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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3005**  
September 15, 2025

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RESILIENCE, AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

**PROBLEM SOLVERS CAUCUS**  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Kathy Goldenberg  
President, New Jersey State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear President Goldenberg:

As the 2025-2026 school year begins, I write with deep concern following the Council on American-Islamic Relations-New Jersey's (CAIR-NJ) call earlier this summer for all Boards of Education across New Jersey<sup>1</sup> to sever ties with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). This is a misguided demand aimed at undermining the work of a nonpartisan organization that has spent more than a century fighting antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and hate in all forms. It is imperative that as you work to ensure the integrity of education for our students, that you please also work to create inclusive environments for all, regardless of background. This means rejecting any suggestion by CAIR-NJ to end any formal partnerships with the ADL.

The ADL provides anti-hate and Holocaust education to students across New Jersey. More than a hundred schools across our state currently participate in the ADL's "No Place for Hate" program, which engages students in anti-bias work and fosters a culture of inclusivity.<sup>2</sup> Counter to CAIR-NJ's claims of bias, the ADL's advocacy includes fighting anti-Muslim hate in the aftermath of 9/11, supporting civil rights protections for LGBTQ+ Americans, and combating the rise of anti-Asian xenophobia and hate following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3 4</sup> Ending this partnership would result in the elimination of educational programs and resources that not only ensure Jewish students are included and recognized, but also fight hatred and intolerance of all kinds.

<sup>1</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations-New Jersey, CAIR-NJ Calls on Boards of Education to Sever Ties with ADL After NEA Vote (July 9, 2025), *CAIR-NJ Press Releases*, <https://cair-nj.org/cair-nj-calls-on-boards-of-education-to-sever-ties-with-adl-after-nea-vote/>.

<sup>2</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *No Place for Hate® Initiative*, New York/New Jersey, [nynj.adl.org](http://nynj.adl.org) (last visited Sept. 10, 2025) <https://nynj.adl.org/npfh/>.

<sup>3</sup> Helen Chernikoff, *How the ADL helped The Asian American Foundation to track and combat hate crimes*, EJP (May 21, 2021), <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/adl-advises-the-asian-american-foundation-on-tracking-hate-crimes/>.

<sup>4</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *Anti-Muslim Bias and Acting as an Ally, ADL Tools and Strategies*, <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/anti-muslim-bias-and-acting-ally>.

Unlike the ADL, which builds bridges through its programming, CAIR-NJ has continued to push divisive rhetoric. Their 2024-2025 Back to School Resources Guide contains a section entitled, "Discussing Palestine in the Classroom."<sup>5</sup> In this section, CAIR-NJ omits important details to guide such a discussion, such as an understanding of violence impacting Israelis and Palestinians, and instead tells educators to highlight Palestinian suffering, while failing to acknowledge the role of Hamas. It also dismisses concerns about antisemitism, advising that students should not be accused of it. That is not balanced education, it is one-sided activism. With the advancement of Assembly Bill A3558, which will establish the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism as law in New Jersey, it is clear that our state leaders are eager to ensure that accusations of antisemitism are taken seriously.

It is important to note other examples of CAIR-NJ's unacceptable behavior. In the context of the debate on the passage of Assembly Bill A3558, CAIR-NJ has criticized the IHRA definition of antisemitism, claiming that it prevents criticism of "Israeli settler colonialism, occupation of the West Bank, [Israel's] apartheid leveraged against Palestinians, and the ethnic cleansing and oppression of the Palestinian people."<sup>6</sup> This could not be further from the truth. It is because of the practical examples included in the IHRA definition that makes this tool uniquely valuable for modern day antisemitism. Especially post-October 7, many forms of antisemitism are masked as anti-Zionism. Comments like "River to the Sea," "kill all Zionist people," and "Globalize the Intifada" are among those most frequently encountered by many Jewish people today, whether or not they are Zionists.<sup>7</sup>

The attack on October 7 was the single deadliest attack against Jewish people since the Holocaust.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, on October 7, 2023, Selaedin Maksut, Executive Director of CAIR-NJ, posted on Facebook, "Occupation is the root of the problem" in response to Governor Murphy's heartfelt statement regarding the attack.<sup>9</sup> CAIR Director Nihad Awad also said he was "happy to see" Gazans invading Israel on October 7, "throwing down the shackles of their own land and walking free into their land, which they were not allowed to walk in."<sup>10</sup> Such a comment not only explicitly ignores Hamas's role in butchering more than 1,200 innocent civilians that day, but also the many Jersey families whose lives were upended that day. The Biden Administration

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<sup>5</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations-New Jersey, Back To School Resource Guide, [cair-nj.org](https://cair-nj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-25-BACK-TO-SCHOOL-GUIDE.pdf) (last visited Sept. 10, 2025), <https://cair-nj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-25-BACK-TO-SCHOOL-GUIDE.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations-New Jersey, CAIR-NJ, Partners Call on Clifton City Council to Uphold Free Speech, Reject Controversial IHRA Definition of Antisemitism (July 18, 2023), *CAIR-NJ Press Releases*, <https://cair-nj.org/cair-nj-partners-call-on-clifton-city-council-to-uphold-free-speech-reject-controversial-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>.

<sup>7</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *Familiar Attempts to Justify and Downplay Antisemitic Violence Follow Latest Attack on Jewish Community*, (Updated June 30, 2025), *ADL Center on Extremism*, <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/familiar-attempts-justify-and-downplay-antisemitic-violence-follow-latest-attack>.

<sup>8</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Museum Statement on the Anniversary of Hamas's October 7 Attack on Israel (Oct. 6, 2024), *USHMM Press Releases*, <https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-releases/museum-statement-on-the-anniversary-of-hamass-october-7-attack-on-israel>.

<sup>9</sup> Anti-Defamation League, The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), (Updated Dec. 23, 2024), *ADL Center on Extremism*, <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/council-american-islamic-relations-cair>.

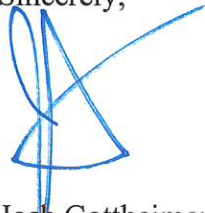
<sup>10</sup> Betsy Klein, *White House slams comments from CAIR leader about October 7, CAIR says remark was taken out of context*, CNN (Updated Dec. 8, 2023), <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/08/politics/white-house-cair-leader>.

not only condemned Director Awad's comments, but also ultimately scrubbed any mention of CAIR from an antisemitism fact sheet. They also pledged that the group had no involvement in the drafting of the National Strategy to Combat Islamophobia and Anti-Arab Hate.<sup>11</sup>

To equate ADL's advocacy against hate — including anti-Muslim hate — with “anti-Palestinian bias,” as CAIR-NJ says in their letter to you, is not only false, but dangerous. Rejecting the ADL would send the wrong message to students and communities of all backgrounds, especially Jewish and Muslim students.

According to the 2020 Bias Incident Report, New Jersey's children and young adults accounted for forty-two percent of known offenders of bias incidents and thirty one percent of victims.<sup>12</sup> The State established the Interagency Task Force to Combat Youth Bias to address these shocking statistics, including feedback from both CAIR-NJ and the ADL. New Jersey ranked third in the nation for antisemitic incidents last year.<sup>13</sup> Now is not the time to dismiss critical resources to combat anti-Jewish bias and Holocaust distortion. Rather, educators should embrace them. I urge the State Board of Education to support New Jersey schools working with the ADL to promote inclusive, fact-based education that teaches students to reject hate in all forms.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

CC: New Jersey Education Association  
The Honorable Phil Murphy, Governor  
The Honorable Tahesha Way, Esq.  
The Honorable Gary Schaer  
The Honorable Rosaura Bagolie  
The Honorable Michael Inganamort  
The Honorable James Beach  
The Honorable Robert Singer

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<sup>11</sup> Gabby Deutch, *White House distances itself from CAIR, condemns director's 'antisemitic statements'*, Jewish Insider (Dec. 7, 2023), <https://jewishinsider.com/2023/12/white-house-distances-itself-from-cair-condemns-directors-antisemitic-statements/>.

<sup>12</sup> New Jersey Interagency Task Force to Combat Youth Bias to the Governor and Attorney General, *An Anti-Bias Vision for the Next Generation, State of New Jersey* (Oct. 2020), Accessible here <https://www.nj.gov/oag/dcr/downloads/2020-ybtf-report.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *Audit on Antisemitic Incidents 2024*, (Apr. 22, 2025), *ADL Center on Extremism*, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>.