

**From:** [OCR](#)  
**To:** [OCR Boston](#)  
**Cc:** [\(b\)\(6\); \(b\)\(7\)\(A\); \(b\)\(7\)\(C\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Title VI Complaint Against University of Massachusetts Amherst, 121 Presidents Dr, Amherst, MA 01003 (National Origin – Jewish)  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 12:18:52 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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February 6, 2024

Dear OCR Boston Office,

The email below is being forwarded to your office for review and appropriate handling.

Thank you,

OPEN Center Customer Service Team  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education

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**From:** Zachary Marshall [\(b\)\(6\); \(b\)\(7\)\(A\); \(b\)\(7\)\(C\)](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 11:08 AM  
**To:** OCR <[OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)>  
**Subject:** Title VI Complaint Against University of Massachusetts Amherst, 121 Presidents Dr, Amherst, MA 01003 (National Origin – Jewish)

You don't often get email from [\(b\)\(6\); \(b\)\(7\)\(A\); \(b\)\(7\)\(C\)](#) [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

*Submitted via email*  
U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
400 Maryland Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

February 6, 2024

**Re: Title VI Complaint Against University of Massachusetts Amherst, 121 Presidents Dr, Amherst, MA 01003 (National Origin – Jewish)**

Dear Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon,

I am writing as a journalist deeply concerned about antisemitism at the University of Massachusetts Amherst since October 7, 2023.

The October 7 terror attack on Israel by Hamas killed over 1,400 innocent people including at least 30 Americans. This was the deadliest Palestinian attack on Israel in history and the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.<sup>[1]</sup>

I run the daily news website Campus Reform and we have published two articles about antisemitism from UMass Amherst faculty and staff that illustrate why Jewish students are unsafe. Two of these incidents resulted in arrests but I have not seen the university take any concrete steps to combat hatred against Jewish students or staff.

On October 27, 2023, Campus Reform reported that UMass Amherst students conducted an antisemitic protest outside a campus building. The crowd shouted the genocidal chat “There is only one solution: Intifada Revolution.”

[Campus Reform | THE SCROLL: UMass police arrest dozens of students shouting 'INTIFADA REVOLUTION'](#)

As was made clear during congressional testimony<sup>[2]</sup>, Intifadas are tantamount to genocide and invocations of them are tantamount to calling for genocide.

Campus Reform embedded video clips taken by reporter Kassy Dillon of the protest. Two weeks prior, Campus Reform had published another report on Dillon’s video footage, which shows UMass Amherst students identifying her as a Jewish journalist and harassing her for being Jewish.

[Campus Reform | THE SCROLL: Pro-Hamas students corner, harass Jewish reporter Kassy Dillon](#)

The Campus Reform report stated:

Dillon posted video of the end of the altercation on X. Dillon, who is Jewish, said that two students approached her and repeatedly asked her ethnicity. She was then approached by another group of students who asked for her phone number and home address.

I acknowledge that police did act appropriately in the first story I cited, but I have not seen the administration take any real measures to fix a culture of hostility for Jews that exists on the university campus.

For example, JTA.org reported Nov. 6 that a UMass Amherst student was arrested for punching a Jewish classmate at a vigil held for the Jewish victims of the October 7 Hamas attack: [UMass student arrested for punching Jewish student at Hillel vigil - Jewish Telegraphic Agency \(jta.org\)](#)

Local media in Western Massachusetts also covered the incident: [UMass student](#)

[arrested for alleged assault at end of pro-Israel event \(msn.com\)](#)

Members of Congress are currently discussing additional protections from the Department of Education for Jewish college students amid the current wave of antisemitic incidents.<sup>[3]</sup> But no such discussions appear to be occurring at UMass Amherst despite clear hatred toward those of Jewish origin.

Therefore, I ask the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to conduct an immediate investigation at UMass Amherst.

For the record, I do give OCR my consent to disclose my name nor other personal information contained in this Title VI complaint to others for OCR's investigation of, and enforcement activities related to, the complaint. I understand that OCR may have to close my complaint. I am not interested in participating in early mediation. I do not have an attorney representing me in this matter. I have not complained about these allegations to the University.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

Zachary Marschall

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/12/israel-hamas-war-biden-jews-holocaust-palestine-iran-warning>

<sup>2</sup> [How the presidents of Harvard, Penn and MIT testified to Congress on antisemitism | AP News](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/house/israel-war-day-resistance-college-protection-jewish-students>

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**Zachary Marschall**

Editor in Chief

**Campus Reform**

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

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[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/12/israel-hamas-war-biden-jews-holocaust-palestine-iran-warning>

[2] [How the presidents of Harvard, Penn and MIT testified to Congress on antisemitism | AP News](#)

[3] <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/house/israel-war-day-resistance-college-protection-jewish-students>



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 5 POST OFFICE SQUARE  
BOSTON, MA 02109-3921

REGION I

CONNECTICUT  
MAINE  
MASSACHUSETTS  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
RHODE ISLAND  
VERMONT

February 26, 2024

Chancellor Javier Reyes

*By email:* [chancellorreyes@umass.edu](mailto:chancellorreyes@umass.edu)

Re: Complaint No. 01-24-2169  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dear Chancellor Reyes:

This letter is to notify you that the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is opening for investigation the above-referenced complaint filed against the University of Massachusetts Amherst (University). The Complainant alleges that the University discriminated against students on the basis of their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) when it failed to respond appropriately to incidents of harassment during October and November 2023.

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Because the University receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, OCR has jurisdiction over it pursuant to Title VI.

OCR will investigate whether the University failed to respond to alleged harassment of students based on national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI.

Please note that opening the complaint for investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination on the merits of the complaint. During the investigation, OCR is a neutral fact-finder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the Complainant, the University, and other sources, as appropriate. OCR will ensure that its investigation is legally sufficient and fully responds to the allegation in accordance with the provisions of OCR's [Case Processing Manual](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrcpm.pdf) (available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrcpm.pdf>). Please also note that complainants may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation. Information on OCR's complaint processing procedures, including mediation, is available at [How the Office for Civil Rights Handles Complaints](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaints-how.html) (available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaints-how.html>).

When appropriate, a complaint may be resolved before the conclusion of an investigation after the recipient expresses an interest to OCR to resolve the complaint. In such cases, OCR obtains a resolution agreement signed by the recipient. This agreement must be aligned with the complaint

*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

allegations or the information obtained during the investigation, and it must be consistent with applicable regulations.

Attached is a request for data necessary to investigate this complaint. OCR requests that the University submit this information within 15 calendar days of the date of this letter. We prefer that you submit information electronically, if feasible. If any item in our request is unclear, or if you experience any difficulty complying with this request, please contact us as provided below prior to the expiration of the 15-day period. Please be aware that OCR may need to make additional requests for information in the future. If OCR needs to conduct an on-site investigation, we will notify you in advance.

Please be advised that the University must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against an individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released, to the extent provided by law.

If you have any questions, you may contact Catherine Morrissey-Bickerton at [catherine.morrissey@ed.gov](mailto:catherine.morrissey@ed.gov) or 617-289-0011.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

Tokufumi Noda  
Compliance Team Leader  
OCR Boston Office

