Karen Paikin Barall

Vice President, Government Relations, Jewish Federations of North America