

## **Written Testimony of Mathew S. Nosanchuk**

### **“Rising Threat: America's Battle Against Antisemitic Terror”**

#### **Subcommittee on Oversight**

#### **House Judiciary Committee**

**Tuesday, June 24, 2025**

Good afternoon. My name is Matt Nosanchuk. I want to thank you, Chairman Van Drew and Ranking Member Crockett for inviting me to testify before the Committee today.

Last month, I attended the opening of a new exhibit at the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. Just six days later—Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Lynn Milgrim—who were attending an event there hosted by the American Jewish Committee, were fatally gunned down in an act of cold-blooded antisemitic violence. Because the museum is only a few blocks from my home, I heard the sirens as first responders sped to the museum. The proximity of this tragedy in both space and time made one thing devastatingly clear: the victim could have been me. That's how hate violence works, it makes every member of the targeted group feel afraid and vulnerable.

This attack—along with the arson at Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro's mansion and the firebombing of a demonstration in Boulder, Colorado supporting the release of the October 7 hostages still held by Hamas, reflects an alarming escalation of both the nature and magnitude of antisemitic violence in America. According to FBI statistics, antisemitic hate crimes more than doubled between 2021 and 2023. [Jews are targeted by hate crimes at a rate of 291 per 1 million people](#)—a dramatically higher rate per capita than any other group.<sup>1</sup>

### **My Commitment To Combating Antisemitism**

My remarks and recommendations today draw on my experience as both a policy professional in government and as a leader, consultant, and practitioner in the Jewish community—working with leaders and communities to understand and develop responses to antisemitism. Galvanizing action and developing policy to counter antisemitism has been a central focus of my work. I previously served in the Obama White House as liaison to the American Jewish community and as a Director on the National Security Council, in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division as Senior Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General, and as the founding executive director of a new organization, the New York Jewish Agenda, and on the Nexus Task Force.

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<sup>1</sup> The Editorial Board, “Antisemitism is an Urgent Problem,” *N.Y. Times*, June 14, 2025, *available at* <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/opinion/antisemitism-jewish-hate.html>.

Most recently, as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategic Operations and Outreach in the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education during the Biden administration, I helped mount an unprecedented effort to aggressively investigate and respond to the rise in antisemitic incidents on campuses and in K-12 schools after October 7. Under the leadership of Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon, OCR opened and resolved more antisemitism cases for investigation than in any prior administration, specifically securing resolution agreements from more than five times as many schools and school districts than OCR secured during the first Trump administration.<sup>2</sup>

### **Threats to Jewish Safety**

However, we must recognize that by the time an incident is so severe that a civil rights investigation or criminal prosecution is warranted, our society has failed those who were harmed and missed the opportunity for many earlier possible interventions.

Investigating and punishing the murder of Sarah and Yaron is critical, but it ultimately will keep many more Jews safe if we invest in education and prevention and interrupt bigotry before it escalates.

When the American people see antisemitic hate normalized in the public square, tolerated and even endorsed by the most prominent national officials, America is failing Jews;

When Nazi symbols and ideas are publicly evoked, America is failing Jews;

When Holocaust education and remembrance are eliminated in our federal agencies, America is failing Jews;

When leaders seek to counter antisemitism by demonizing other ethnic groups, fanning fears, and using Jewish vulnerability to trample on the freedoms and due process rights of any group, America is failing Jews;

When we allow charges of antisemitism to be used as a political wedge issue to sow divisions between Jews and other communities, America is failing Jews; and

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<sup>2</sup> The unprecedented enforcement activities of the Office for Civil Rights in antisemitism and other Title VI shared ancestry investigations are described in Office for Civil Rights, Highlights of Activities, Office for Civil Rights 2021-2025, Jan. 2025, available at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/protecting-civil-rights-109409.pdf>.

When we fail to recognize that rising antisemitism is part of a broader rise in hate in our nation, and eradicating hate is not the responsibility of one community alone, but requires a united effort, we have failed to make Jews and all of our communities safer.

My message is straightforward: Leaders who insist on responding to rising antisemitism by imposing draconian policies that trample on due process of others to advance anti-immigrant policies, strip billions in funding from universities, or otherwise erode democratic norms, are not making Jews any safer. They are undermining the democratic institutions and norms under which Jews and other groups have thrived. They are also making antisemitism worse by justifying these measures in the name of combating antisemitism, putting Jews in the position of being blamed or scapegoated.

We will succeed only if we recognize that antisemitism is antisemitism wherever it originates on the ideological spectrum and to focus, not on fear mongering, but on real strategies that bring communities together to fight it.

In that regard, I commend Chairman Van Drew and his co-sponsors for passing House Resolution 481, which recognizes that “acts of antisemitism—whether expressed through threats, vandalism, or violence—are fundamentally incompatible with the values of the United States and must be condemned unequivocally.” This keeps the focus where it belongs—on violent antisemitism itself, not partisan politics.

## **The Escalating Crisis**

The escalation of antisemitic violence and rhetoric in America has been stark and made an increasing number of American Jews feel unsafe.

- In 2014, a neo-Nazi killed three people at Jewish facilities in Overland Park, Kansas.
- In 2017, white nationalists marched in Charlottesville chanting "Jews will not replace us." President Trump's response, claiming there were "very fine people on both sides," contributed to the normalization of extremist rhetoric in mainstream discourse.
- This normalization had deadly consequences. In 2018, eleven people were murdered at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh—the deadliest antisemitic attack in American history. The shooter was motivated by the "great replacement" conspiracy theory gaining traction in far-right circles.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theories blamed Jews for the pandemic, resulting in physical attacks on visibly Orthodox Jews. Synagogues were defaced with swastikas.
- In 2022, four worshippers were taken hostage at a Texas synagogue by an extremist demanding the release of an al-Qaeda operative.

- These antisemitic incidents are part of a larger rise in hate crimes. The FBI's Hate Crimes Statistics Act Report for 2023 revealed a record high 11,862 hate incidents overall and 2,699 reported incidents based on religion. More than half of these (1,832) were driven by anti-Jewish bias.<sup>3</sup>

To meet this escalating threat, in the spring of 2023, the Biden administration announced the first-ever [National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#),<sup>4</sup> containing over 100 specific actions organized around four pillars: increasing awareness of antisemitism, improving safety for Jewish communities, reversing the normalization of antisemitism, and building cross-community solidarity. This whole-of-government approach was developed through extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders in the American Jewish community. Its release was applauded by Members of Congress and by Jewish organizations across the political spectrum.

Since the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023 and the resulting Gaza War, we have witnessed an increased number of antisemitic incidents and escalating severity in the incidents that have occurred. Perpetrators of these acts have explicitly connected their violence to the Gaza conflict, targeting American Jews based on the view that they are somehow responsible for the actions of Israel's government.

## Antisemitism Across the Political Spectrum

Today, antisemitism has spread at both ends of the political spectrum. It is well established that the increase in domestic terror attacks results principally from the actions of white supremacist and anti-government extremists.<sup>5</sup> Also on the right, we see normalization of conspiracy theories and the ascension of antisemites into positions of political power. We've seen avowed antisemites be invited to Mar a Lago;<sup>6</sup> the appointment of someone with documented support of antisemites to head the Office of Special Counsel;<sup>7</sup> the naming of a Pentagon press secretary who shared Neo-Nazi,

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, "FBI Releases 2023 Hate Crimes Statistics," *available at* <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>. This likely undercounts the actual number given that 60 cities with populations over more than 100,000 reported zero hate crimes to the FBI in 2023.

<sup>4</sup> National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, May 2023, *available at* <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> "The Rising Threat of Domestic Terrorism," *U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs (Majority Staff Report)*, *available at* [https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116\\_ExecutiveSummary\\_HSGACMajorityReport\\_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116_ExecutiveSummary_HSGACMajorityReport_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Maggie Haberman and Alan Feuer, "Trump's Latest Dinner Guest: Nick Fuentes, White Supremacist," *N.Y. Times*, Nov. 25, 2022, *available at* <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/25/us/politics/trump-nick-fuentes-dinner.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Dreisbach, "Trump nominates official with ties to antisemitic extremists to lead ethics agency, *NPR*, *available at* <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/30/nx-s1-5417902/trump-ingrassia-antisemitism-ethics>.

antisemitic conspiracy theories on social media;<sup>8</sup> and the pardoning of January 6 perpetrators, including one who was wearing a “Camp Auschwitz” sweatshirt.<sup>9</sup>

On the left, criticism of Israeli policies has at times crossed into antisemitic rhetoric and violence, as we saw in the horrific incidents that prompted this hearing. I want to make clear that when Jews are targeted at events that purport to be about solidarity with Palestinians, when Jews are asked to renounce or to check their relationship with Israel at the door in order to participate in coalitions, civil society is not just failing Jewish community members, they are falling short of progressive ideals of pluralism and respect for difference.

### **Effective Responses Versus Misuse of Antisemitism**

During my time at the Department of Education, we worked closely with our administration colleagues to implement the National Strategy and fulfilled OCR’s congressionally mandated responsibility to enforce civil rights laws in the nation’s schools and other institutions that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

We took unprecedented action to address this crisis. We made complaint filing easier, issued multiple guidance documents to help schools responsible for protecting their Jewish students to understand how the law applied to the types of incidents occurring on college campuses, regularly briefed Jewish community organizations and Congress on our efforts, and, as noted above, resolved more complaints than any previous administration. We did this work despite repeated requests for increased funding going unfulfilled by Congress.

Another of today’s witnesses Kenneth Marcus, who headed the Office for Civil Rights during the first Trump administration, discussed with the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) OCR’s commitment during the Biden administration to holding schools accountable for antisemitism:

Marcus said current OCR leadership is treating discrimination complaints from Jewish students as an urgent and important issue, and he applauded that aggressive posture by the federal government.

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew Bernard, “Pentagon promotes press sec who parrots ‘neo-Nazi playbook,’ AJC tells JNS,” JNS, available at <https://www.jns.org/pentagon-promotes-press-sec-who-parrots-neo-nazi-playbook-ajc-tells-jns/>.

<sup>9</sup> Jacob Jaffa, “White supremacist and members of neo-fascist group among ‘January 6 patriots’ pardoned by Trump,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, Jan. 21, 2025, available at <https://www.thejc.com/news/usa/trump-pardons-far-right-proud-boys-antisemitism-january-6-s0smrpjij>.

"It is clear that they are sending a message to universities that they need to take antisemitism allegations very, very seriously," Marcus said.<sup>10</sup>

However, instead of building on this enforcement record and the National Strategy's recommendations, we are seeing a troubling pattern of what [a group of Jewish Senators](#) called "using what is a real crisis as a pretext to attack people and institutions who do not agree with you."<sup>11</sup>

The current administration has launched frontal attacks on higher education and democratic institutions that have been central to Jewish American identity and success. In the name of combating antisemitism, the administration seeks to withhold billions from universities and deport students for constitutionally protected speech and without regard for their due process rights.

Claiming that combating antisemitism justifies these attacks on democratic norms and due process undermines genuine, needed efforts to combat antisemitism. When the administration claims to fight antisemitism while simultaneously gutting \$30 million in hate crime prevention grants and decimating the budget and staff of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education, it reveals that a desire to score political points takes precedence over Jewish safety.

A [broad coalition of mainstream Jewish organizations](#) recently rejected "the false choice between confronting antisemitism and upholding democracy."<sup>12</sup> As they noted, "Our safety as Jews has always been tied to the rule of law, to the safety of others, to the strength of civil society, and to the protection of rights and liberties for all."<sup>13</sup>

## The Path Forward

The effect on Jewish communities cannot be overstated. Synagogues require armed guards. Jewish schools conduct active shooter drills. Parents debate whether to send

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Vasquez, "Why Colleges Need to Look Out for 'Hostile Environments,'" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Aug. 16, 2024, *available at* <https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-colleges-need-to-look-out-for-hostile-environments>.

<sup>11</sup> See Senate Democrats Press Release, "With American Education Institutions Under Attack, Schumer, Blumenthal, Schatz, Rosen, And Schiff Demand President Trump Finally End Weaponization Of Antisemitism And Protect Students On Campuses Across The Country," *available at* <https://www.democrats.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/with-american-education-institutions-under-attack-schumer-blumenthal-schatz-rosen-and-schiff-demand-president-trump-finally-end-weaponization-of-antisemitism-and-protect-students-on-campus-across-the-country>.

<sup>12</sup> "Broad Coalition of Mainstream Jewish Organizations Release Statement Rejecting False Choice Between Jewish Safety and Democracy," April 15, 2025, *available at* <https://jewishpublicaffairs.org/press-release/jewishcommunalstatement/>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

children to Jewish summer camps. Many Jews hide visible signs of their identity in public.

This is about whether Jewish Americans can feel secure in a country that has provided unparalleled religious freedom and opportunity among nations in the diaspora.

Using antisemitism to drive an antidemocratic agenda diverts attention from measures that can effectively combat antisemitic terror:

1. **Government leaders need to speak out.** Call out and condemn antisemitism from wherever it emanates on the political spectrum.
2. **Continue Implementation of the National Strategy:** Build on its bipartisan framework rather than abandoning proven approaches.
3. **Restore Critical Funding:** Immediately reinstate the \$30 million in hate crime prevention grants that were terminated and the \$40 million to fund the Justice Department's Community Relations Service, which plays a crucial role in communities resolving hate-based conflict.
4. **Strengthen Civil Rights Enforcement:** Restore full funding to the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and restore the expertise that has been lost through the mass layoffs and the closure of regional offices, drastically reduced funding, and the absence of essential ongoing monitoring of many existing antisemitism resolutions.
5. **Enhanced Federal Coordination:** Strengthen information sharing between agencies, law enforcement, and Jewish security organizations.
6. **Bipartisan Condemnation:** Maintain the approach of House Resolution 481. Antisemitism must never become a partisan issue.
7. **Education and Awareness:** Expand Holocaust education and antisemitism awareness programs.
8. **Platform Accountability:** Work with social media companies to address antisemitic conspiracy theories and incitement.

## Conclusion

The recent violence represents a clear and present danger to Jewish Americans and our national values. We cannot allow antisemitism to become normalized.

The choice is clear: combat antisemitism through bipartisan action that strengthens our democratic institutions, or watch as the issue is used to undermine the foundations that have made America a beacon of hope for Jews and all persecuted peoples.

As [60 civil rights organizations](#) recently affirmed in a joint statement, we must ensure “that these events—and the legitimate fear in the Jewish community—are not exploited

to justify inhumane policies or to target those who peacefully exercise their First Amendment rights.”<sup>14</sup>

We need to prevent the scourge of antisemitism, but we must do so in a way that strengthens rather than weakens the democratic institutions that have been the foundation of Jewish safety and prosperity in America.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your questions.

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<sup>14</sup> Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, “Civil Rights Coalition Joint Statement on Antisemitic Hate Crimes,” June 5, 2025, *available at* <https://jewishpublicaffairs.org/press-release/civil-rights-coalition-joint-statement-on-antisemitic-hate-crime-s/>.