



UNITED STATES SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON

**AGING**

RANKING MEMBER KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## **Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand's Opening Statement “Never Again: Addressing the Rise of Antisemitism and Supporting Older Americans”**

*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 across the globe.*

*I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. Each of you are experts on 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. 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 7<sup>th</sup>, but I have heard from so many constituents that their anxiety levels are constantly off the charts, that there are macroaggressions and microaggressions, that the feeling of Antisemitism, the feeling of being attacked, and the feeling being isolated, are prevalent.*

*These are not normal times, and since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 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.*

*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 7<sup>th</sup> is the most egregious nightmare, the most disgusting, horrific, inhumane, barbaric attack that I have ever heard testimony about or seen video footage of. Satanic, evil, disgusting.*

*We witnessed what happened in 2018 with the Tree of Life synagogue.*

*Worshippers, 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.*

*So, 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.*