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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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March 27, 2025

Dr. G. Gabrielle Starr
President
Pomona College
333 N. College Way
Claremont, CA 91711

Dr. Robert Gaines
Acting President
Pomona College
333 N. College Way
Claremont, CA 91711

Ms. Janet Inskeep Benton
Chair, Board of Trustees
Pomona College
333 N. College Way
Claremont, CA 91711

Dear Dr. Starr, Dr. Gaines, and Ms. Benton:

Unfortunately, campus antisemitism incidents continue in the aftermath of the terrorist attack of October 7, 2023. As the Chairman of the Committee on Education and Workforce (Committee) and the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, we are concerned about Pomona College's (Pomona) letter grade of "F" on the Anti-Defamation League's 2025 Campus Antisemitism Report Card (Report Card).¹ Accordingly, we write to seek information about several antisemitic incidents on your campus.

The Report Card makes note of an April 2023 flyer commemorating Israel's Independence Day that was defaced with the words, "Have you no shame, you bloodthirsty baby killers," a comment that appears to reference *blood libel*, an ancient and false antisemitic allegation dating back to the Middle Ages.²

¹ <https://www.adl.org/campus-antisemitism-report-card/pomona-college#overview>

² <https://www.adl.org/campus-antisemitism-report-card/pomona-college#overview>;

<https://www.adl.org/resources/background/blood-libel-false-incendiary-claim-against-jews>. "The Nazis made

Beyond this 2023 incident, more recent evidence of antisemitism has been found at Pomona. First, in February 2024, Pomona's student government association (the Associated Students of Pomona College (ASPC)) conducted a referendum aligned with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign, a global antisemitic movement that aims to weaken Israel economically.³ The result of the ASPC vote was broad student support for an academic boycott of Israel and divestment from Israel-linked companies.⁴ National Students for Justice in Palestine, "a network of anti-Zionist student groups on US university campuses that has justified terror attacks against Israel," touted the ASPC effort, noting it garnered "the highest percentage of 'yes' votes of any student body-wide [BDS] referendum conducted at a major college in the U.S."⁵

Second, a group of masked agitators from the group Pomona Divest from Apartheid (PDfA) stormed Alexander Hall, an administrative building on campus.⁶ These agitators occupied President Starr's office for hours while dozens of others took over an area in a nearby hallway.⁷ Meanwhile, nearly 150 demonstrators assembled outside the building and chanted "Israel bombs, Pomona pays, how many kids did you kill today?"⁸

Third, other agitators associated with PDfA set up an encampment on Marston Quad in May 2024 in anticipation of commencement.⁹ The masked agitators erected tents on the stage where graduates would receive their diplomas and dismantled fences designed to protect the quad. The agitators turned the fences into "makeshift barricades around the encampment."¹⁰ The demonstrators' written "Political Principles of Unity" included an express rejection of "reconciliation and recognition from the administration, pigs, politicians, and press."¹¹ Three months thereafter, demonstrators masked with keffiyehs and head scarves disrupted Pomona's annual opening convocation ceremony for freshmen.¹² The protesters blocked entrances and impeded public access to Bridges Hall of Music.¹³ Then, in September 2024, PDfA used Instagram to summon approximately 60 demonstrators to Marston Quad.¹⁴ The demonstrators

effective use of the blood libel to demonize Jews," according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/blood-libel>.

³ <https://www.adl.org/campus-antisemitism-report-card/pomona-college#overview>

⁴ <https://www.adl.org/campus-antisemitism-report-card/pomona-college#overview>

⁵ <https://www.claremontundercurrents.com/pomona-students-vote-to-divest-from-israel-in-historic-referendum/> ;

<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/students-justice-palestine-sjp>

⁶ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/claremont-police-arrest-palestine-activists-at-pomona-college>;

<https://jewishinsider.com/2024/04/universities-pro-hamas-demonstrations-pomona-columbia-vanderbilt/>. PDfA is a student organization that supports the BDS movement.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/new-encampment-at-site-of-pomona-commencement>

¹⁰ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/new-encampment-at-site-of-pomona-commencement>

¹¹ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/new-encampment-at-site-of-pomona-commencement>

¹² <https://claremont-courier.com/schools/protest-disrupts-pomona-college-convocation-79266/>

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/protestors-vandalize-disturb-pomona-president-s-house>

proceeded to vandalize the president's home by "[pouring] red paint mimicking spilled blood" on the sidewalk.¹⁵

Fourth, in October 2024, hundreds of student demonstrators from Pomona and other colleges in the Claremont system occupied Carnegie Hall, a building containing academic offices and classrooms. They spray painted "INTIFADA" in large red letters on the walls¹⁶ and blocked several entrances.¹⁷

Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act* requires, among other things, programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance to maintain a safe learning environment. Accordingly, Pomona is obliged to promptly address discrimination, harassment, and a hostile environment, wherever such exists.

To help us better understand these occurrences of antisemitism and Pomona's responses to these incidents, please provide the following information (instructions enclosed) to the Committee **no later than 12:00 p.m. EDT on April 10, 2025:**

1. All documents related to disciplinary actions taken against students involved in the Carnegie Hall occupation and vandalism. Include all documents, including e-mail communications related to disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspensions, expulsions, and written or verbal reprimands.
2. All disciplinary documents referring or relating to the vandalization and rampage at the residence of President Starr. Include all documents, including e-mail communications, related to disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspensions, expulsions, and written or verbal reprimands.
3. A list of all student disciplinary/conduct cases associated with antisemitic incidents¹⁸ from October 7, 2023, through the date of your response to this letter. Please include the date, a description of the incident, the undergraduate/graduate status and school of the alleged perpetrator, the entity/entities responsible for reviewing the case, the disciplinary process/processes being used to review the case, case status, actions taken to date (including any modification of proposed or imposed discipline), and the standing of the alleged perpetrator (good standing, suspended, expelled, etc). Please identify all instances in which alleged perpetrators were involved in previous disciplinary incidents.

Congress' oversight power derives from Article I of the U.S. Constitution and has been repeatedly affirmed by the United States Supreme Court.¹⁹ Under House Rule X, the

¹⁵ <https://www.claremontindependent.com/post/protestors-vandalize-disturb-pomona-president-s-house>

¹⁶ <https://claremont-courier.com/schools/claremont-colleges-students-occupy-carnegie-hall-79978/>

¹⁷ <https://claremont-courier.com/schools/claremont-colleges-students-occupy-carnegie-hall-79978/>

¹⁸ The term "antisemitic" incidents should be understood to include any incidents involving the targeting of Jews, Judaism, Israel, Israelis, Zionism, and/or Zionists, or incidents otherwise identified as antisemitic.

¹⁹ See generally U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 8; *McGrain v. Daugherty*, 273 U.S. 135, 174 (1927) (holding that "the power of inquiry—with process to enforce it—is an essential and appropriate auxiliary to the legislative function");

Dr. Starr, Dr. Gaines and Ms. Benton

March 27, 2025

Page 4 of 4

Committee's legislative and oversight jurisdiction is broad, extending to "education . . . generally" and "laws, programs, and Government activities relating to domestic educational programs and institutions and programs of student assistance within the jurisdiction of other committees."²⁰ When producing documents, do not alter them in any way, including but not limited to the application of redactions or watermarks. Additionally, digital copies should be provided in a format that enables their printing and copying.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kent Talbert at kent.talbert@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4527.

Sincerely,



Tim Walberg
Chairman
Committee on Education and Workforce



Burgess Owens
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development

Enclosure (Instructions)

CC: The Hon. Linda McMahon, Secretary of Education
The Hon. Pamela Bondi, Attorney General

Eastland v. U.S. Servicemen's Fund, 421 U.S. 491, 504 (1975) (holding that "the power to investigate is inherent in the power to make laws"); *Barenblatt v. United States*, 360 U.S. 109, 111 (1959) (holding that "the scope of power of inquiry . . . is as penetrating and far-reaching as the potential power to enact and appropriate under the Constitution.").

²⁰ RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 119th Cong. at 7, 10 (Jan. 16, 2025), <https://rules.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/rules.house.gov/files/documents/houserules119thupdated.pdf>.