



JEWISH STUDENTS BILL OF RIGHTS



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FOREWORD

For too long, Jewish students have been targeted, discriminated against, and in some cases, physically assaulted because of who they are and what they believe. Schools have a duty to protect students of all backgrounds, to provide a safe learning environment and to teach fair and factual curricula.

I grew up in a country where deep-seated antisemitism was the norm. In the Soviet Union, Jews were treated as second-class citizens. The government forced people to stop any religious practice and spread propaganda that used Jews as scapegoats. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* — a text still used today to justify hatred of Jews — was circulated by the czarist secret police. **And now, this same hatred is threatening America.**

Since 2004, the Department of Education has affirmed that Jewish Americans must be protected from harassment at schools that accept federal funding, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the last 15 years, the White House has expanded on these protections. Jewish American students at these schools — from preschool through graduate school — are legally entitled to learn in an environment free of hate and discrimination. This hate includes new and rising forms of antisemitism, which often masquerade as anti-Zionism.

Club Z's teenage students are making their voices heard — even though one in three cannot openly identify as a Zionist at school. They are calling on the relevant government bodies to enforce these anti-discrimination laws by adopting the Jewish Students Bill of Rights.

It is far past time to take a strong, decisive stand against antisemitism in America.



Masha Merkulova

Masha is the Executive Director of Club Z, a national Zionist youth movement.

THE PROBLEM

WHY JEWISH STUDENTS NEED A BILL OF RIGHTS

Antisemitism is growing on campuses across the country, from kindergarten through graduate school. A Club Z survey of Jewish teenagers found that half of the students do not wear items that easily identify them as Jews in public. For American Jewish teens, Israel and Zionism is inextricably linked to their Jewish identity. Manifestations of antisemitism span not only classic tropes of Jew-hatred (e.g. “Jews control the world”), but also include expressions of demonization and delegitimization of the Jewish State (e.g. “Zionism is racism” and “IDF soldiers are baby killers”).

What is most alarming is where these teens are most likely to encounter antisemitism today: on social media and in their schools.

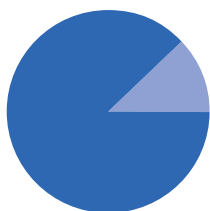
Jewish students are openly ridiculed by their classmates and teachers. From Jewish students’ lockers defaced with swastikas, to Jewish teens told that they “don’t need names, numbers would be enough,” to being called a “fascist pig” for wearing a Jewish star, the examples are countless.

At least one-third of Club Z teens have encountered the following antisemitic lie at least once:

- Jews control the world
- Jews exploit the Holocaust
- Holocaust denial
- Jews control the media
- Zionism is racism
- IDF soldiers are baby killers

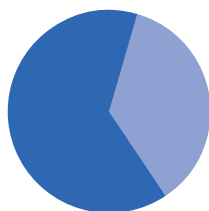
Bigotry is also coming from teachers; in a top California school, a teacher made the [appalling claim](#) that “Jews didn’t really do anything productive over the course of their existence. They mostly just wandered the desert killing their own babies.” At another school, a teacher decorated a history classroom with incendiary posters, which indicated that Jews have no right to live in their homeland.

Hate is also found in curricula. California’s 2019 Draft [Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum](#) excludes Jews as an ethnic minority and promotes Jewish stereotypes. One of the few mentions of Jews references Jewish wealth in relation to success and property rights.



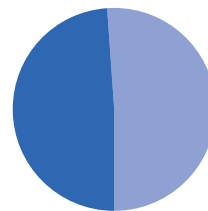
88%

of Jewish American teens see people trivialize the Holocaust



64%

of Jewish American teens encounter someone claim that “Jews control the banks”



49%

of the teens said that they do not wear items that easily identify them as Jews in public.

THE CAUSE

WHAT IS BEHIND THIS ANTISEMITISM?

- 1. Textbooks are replete with inaccuracies against the State of Israel and the Jewish people.** Pearson Publishing Company, the world's largest education company — whose major stakeholders include Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Turkey — disseminates content that contains anti-Israel and antisemitic [content](#). Pearson offers a number of Common Core Programs for high schools in the U.S., including curriculums that demonize the Jewish State; present anti-Zionist revisionist material; and whitewashes or ignores terrorist attacks against Israelis.
- 2. Foreign funding of K-12 public schools goes unchecked.** The Qatar Foundation, funded by the Qatari government, gave more than \$30 million over an eight year period to dozens of schools from New York to Oregon, The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) in 2017. The funding [came from](#) Qatar Foundation International (QFI), the foundation's U.S. arm, to support the growth of Arabic programs, including paying for materials, salaries, and teacher training. QFI's curriculum contains antisemitic and anti-American material.
- 3. New curricula proposals threaten to institutionalize antisemitism.** In 2019, California's Department of Education presented a Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that demonized Jewish self-determination and supported the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, while promoting misinformation and antisemitic Jewish stereotypes. It drew [outrage and concern](#) from more than 80 Jewish and civil rights organizations. This community-wide effort led the California State Board of Education to [announce](#) that the curriculum will be "substantially redesigned." Yet, in January 2020, California's Department of Education [recommended](#) that the ethnic studies curriculum focus on "four foundational groups," signaling that the concerns raised by the Jewish community, their allies and other minority groups will be disregarded. A final draft of the curriculum will go to the State Board of Education for adoption in March 2021.

To combat this bigotry and antisemitism in our public schools, Club Z Teens calls on the U.S. Department of Education, California Department of Education, and U.S. public schools to adopt the Jewish Students Bill of Rights.

JEWISH STUDENTS BILL OF RIGHTS

PREAMBLE

We, the Jewish students of America, in order to guarantee an education without fear of harassment, intimidation, or violence on the basis of our identity, affirm that Zionism is an integral part of our Jewish identity, and declare that we are entitled to the following rights at all levels of the United States education system.

ARTICLE I: THE RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION

Jewish students have the right to freely express Zionism – which is an integral part of Jewish identity – without fear of discrimination or retribution from any teachers or administrators.

- Teachers will not silence students or deliberately lower their grade in a classroom for expressing Zionist viewpoints.
- If Israel is discussed in a classroom, Jewish students are allowed to speak their views freely, with respect and support from teachers. Jewish students can explain why and how anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitic, as the philosophy of anti-Zionism delegitimizes Jewish history and Jewish identity.
- Jewish students will not face interrogation about Israel during discussions where Israel is not relevant.
- Schools and faculty must allow students to participate in clubs, events, and organizations that affirm Zionism as integral to Jewish identity. Schools will provide resources for student-led Jewish Zionist events or clubs, such as access to classroom space or funding, as provided to other student groups.

ARTICLE II: THE RIGHT TO A FAIR EDUCATION

Jewish students have the right to an unbiased education about the Jewish State and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Discussion including differing viewpoints is key to learning critical thinking skills, but curricula regarding Israel must be grounded in verified facts.

- Teachers will encourage students on all sides of an issue to express disagreement over ideas or beliefs in a respectful manner.
- Schools must ensure that educational curricula are not used to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish State.
- Educators must present historically accurate information about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and include diverse perspectives, including Zionist sources.

ARTICLE III: THE RIGHT TO A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Jewish students have the right to attend schools where respect and dignity for all students, including Jewish students, is a standard set by state, district, and school administrators, and enforced at all levels, from the State Superintendent to classroom teachers.

- Schools must ensure that Jewish students receive the same protections from discrimination afforded to other minority groups, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Schools and faculty need to communicate a clear message to students that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated, and that school is a safe place for all students, including Jewish students.
- Schools must ensure the safety and security of students on campus and during school activities. When Jewish students are subjected to verbal and/or physical harassment, educators need to take immediate action against the perpetrators to prevent similar harassment from happening again.
- Schools must encourage students, staff and parents to report all incidents of harassment and bullying so that schools can address them before the situation escalates.

ARTICLE IV: THE RIGHT TO A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Jewish students have the right to protections from all forms of discrimination, with a definition of antisemitism that includes anti-Zionism, today's most potent form of antisemitism.

- Schools receiving federal and state funds must formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which includes examples of antisemitism pertaining to the Jewish State.
- Schools and faculty need to acknowledge that rising forms of antisemitism often masquerade as anti-Zionism. To properly determine when anti-Zionism has crossed the line into antisemitism, schools must refer to the IHRA definition.
- The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement explicitly calls for the destruction of the Jewish State and is inherently antisemitic. Authority figures including teachers and administrators need to acknowledge BDS's bigotry, and refrain from promoting this hateful movement in the classroom.

ARTICLE V: THE RIGHT TO FAIR PROTECTIONS

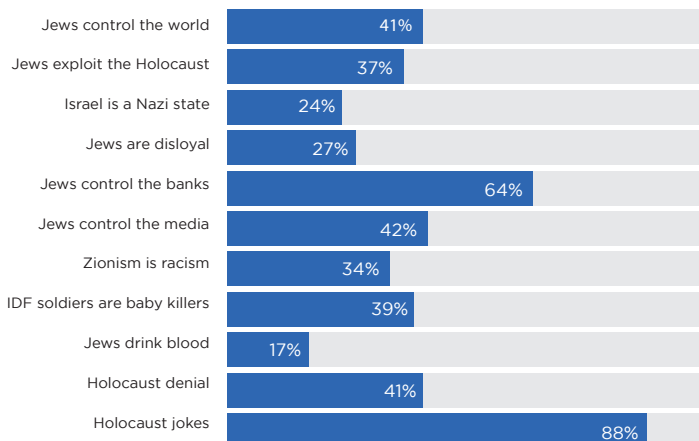
Jewish students have the right to an environment where those who promote misinformation about Jews and the Jewish State are held accountable for spreading antisemitism.

- Antisemitism, under any circumstance, cannot be tolerated. This includes antisemitism in the classroom, syllabi, curriculums, textbooks, school functions, events and any other function directly tied to schools, as defined by the IHRA definition.
- Schools need to have a system in place to intervene if a student or teacher promotes antisemitism. Any person responsible for disseminating antisemitic viewpoints needs to be held accountable.
- Schools need to create robust partnerships with local Jewish communities and organizations to ensure that they are properly addressing antisemitism and protecting Jewish students.

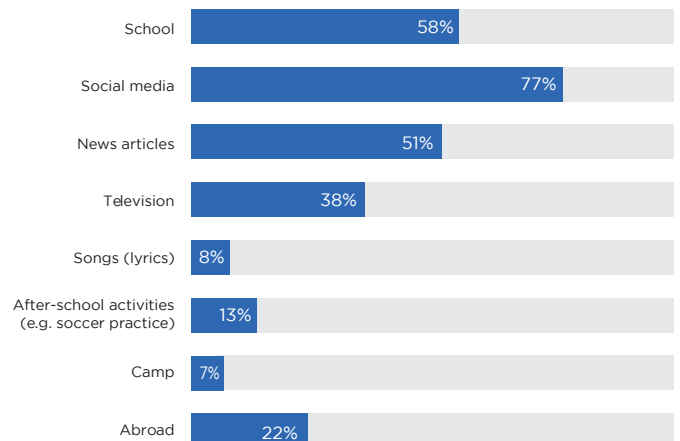
CLUB Z SURVEY

Club Z conducted a survey in January 2020 of American Jewish teenagers from across the country on antisemitism, anti-Zionism and education. These are the findings:

1. 16% of students don't feel safe as a Jew
2. Do you wear items that easily identify you as a Jew in public?
Yes 51%
No 49%
3. Do you view the following statement, "Israel has no right to exist," as antisemitic?
Yes 98%
No 2%
4. Have you ever refrained from openly stating that you are a Zionist at your school?
Yes 29%
No 71%
5. Do you believe that Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people?
Yes 100%
6. What type(s) of antisemitic comments and/or accusations have you encountered?



7. In the past year, have you ever felt unsafe at a Jewish event/ place where there were a majority of Jews present?
Yes 29%
No 71%
8. In the past year, have you refrained from going to Jewish places for fear of an antisemitic attack?
Yes 12%
No 86%
9. Have any of your classmates and/or teachers directly singled you out because you were Jewish?
Yes 19%
No 81%
10. Have your teachers brought up Israel in the classroom?
Yes 62%
No 21%
11. If "yes," was there an overt anti-Israel bias?
Yes 37%
No 62%
12. Where have you encountered antisemitism?



The survey reflects the attitudes of 83 teens who attended the Club Z National Conference on the topic of antisemitism in America.