



**Virginia Jewish  
Communities**

Community Relations Council of the United Jewish  
Community of the Virginia Peninsula, Inc.  
[www.UJCVP.org](http://www.UJCVP.org)

Jewish Community Relations Committee of the  
Jewish Community Federation of Richmond  
[www.JewishRichmond.org/JCRC](http://www.JewishRichmond.org/JCRC)

Jewish Community Relations Council of the  
United Jewish Federation of Tidewater  
[www.JewishVA.org/JCRC](http://www.JewishVA.org/JCRC)

Jewish Community Relations Council of  
Greater Washington  
[www.jcouncil.org](http://www.jcouncil.org)

Testimony for September 17, 2024

Virginia Senate Committee on Education and Health Hearing

Re: 2023-2024 Campus Demonstrations

Virginia's Jewish Federations and Community Relations Councils are the regional public affairs and community relations voices of the Jewish communities of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Peninsula, Tidewater and Richmond, representing tens of thousands of synagogues, community centers, day schools, social service providers, families and individuals throughout the Commonwealth. On behalf of the Virginia Jewish Communities, we submit this unified testimony today to share with you how Jewish students, faculty, staff and community members experienced the anti-Israel protests and encampments on Virginia's campuses last year.

On campuses across the Commonwealth – whether by regular protests or the spring's encampments – Jewish members of University campuses found their rights violated over and over again. Their rights to free speech, assembly and religious practice were violated by masked protesters who blocked their paths and prevented them from gathering, celebrating and mourning. Their rights to equal protections of the laws were violated by University administrators, police departments and commonwealth's attorneys who were slow or altogether absent when it came to enforcing existing laws and policies when Jewish students were the target. At some schools, protesters in masks intimidated and bullied Jewish students. At other schools, protesters infiltrated private gatherings and invaded safe spaces. An alarming number of these protests have included both direct and indirect calls to eliminate Israel as a Jewish state, including slogans that support



**Virginia Jewish  
Communities**

Community Relations Council of the United Jewish  
Community of the Virginia Peninsula, Inc.  
[www.UJCVP.org](http://www.UJCVP.org)

Jewish Community Relations Committee of the  
Jewish Community Federation of Richmond  
[www.JewishRichmond.org/JCRC](http://www.JewishRichmond.org/JCRC)

Jewish Community Relations Council of the  
United Jewish Federation of Tidewater  
[www.JewishVA.org/JCRC](http://www.JewishVA.org/JCRC)

Jewish Community Relations Council of  
Greater Washington  
[www.jcouncil.org](http://www.jcouncil.org)

terrorism like “Globalize the Intifada!” Over and over again, the issues reported by the Jewish community were not issues of speech – they were issues of threatening, intimidating and disruptive action.

Jewish students managed their way through this traumatic year by changing their routes through campuses to avoid the threats and intimidation. They learned to hide their identity – not with masks such as those donned by the protesters, but by removing anything that would outwardly identify them as Jewish. They stopped wearing Star of David necklaces or Kippot (the traditional Jewish head covering). These adjustments went on far too long and cost far too much. Jewish community members sacrificed grades and mental health just to get through the school year.

The anti-Israel protests and encampments of last school year were rife with antisemitic rhetoric and threatening action. They raised concerns of intimidation and trespassing. We are grateful for the efforts finally taken to once again make campuses spaces for all students to learn. Those efforts were late and Jewish community members suffered for it.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington

United Jewish Community of the Virginia Peninsula

United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

Richmond Jewish Federation