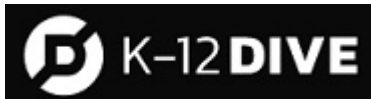


School districts navigate wave of activism in wake of Israel-Hamas war

K-12 Dive

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Section: US NEWS, US NEWS, US NEWS & JEWISH NEWS

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Byline: Naaz Modan

Body

Student and teacher activism is pushing education leaders to navigate a politically divisive environment as protests sweep the nation and globe in response to the Israel-Hamas war. On the K-12 level, reported protests have been largely advocating for a cease-fire or pro-Palestine.

On Thursday, hundreds of students calling for a cease-fire walked out of New York City classrooms. Movement of Rank-and-File Educators, a social justice caucus of the United Federation of Teachers, expressed support for the walkout on social media.

Chancellor David Banks, meanwhile, responded to the community. "In this challenging moment, when so many in our communities have deeply held personal views about various aspects of the Israel-Hamas war, the question can arise as to where the line lies between our responsibilities as public school district employees, and our personal lives and views," said Banks, according to an email New York City Public Schools shared with K-12 Dive.

Banks urged employees to "ensure that expressions of their political views are kept separate from their NYCPS job" and don't indicate that they're speaking in their official capacity. He said that employees can express personal views outside of the workday and workplace "in a way that does not cause disruption" to the school.

However, the New York chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union warned in a statement on social media that "attempting to restrict teachers' & staff members' political speech - especially speech that occurs outside the workplace - is often an overreach and can chill peaceful debate and discussion."

"Outside of the classroom, teachers have their First Amendment rights just as any other individual has," said Wesley Hedgepeth, president of the National Council for the Social Studies, in an email on Friday.

He added that "teachers should model informed civic action" for their students, but he warned they might lose their jobs if they violate school rules. Hedgepeth now teaches social studies courses at a private school in Virginia and previously taught at a public one.

Meanwhile, in advance of a walkout last week planned by students at Virginia's Alexandria City High School, Executive Principal Alexander Duncan III sent a message to staff and families. In the Nov. 8 note about the walkout

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related to the Middle East situation, Duncan said high school administrators and central office staff were "prepared and positioned to ensure that this walkout is conducted in a safe and respectful manner."

Last month, students in the San Francisco Bay Area also participated in a "Walk Out for Gaza," worrying some members of the local Jewish community.

"We are extremely concerned by this action, the messaging, and its impact on Jewish students' safety and sense of belonging," said a letter addressed to San Francisco Unified School District Superintendent Matt Wayne and the school board. "Our Jewish students and families are vulnerable, and need to know that we belong here."

The letter, which came from the Russian-speaking Jewish Community of SF Bay Area, asked Wayne to prevent staff and teachers from "from participating in or promoting" the protest.

Wayne said in a public announcement on Oct. 17, a day prior to the scheduled walkout, that while the district "supports the right of our students to express their views in a peaceful manner, including their constitutional right to peacefully protest, the walkout is *not* an SFUSD sponsored activity."

Wayne said he issued guidance to school leaders "to address safety concerns and reiterate educational focus during the school day."

Educators are navigating the wave of student protests amid a noted rise in Islamophobic and antisemitic incidents on school grounds.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Education sent a Dear Colleague letter to educators nationwide pointing to an "alarming rise" in reports of antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents. Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon, who wrote the Dear Colleague letter, said the department is urging "school communities to be vigilant" of discrimination against Muslim, Jewish and other students.

The increase in anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim incidents reflects a pattern that Muslim and Jewish advocacy groups said is being increasingly seen nationwide.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, a leading organization that advocates against antisemitism, antisemitic incidents increased by 388% year over year between Oct. 7 - the day of the Hamas attack on Israel - and Oct. 23.

The Council on American Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights advocacy organization, noted 774 complaints of Islamophobic incidents between Oct. 7 and Oct. 24.

Load-Date: November 13, 2023

KJP Refuses To Condemn Pro-Palestine Activists Tearing Down Israeli Hostage Posters

The Daily Caller

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 446 words

Byline: Reagan Reese, White House Correspondent, reagan@dailycaller.com

White House Correspondent

Author Image

Body

Link to Image

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre refused to condemn pro-Palestine activists who have been tearing down posters of Israeli hostages hanging in cities across the country.

Following Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attack on Israel, pro-Palestine activists have torn down posters, once hung by Jewish Americans, with pictures and information on hostages and kidnapped Israelis. Some activists have called the posters "disgusting" and "bait." NBC Chief White House correspondent Peter Alexander asked Jean-Pierre if the White House's view is that such actions should be condemned or if the administration considered it a form of peaceful protest. **(RELATED: White House Announces Anti-Islamophobia Strategy Amid Large Spike In Antisemitism)**

"Look, I - I've sorta, kinda seen the reporting here and there. I think it was from last week," Jean-Pierre responded before Alexander added there were "30 million videos" that have gone around of such incidents.

"I'm just not going to go into specifics on that particular thing. What I can say is there are real, violent protests and threats that are happening right now, and senior administration officials are aware of these reports which are deeply concerning. That is something we are focused on," Jean-Pierre said during the Tuesday press briefing.

One pro-Palestine activist decided to tear down such posters featuring Israeli hostages in New York after a friend told her they were anti-Islamic propaganda, according to The New York Times. Another activist remarked Jewish Americans were putting up the posters to "bait people to take them down," the Times reported.

#BREAKING: Shocking video captures two people in front of #USC tearing down and discarding posters of hostages kidnapped by Hamas. This is not helping Palestine its only a front for Antisemitism #StopAntisemitism #StopTheHateNow #Isreal #Hamas #IsrealPalestineWar pic.twitter.com/KppB5axRzm

- HardBoiledEgg (@HarderBoiledEgg) October 27, 2023

"To be clear, it's deeply concerning that people would be pulling these things down?" Alexander followed up.

KJP Refuses To Condemn Pro-Palestine Activists Tearing Down Israeli Hostage Posters

“As it relates to a lot of reporting out there about violent protests and threats and so I can speak to that. I can speak to how the FBI is tracking an increased volume. I can speak to the frequency of threats that we are seeing to the Jewish community, to the Arab American community, to the Muslim communities in the United States since Oct. 7.”

“That is something I can speak to, and obviously DOJ and FBI are working with local law enforcement on those threats and of course that is deeply concerning to us and so that is what we are going to work on, focusing on that,” the press secretary concluded.

Graphic

[Photo Credit: Screenshot | White House]

Load-Date: November 7, 2023

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Ex-New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is heckled by hostile Eagles fans in Philadelphia over his support for the Cowboys before 'remaining silent as his friend

Ex-New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is heckled by hostile Eagles fans in Philadelphia over his support for the Cowboys before 'remaining silent as his friend is ejected from their box for hanging a US-Israeli flag'

MailOnline

November 6, 2023 Monday 1:15 PM GMT

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Byline: Max Winters For Dailymail.Com

Body

- Chris Christie was booed by Eagles fans as he backed his Cowboys to beat them
- Christie was accused of 'remaining silent' when George Norcross was ejected
- DailyMail.com provides all the latest international sports news

Chris Christie endured a controversial afternoon on Sunday when he was brutally heckled by Philadelphia Eagles fans before being accused of staying silent when his friend was ejected from their hospitality suite for displaying a US-Israeli flag.

Christie, who served as New Jersey Governor between 2010 and 2018, watched the NFC East showdown between the Eagles and his beloved Dallas Cowboys in a suite with George Norcross - the New Jersey political heavyweight.

Before the game at Lincoln Financial Field had even started, Christie was taunted by Philadelphia fans as he predicted the 7-1 home team would lose to their Texas rivals. The Eagles would eventually run out 28-23 winners.

During his Eagles Pregame Live show, host Ron Jaworski ushered Christie in front of the camera to ask how he thought the game would play out.

Eagles fans in the background made their feelings clear though, strongly booing Christie as he made his bold prediction.

Jaworski said: 'You never know who's gonna come by. I'm gonna call over one of our guests. He's being booed rather vociferously. Governor Chris Christie is here.

'We caught the Governor walking through the parking lot. They love him here in Philadelphia. Wink, wink.'

Undeterred by the booing, Christie joked about the 'beautiful day the city of Philadelphia gave to welcome the Dallas Cowboys.'

Ex-New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is heckled by hostile Eagles fans in Philadelphia over his support for the Cowboys before 'remaining silent as his friend

Doubling down on his Cowboys support, Christie then predicted Mike McCarthy's team would win '27-24'.

As Christie made his way off stage, Jaworski joked the Republican would 'probably be in Jerry Jones' box' - the owner of the Cowboys and Christie's friend.

But instead of sitting with the Cowboys owner, Christie was actually in the same suite as George Norcross, the New Jersey political heavyweight who boasts close links to powerful Democrats.

But during the game, Norcross was kicked out of the stadium for flying a half-American/half-Israeli flag from the balcony in his suite.

Norcross was seen on video posted to X being escorted out of his suite before stadium security guards took the banner down.

It appeared to be the same banner that was flown behind Christie during his TV appearance earlier in the day as he made his prediction.

New Jersey Globe reporter David Wildstein suggested the banner may have come from Norcross himself, as he frequently hosts a tailgate prior to Eagles games.

The Eagles said in a statement on Monday: 'The Philadelphia Eagles reaffirm our stance again condemning the horrific and brutal Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7th.

"The tragic loss of innocent lives in Israel is both shocking and heartbreaking. We condemn the abhorrent acts of terrorism, and we grieve for all the victims and their families. We pray for peace to be brought to the people of the region." - Philadelphia Eagles, October 9, 2023.

'We feel it necessary to articulate the facts of the matter involving Mr. Norcross at the stadium on Sunday. Mr. Norcross' removal from the stadium had nothing to do with the content of his sign.

'Our stadium policies expressly prohibit signage containing any kind of non-game messaging to be hung from a stadium suite. Stadium staff repeatedly asked Mr. Norcross to remove the sign he hung outside of the suite. Instead of complying with the request, Mr. Norcross became physically and verbally abusive. Mr. Norcross was ejected from the stadium only after his abuse toward numerous stadium staff members continued. He was escorted from the suite level to the stadium's ejection point, just as anyone else would be after engaging in abusive behavior in violation of stadium policy.'

Norcross, 67, was labelled New Jersey's 'most powerful unelected individual' earlier this year and is often sought after for endorsements and fundraising by New Jersey Democrats.

Norcross was a close ally of Christie when he served his two terms as Governor, helping him get Republican legislation through a state house still dominated by Democrats.

GEORGE E. NORCROS STATEMENT ON HIS FORCIBLE REMOVAL FROM LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD

CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY: The following is a statement from George E. Norcross, III on his forcible removal from Lincoln Financial field yesterday for refusing to take down a US-Israel flag.

'Yesterday, I was forcibly removed and assaulted by the non-police security staff of Lincoln Financial Field and the Eagles/NFL for refusing to remove a 3' x5' American and Israeli flag I'd hung off the

box I was sitting in. As a longtime passionate fan and season ticket holder, I have watched the Eagles/NFL make clear and strong statements on numerous important civil justice issues and ethnic and world conflicts, including supporting the people of Ukraine, so as a strong supporter of Israel -- a country which was viciously attacked by the terrorist group Hamas less than a month ago -- I thought it was an important statement to make.

Ex-New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is heckled by hostile Eagles fans in Philadelphia over his support for the Cowboys before 'remaining silent as his friend

It remains unclear why the Eagles/NFL believe that the US-Israeli flag should be deemed 'obscene or indecent' or otherwise inappropriate -- which is what I was cited for -- and should therefore be ripped down despite both issuing public statements strongly supporting Israel following the October 7th attacks. But as I consider whether to file suit against the Philadelphia Eagles, the NFL and the security company which yanked me out of the box and paraded me in front of thousands of

fans, I urge other supporters of Israel to make their feelings known to the team and the NFL just as they have to universities like Penn and Harvard.

There is no dispute: On October 7th, Hamas murdered innocent Israeli civilians, raped women and butchered children, and continues to hold hostages. I believe Israel has the right to defend itself, just as the United States did following the September 11th attacks and I will remain a proud and vocal defender of its right to do so. Americans have the right to peacefully protest, but that does not include the right to threaten people with bodily harm or even death.'

Wildstein later posted: 'Note Chris Christie was a guest in George Norcross' box. He said or did nothing as his friend was being escorted out.'

Christie is a firm supporter of Israel and called on the US Government to give them 'everything it needs to be able to take whatever actions it needs to take' in the country's ongoing conflict with Hamas.

Norcross' family's support for Israel was made clear when brother Donald Norcross was part of a Congressional delegation to Tel Aviv in the aftermath of the October 7 attack.

Donald was also seen in meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and reaffirmed his support for the Jewish state.

'It was important for myself and my colleagues to travel to Israel to show the strength of the US - Israel relationship and our unwavering bipartisan, bicameral unity for Israel and the Jewish people,' the Congressman said.

'Israel is our closest and most important ally in the Middle East, and they need our support now more than ever.'

'Signs, banners or similar items that are obscene or indecent, not event-related, potentially offensive to other patrons, capable of blocking the views of other fans or otherwise deemed dangerous or inappropriate by the Eagles are prohibited,' their 2014 guidelines state.

'Lincoln Financial Field reserves the right to confiscate signs that are in violation of stadium policy.'

Load-Date: November 6, 2023

Rally for Palestine Held on Campus - The Spectator

The Spectator: Seattle University

November 15, 2023 Wednesday

University Wire

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1244 words

Body

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Fern Creson

Last Tuesday, Nov. 7, the Seattle University Students Justice for Palestine, United Filipino Club and Students for Sustainable Action held a rally and teach-in outside of the Lemieux Library. Around 200 students attended, as club representatives "call[ed] for an end to the siege on Gaza" and advocated for the Seattle U community to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The focus of the rally was to draw attention to the impact that the ongoing bombings in Gaza have had on its citizens, and to recognize that the recent developments taking place are due to a historical conflict.

Associate Professor of History and International Studies and Director of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Nova Robinson specializes in modern Middle Eastern history and international human rights. In an interview with The Spectator, she explained that while Hamas—a political faction deemed a terrorist organization by the United States and other world powers—was elected in 2006 and provides some social services and financial aid to Gaza citizens, it has very little popular support in Gaza and the majority of civilians are critical of it.

"On some levels, people in the Gaza Strip are living under two forms of authoritarianism: the Israeli-imposed blockade of the Gaza Strip that has been ongoing for 16 years—that means that there is no free passage by land, water, or air into the Gaza Strip—and then they have a system of government that they are living under that is not democratic by any means," Robinson said.

At the Nov. 17 rally, students gave speeches voicing their concerns and opinions, and there was a portion that gave context about the history leading up to the recent developments in Gaza. At the end a poem was read, followed by the speakers asking that those who were in attendance lay on the ground while the names of those who have been killed in the Israeli airstrikes were read aloud.

Members from SUSJP and SSA agreed to be interviewed on the condition of anonymity after Arab and Muslim students, and students in Pro-Palestinian organizations on other campuses, have faced doxxing, threats and violence. One of the members shared how students have responded in the past to political conflicts and the impact that role has.

"Students have played a pivotal role in international crises. We've seen that with Iraq, Afghanistan, the Vietnam War and South African Apartheid. Students have played a really important role in pressuring their institutions and governments to address these issues or divest from them or boycott them," an SUSJP member said. "I think

Rally for Palestine Held on Campus - The Spectator

students have a responsibility, especially at SU, to be empowered for a just and humane world and not practice that in theory."

SUSJP has made three formal demands of the university in an open letter cosigned by 37 other campus organizations and clubs: "publicly acknowledge the US-supported Israeli genocide of Palestine," "cut ties with the Boeing Company," and to "affirm and carry out the May 19th, 2021 Student Government of Seattle University Resolution on Solidarity with Palestine and Seattle University's Palestinian Community."

Protest signs and learning from speakers. (Fern Creson)

A member from the Muslim Student Association, who requested to remain anonymous, alleged that the United States citizens' taxes fund the arms being sent to Israel, and speakers at the event also brought attention to the ties Seattle U has with Boeing.

"It is our taxpayer money that is going toward the current violence in Palestine. It's not just us watching as folks from the sideline. It is our money that is actively going towards Boeing and other weapons," the MSA member said.

SUSJP and UFC consulted with the administration to see if they could have Jewish Voices for Peace deliver an educational message about the difference between Anti-Zionism and antisemitism. The on-campus demonstration policy recognizes the rights of students and other members of Seattle U to express their views by peaceful protest. Campus demonstrations may be conducted when they do not pose a risk to welfare or others.

However, SUSJP and UFC were informed in an email that the speaker policy specifies that the Dean of Students may prohibit a student group from inviting an outside individual if there is reason to believe that doing so may potentially incite violence towards others, threaten university community members or pose a risk to university activities and functions. JVP, an outside party, was denied speaking rights at the rally.

Organizers of the rally were faced with challenges in planning the event, specifically the tight turnaround. With the rally being approved less than a day before, outreach to students and faculty was limited. An SSA member explained that there were concerns that the rally would potentially disrupt Homecoming Week, overall slowing the process of getting approval.

"The entire process of trying to get approval for this rally, being faced with red tape and being censored at every corner, and being warned the night before that Public Safety and the Seattle Police Department were notified says something about how the university views us and how the university wants others to view us," an SSA member said.

"Just recently, Columbia University suspended SJP students and JVP. These are two organizations that have been advocating for Palestine rights," an MSA member said. "It raises some red flags because universities are supposed to let students use their voices. When we're seeing a particular kind of crackdown on promotion of student values, I think that's very important to highlight."

Despite JVP being unable to speak at the rally, a Jewish Seattle U graduate student and Robinson delivered information about the differences between Anti-Zionism and antisemitism, as well as highlighting the difference between political ideology and faith.

"This is not a religious conflict at all. It's not Muslim versus Jews and that's what we've been seeing in the news. People will often use the terms like antisemitic or Anti-Zionist very casually without really understanding what it means...a lot of people supporting the Palestine people are Jews, like Jewish Voices for Peace," an MSA member said.

Robinson also expressed in the interview that many major media outlets have not properly historicized their coverage or platformed nuanced perspectives, and drew attention to how civilians have been disproportionately harmed by violence from Hamas and the Israeli government.

Rally for Palestine Held on Campus - The Spectator

"I try to take a perspective that recognizes the suffering that has led to this conflict, and the suffering that this conflict continues to perpetuate," Robinson said.

An MSA member also touched on how they were happy to see supporters from multiple different faiths and identities in attendance at the rally.

"Why do people from other backgrounds and other cultures care about this issue? It's because it's one that stems past the Palestinian borders and boundaries. All the struggles are interconnected internationally. This is an issue of settler colonialism and that's why we're seeing support for the Palestinian people all over the world," an SUSJP member said.

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