

Arthur Stark  
Chairman

William C. Daroff  
Chief Executive Officer

Malcolm Hoenlein  
Vice Chair



**CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS**  
of Major American Jewish Organizations

January 12, 2021

Dear President-Elect Biden,

We are writing on behalf of, and as members of, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which is the umbrella organization of fifty-three national Jewish organizations that span the political and religious spectrum of American Jewry. We again congratulate you upon your victory, and look forward to working closely and productively with you and your Administration over the coming years.

One area of great concern among our constituents and throughout our community is the significant rise of antisemitism across the United States. The FBI's recently released annual report on hate crimes documented that in 2019, the number of antisemitic hate crimes increased 14 percent, and made up over 60 percent of hate crimes based on religion. We know that you share this concern, as you have many times identified the appalling display of antisemitism in Charlottesville as an essential factor in your decision to run for president.

Three consecutive administrations, representing both political parties, going back to that of President George W. Bush recognized that antisemitism on college campuses is a serious problem. Each has taken the position that Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act applies to such biases in the college setting. Each of these Administrations has taken the position that some anti-Israel activity is simply a modern form of antisemitism. That is a position the US State Department has recognized since 2005, in its endorsement of what is now called the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, and has urged other countries to adopt as well. Many have, such that the IHRA definition is now the standard used by governments around the world to identify antisemitism as they combat it.

We note too that the IHRA definition has enjoyed widespread bipartisan Congressional support as evidenced by legislative sponsorship of the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act in both the Senate and the House of Representatives over the last two Congresses.

The IHRA definition is now the most comprehensive and authoritative definition of antisemitism and as such ought to inform the enforcement of Title VI throughout the government. The Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism, which was issued on December 11, 2019, was an important and impactful step forward in protecting the rights of Jewish students and identifying antisemitic acts as a form of discrimination through the application of Title VI.

We believe that all federal departments and agencies should, in their work, consider the IHRA working definition of antisemitism (with examples), which states, "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as

hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

These are essential tools for the federal government to combat the scourge that is aptly called "the world's oldest hatred." We urge your Administration to maintain and build upon these policies of the last three Presidents, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate on potential ways to implement this definition that responsibly safeguard freedom of speech.

We request an opportunity for representatives of our community to meet with members of your transition team and incoming Administration in order to discuss ways in which the Jewish community can work with you on these pressing issues.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Stark  
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CC: The Honorable Miguel Cardona

