

Opening Statement for Ranking Member Alma Adams (NC-12)

Subcommittee on Workforce Protections

"Combating Workplace Antisemitism in Postsecondary Education: Protecting Employees from Discrimination"

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Wednesday, June 24, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to express my gratitude to the witnesses for testifying before the subcommittee today. Welcome.

Today, we are here to address crucial issues affecting our educational institutions and workplaces. It is my hope we can come together to confront these challenges with a commitment to inclusive and effective solutions.

It is imperative to recognize that everyone deserves to work in a place free from discrimination. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (ED OCR) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have processes in place to respond to employment discrimination complaints. However, more work needs to be done to improve interagency coordination. The recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) findings underscore the need for enhanced coordination and resource allocation to better serve those facing discrimination.

Effective oversight of agencies responding to discrimination claims requires understanding the laws that prohibit discrimination. Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* prohibits discrimination by recipients of Federal funds, and Title VII prohibits discrimination in the workplace. Our discussions must be informed by an understanding of both the law and the facts so that we can take meaningful steps to ensure agencies, such as the EEOC and ED OCR, can provide appropriate redress to individuals facing discrimination.

And so, at the heart of today's discussion is the intersection of discrimination, including antisemitism, and the capacity of our federal agencies' response mechanisms. The Biden Administration's National Strategy for Combatting Antisemitism provides a roadmap for the Federal agencies and our nation to comprehensively address these issues. Additionally, the recently updated guidance on workplace harassment issued by the EEOC provides clear guidance for employers regarding their responsibility to maintain safe, supportive work environments, including for their workers who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Unfortunately, the Majority's focus on antisemitism while simultaneously attempting to hamstring Federal civil rights enforcement is both counterintuitive and counterproductive. Furthermore, this approach risks undermining the progress we've made.

Instead, it is my wish that today's hearing will provide us an opportunity for bipartisan collaboration on policy solutions that safeguard the civil rights and dignity of all individuals. By fully funding our enforcement agencies, addressing faculty diversity, enhancing agency responsiveness, and ensuring equitable treatment for all, we can truly foster inclusive environments that promote student success and workplace fairness.

With that I look forward to productive discussions ahead.

Thank you, and I yield back.