

OCR to Investigate UCLA for Title VI Violations Based on Complaints Filed by StandWithUs and Zachor Legal Institute

The DoE's Office for Civil Rights will investigate allegations that UCLA administration failed to prevent a hostile campus environment for its Jewish community.

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, January 8, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") has notified StandWithUs and Zachor Legal Institute on January 3rd that it has accepted each of their respective complaints alleging that UCLA violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI") and has opened the matters

for full investigation on the merits. StandWithUs and Zachor Legal Institute both alleged that the UCLA administration repeatedly failed to prevent a hostile campus environment for its Jewish campus community in direct violation of the school's Title VI obligations.



Zachor Logo

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Marc Greendorfer, President of Zachor Legal Institute

The StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department and the StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism, together with UCLA senior Shayna Lavi, filed a complaint with OCR alleging that UCLA violated Title VI based primarily on a guest lecture in Lavi's Anthropology class, during which the speaker, San Francisco State University Professor Rabab Abdulhadi, described the State of Israel as a racist endeavor, denied its right to exist, and characterized Zionists as white supremacists.

After Lavi challenged Abdulhadi during the class, she was verbally harassed by her. In subsequent class sessions, Lavi was also harassed by her professor Kyeyoung Park, who invited the guest lecturer. Lavi informed UCLA

administration, which failed to respond adequately or effectively.

“Students should never be subjected to discrimination, harassment or retaliation by their professors after standing up for themselves, their identity, and their community,” StandWithUs co-founder and CEO Roz Rothstein said. “For Shayna, as for many Jews, Zionism is an integral part of her Jewish identity, and university administrators should be in the business of protecting students against conduct that marginalizes and demonizes them, not giving such hate a free pass.”

Many of the allegedly egregious statements made during the guest lecture that is the subject of

the StandWithUs complaint satisfy the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) Working Definition of Antisemitism. As part of the December 11, 2019 [Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism](#), OCR must consider the IHRA definition and accompanying examples of antisemitism when determining whether a Title VI violation has occurred.

Zachor Legal Institute was contacted by a number of UCLA students in 2018 when the terror-connected hate group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), announced that it had been allowed to host a national conference on the campus of UCLA. Zachor contacted UCLA's administration to ask, given SJP's long history of promoting anti-Semitic discrimination and calls to violence on college campuses, how the university could provide student and federally funded resources for a conference that was sure to create a hostile environment for Jewish students.

Though Zachor provided UCLA with extensive documentation of SJP's history of blatant antisemitism, UCLA chose to allow the hate conference to proceed. Once the conference began and Zachor received numerous reports of discrimination from students at UCLA, Zachor filed a Title VI complaint with the OCR.

"For too long, antisemitic hate groups have been given free rein to create hostile environments on college campuses, often in programs that are federally funded. This type of discrimination has always been contrary to federal civil rights law and thanks to the effects of the recent Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism and the Office for Civil Rights, the Department of Education now has clear guidance on how to deal with the toxic effects of all types of campus antisemitism. We are not asking for special treatment; rather, we are simply seeking an equal and consistent application of anti-discrimination provisions of federal law," Zachor Legal Institute's co-founder and President Marc Greendorfer said.

"We are encouraged by this latest development, as it brings Jewish students and faculty at UCLA one step closer to regaining the confidence that they will be able to participate in all aspects of campus life without fear of being targeted for negative treatment because of how they express their Jewish identities," said Carly Gammill, director, StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism.

About StandWithUs

StandWithUs (SWU) is an eighteen year-old, international, non-profit and non-partisan Israel education organization that works to inspire and educate people of all ages about Israel, as well as challenge misinformation and fight against antisemitism.

Through university fellowships, high school internships, middle school curricula, conferences, materials, social media, educational films and missions to Israel, StandWithUs supports people around the world who want to educate their schools and communities about Israel.

Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the organization has programs on five continents with chapters and offices throughout the U.S., in Israel, the UK, Canada and Brazil.

For the last 7 years, SWU has consistently received the highest possible ratings from Charity Navigator (4 stars) and Guidestar (Platinum) www.standwithus.com and www.facebook.com/standwithus and www.twitter.com/standwithus

About Zachor Legal Institute

Zachor Legal Institute (www.zachorlegal.org) is an organization using the law to oppose antisemitism and the delegitimization of Israel. Zachor engages in legal scholarship and activism to both commercial and university environments. Our recently released report, [The New Anti-Semites](#), details antisemitism rampant in the BDS Movement.

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