

Exhibit A



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Dear Jewish Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I am writing today to express my support for you as valued members of our campus community. I am concerned about how you and members of other communities have been impacted by the adoption of, and the ensuing reactions to a bylaw endorsed by certain Berkeley Law student organizations which excludes speakers who support Israel and Zionism. Due to the extraordinary complexity and divisiveness of the issues involved, I have been focusing on direct engagement with members of the Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian, and Muslim communities and their supporters in what has been a challenging effort to foster healing. I will continue my efforts to foster a greater degree of mutual understanding across this difficult divide.

I want to convey my understanding as to why the adoption of the bylaw was deeply upsetting to some Jewish members of our community for whom Zionism is an indivisible part of their Jewish identity, and who now say they no longer feel welcome at events held by some of the student organizations that have agreed to the bylaw's terms.

I realize that for some, opposition to Zionism is solely a function of the State of Israel's policies and actions. I do not believe criticism of Israel is inherently antisemitic or anti-Zionist. I understand the reasons for opposition to some of Israel's policies and actions. At the same time, I have observed that there are those whose opposition to Zionism springs from a belief that the Jews as a people have no right to a homeland—the essence of Zionism's original aspirations. As a result, I understand how opposition to Zionism seems for some to be opposition to Israel's very existence, and therefore is regarded as antisemitic by some members of the Jewish community.

I am also very concerned about the impact that these recent events, the vitriolic social media posts, and the unbalanced and inaccurate media reporting are having on those who authored or supported the adoption of the bylaw. I condemn the harassment and threats they and their supporters have been subject to and, in particular, the truck-borne billboards that have singled out and attacked many student leaders and staff members by name. I commend the statement issued by Jewish students at Berkeley Law that also condemned these "abhorrent attacks" and expressed Jewish law students' commitment to stand with their fellow students.

I believe that all student organizations have the right, and a legally protected ability, to invite speakers based on their viewpoint to the events they host and sponsor. We must be consistent in defending that right for all groups, including pro-Palestinian ones. The Supreme Court has been clear that those holding events have a First Amendment right to decide the views to be communicated at those events.

I am aware that the current situation has led many members of your community to feel more vulnerable and unwelcome in campus spaces. This concerns me deeply. Excluding anyone from any campus activity based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality would represent impermissible discrimination. As always, we urge anyone who experiences or is made aware of actions that they believe may violate the Student Code of Conduct or campus regulations to report those actions immediately to [Center for Student Conduct](#) and/or the [Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#).

I believe that as an institution of higher education we must seek to foster understanding, facilitate dialogue, and remain open to and respectful of diversity of perspective. In addition, my administration has an unwavering commitment to confronting antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of discrimination and bias including that against Jewish students in order to provide all of our students with a true sense of belonging. I am proud of our many Jewish student organizations and Berkeley student Chabad to support and foster a thriving community, and all that is contributed to our academic mission by our world-class Jewish Studies program, the Magnes Museum, and the Helen Diller Institute of Jewish Law and Israel Studies, which frequently hosts speakers and visiting scholars from Israel. In addition, I value the campus partnership with the Berkeley Hillel Jewish Student Center for helping to build community.

In recent weeks I have met with members of the Chancellor's Committee on Jewish Student Life and Campus Climate, and the chairperson, Professor Ethan Katz. Together we are discussing and exploring how we can improve the Jewish experience at Berkeley by, among other things, developing substantive responses to your concerns, needs and interests. I have asked Professor Katz to keep the community informed about the outcome of our efforts.

I acknowledge and accept that our university is a work in progress. I understand and deeply regret that here at Berkeley members of communities which have been historically marginalized and discriminated against far too often feel unsafe, unwelcome, and disrespected. In the course of my meetings, through this message and a similar one I am sending to Muslim and Palestinian students, I hope to catalyze thought, discussion and action that will enable us to more fully align our words and deeds with our Principles of Community.

I ask and urge all of us to consider how even as we disagree, that we also recognize and respect each other's humanity and place in our community.

Respectfully yours,

Carol T. Christ
Chancellor