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## **Mass. Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism Releases Final Report & Recommendations**

*Commission Charts Course to Combat Antisemitism “The Massachusetts Way”*

**(BOSTON – 11/23/2025)** On Thursday, the **Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism** held its final meeting at the Massachusetts State House, where it **voted unanimously to approve its *Final Report of Findings and Recommendations***, and submit the report to the Legislature. The **Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism is the first statutorily created commission on combating antisemitism in the United States**. It was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Healey during the summer of 2024 to address the alarming rise of antisemitic incidents and [hate crimes](#) occurring across the Commonwealth.

The Special Commission extends its gratitude to the countless residents who bravely shared experiences of antisemitism, best practices to combat hate, and professional expertise over the course of the Commission’s 16 public meetings. In total, the Commission heard more than 50 hours of testimony from over 200 speakers that, along with Massachusetts- and U.S.-specific data, informed the final report. As detailed below, the report has received **significant support from over 15 officials across the state**.

**The final report’s findings and recommendations chart a course for combating antisemitism “the Massachusetts Way,”** by supplying a set of best practices rooted in the Commission’s strong belief that fighting and preventing antisemitism must combine strong civil rights protections, civic education, and moral responsibility. Major themes of the **recommendations throughout the report’s multiple sections include:**

- Promoting education and awareness of antisemitism and of Jewish heritage, history and contributions to the Commonwealth and the United States.
- Strengthening protections against discrimination and harassment.
- Highlighting best practices for institutional responses to antisemitic incidents and ideology.
- Enhancing safety and security of Jewish residents, institutions, and places of worship.
- Fostering allyship between religious, cultural and ethnic communities to combat hate.
- Bolstering bias or hate motivated incident reporting and data collection mechanisms.

“After over a year of work, I’m proud to share our final report, which offers a detailed playbook on how to confront the antisemitism across the Commonwealth. I want to thank Speaker Mariano and Senate President Spilka for their leadership and steadfast support in making this Commission possible,” shared **Representative Simon Cataldo, Co-Chair of the Special Commission**. “I’m grateful to my co-Chair, Senator Velis, as well as to all Commissioners, who dedicated an enormous amount of time and energy to ensure this report is as robust, specific, and comprehensive as possible. I particularly want to recognize the bravery shown by so many Massachusetts residents who shared deeply personal—and often harrowing—experiences with antisemitism; their voices were essential in shaping this report.”

“Massachusetts has a long-standing history of pushing back on forms of hate and injustice towards vulnerable groups. The Jewish residents across our Commonwealth deserve the exact same support we have shown other groups and the time to take action is now,” shared **Senator John Velis, Co-Chair of the Special Commission during his remarks on the [Senate floor regarding the amendment to create the Commission](#)**. “It is our world’s oldest hatred, one that has persisted in countless forms for over 2000 years dating back to biblical times. Tragically, antisemitism continues to not only exist to this day, it is being increasingly “normalized” in American society and we must speak out against it and educate others about what it looks like and the harm that it causes.”

While the Special Commission’s recommendations are not legally binding, they provide guidance to public officials and community organizations **on ways to prevent and respond to antisemitic incidents in a wide range of areas including K-12 education, higher education, public safety and law enforcement, workplace and healthcare environments, and more.**

"In Massachusetts, we are doing everything we can to combat antisemitism," said **Governor Maura Healey**. "I'm grateful for the work of the Special Commission to produce this report that serves as an important guide for educating our children, building a better understanding of the Jewish experience, and making it clear that antisemitism has no place in Massachusetts."

"We want our Jewish community to feel safe and welcomed in Massachusetts, and we're thankful that this report from Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism includes thoughtful recommendations for how we can combat antisemitism in our state," said **Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll**. "We know that education is key and we look forward to working with our schools and others to uplift the Jewish experience."

“These strong recommendations set Massachusetts on a course to confront and reduce rising antisemitism by giving young people the critical context of Jewish history, equipping school leaders with a deeper understanding of Jewish culture, and empowering students to speak out when they see hate toward Jews or anyone else,” said **Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland)**. “These recommendations will deepen our understanding of how hate, bias, and discrimination affect the mental health of young people, and move us toward a world where Jews—and all people of any identity—can live authentically and free from hate. I applaud and thank Senator John Velis and Representative Simon Cataldo for their stewardship of this Commission, along with all of the members for their participation in this its report, and I look forward to implementing these steps.”

“I want to thank Representative Cataldo and the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism for their thoughtful work and recommendations to understand and combat the alarming rise in antisemitic incidents that have taken place in the Commonwealth, consistent with a concerning national trend”, said **House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy)**. “As elected officials, we have a responsibility to ensure that hate in all forms is rejected. That’s why I’m grateful for the Commission’s work, as it will help to ensure that Massachusetts remains a leader in the effort to build a more tolerant and accepting America.”

“I am grateful to the Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism for preparing this report which will serve as an important tool for combating antisemitism across our state,” shared **Attorney General Andrea Campbell**. “We must do everything we can to ensure Massachusetts is a safe and inclusive place for everyone, including our Jewish community, and I appreciate the Commission's important work to address the rise in antisemitism in Massachusetts and this country.”

“Although antisemitism has always existed, it has become an even greater threat to people across our state and country. Our Jewish community is counting on us, and we have a responsibility to lead, and to do so with urgency,” shared **Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg**. “I fully support the Commission’s recommendations, which provide clear, practical steps to control hate, build understanding, and protect free speech. By adopting these measures, we can ensure everyone experiences a safe, inclusive environment where they are valued, respected, and free from discrimination.”

## **K-12 Education**

Originally released as preliminary recommendations ahead of the 2025-2026 school year and endorsed by Commissioner Pedro Martinez of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the K-12 recommendations highlight ways that antisemitic incidents can be prevented through education and notes best ways schools can respond when these incidents do occur. The Commission encourages:

- **Anti-Bias training**, for school committees and all K-12 faculty and administrators **that includes antisemitism**.
- An Advisory Council on **Holocaust and Genocide Education** to ensure timely **support for schools** in the implementation of the State’s Genocide Education Mandate and to track its implementation.
- DESE development of **model curricula** and **best practices/resources** around teaching **antisemitism and Jewish identity in schools**.
- **DESE to establish a statewide Bias Reporting Program** to track hate or bias motivated incidents in K-12 schools.
- **School Districts to create** clear, transparent, and publicly available **protocols for how a community member can report** to the school administration an **incident of hate, bias, or discrimination**.
- **School Districts to have** clear, transparent, and **publicly available protocols for how reports of hate, bias, or discrimination are handled by the district**.

- DESE to issue **guidance to public and private schools on creating safe and supportive school environments for all students.**
- **Clear policies that assist students observing religious holidays** not observed with a day off on the school calendar.
- **Schools to expand access to kosher and halal foods.**
- **Active bystander training** to equip students and staff with the **skills to safely intervene in incidents of bias, harassment, or discrimination.**

### **Higher Education**

Antisemitism is a serious, systematic concern on college campuses throughout the Commonwealth that has left Jewish students and faculty feeling unwelcome or unsafe. However, many high education institutions in Massachusetts, including the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Brandeis University, and many others, have set strong examples on ways to address antisemitism in this setting. The Commission's recommendations encourage Massachusetts colleges and universities to:

- **Create** clear, transparent, and publicly available **protocol for how a campus community member can report** to the school administration an **incident of hate, bias, or discrimination.**
- **Coordinate with state and local law enforcement** to develop responsive strategies with campus police **to protect vulnerable student populations.**
- Review, clarify, and widely disseminate policies and codes of conduct to **explicitly prohibit discrimination and harassment based on all protected identities.**
- **Implement anti-Bias training**, for all members of the campus community **that includes antisemitism.**
- **Adopt and distribute** clear rules governing campus demonstrations and protests.
- **Create clear policies that assist students observing religious holidays** not observed with a day off on the school calendar.
- **Appoint or designate a Title VI Coordinator and/or office** responsible for overseeing the institution's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and providing university-wide training on Title VI and other federal civil rights protections.

The Commission's recommendations also:

- Encourages **the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to issue guidance with the Attorney General (AG)** on how to **create safe and supportive campus environments with respect to protected categories.**
- Encourages DHE and AG to **issue clear guidance to institutions around the First Amendment and protected free speech.**

### **Public Safety and Law Enforcement**

The Commission was created in response to the rising number of antisemitic hate crimes and incidents across the Commonwealth. Throughout the Commission's 16 public meetings, residents frequently shared concerns for the safety and well-being of Jewish residents. The report's recommendations urge state and local public safety officials to:

- **Report all instances of hate crimes, both charged and investigated**, to the HART Hate Crimes Report Portal and the National Incident-Based Reporting System.
- Partner with community organizations, faith institutions and cultural centers to **foster trust, awareness, and preparedness with marginalized or targeted communities.**
- Provide **trainings** to all law enforcement personnel, clerk magistrates, victim witness advocates, and prosecutors **on recognizing antisemitism and ways to identify whether a crime was motivated by bias or hate.**
- Familiarize personnel with religious holy days and observances and **take proactive measures** in coordination with religious institutions on these days **to ensure the safety of congregants.**
- Coordinate with the Attorney General, District Attorneys, and Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance to **share accessible resources for victims of hate crimes to seek trauma-informed services and support.**

### **Workplace and Healthcare Settings**

Antisemitism in the workplace threatens not only employer and employee well-being, but also threatens the Commonwealth's ability to attract and retain talented individuals. The Commission's recommendations encourages:

- The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination **to clarify information regarding employment discrimination** to note that discrimination against Jews is prohibited under state and federal law.
- Employers to **incorporate education on antisemitism into DEI and anti-discrimination trainings.**
- Employers to **support and recognize Employee Resources Groups or Affinity groups**, including those focused on Jewish identity, as well as Jewish American Heritage Month each May.
- Professional and academic organizations to adopt standards to ensure professional programming is **free from discriminatory rhetoric.**

### **Other general recommendations from the Commission's report include:**

- Encouraging interfaith and multi-ethnic dialogue to foster understanding and allyship against hate among diverse groups.
- A legislative review of Chapter 151C to extend discrimination protections beyond the application stage to all protected classes in educational settings.
- Continued and expanded funding to municipalities, law enforcement agencies, school districts, higher education institutions and other stakeholders to implement recommendations.

Having received unanimous support from Commission Members the Final Report and Recommendations will be filed with the Clerk of the House of the Representatives and the Senate, and the Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means.

## **Statements of Support**

### **U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren:**

“Antisemitism and violence have no place in Massachusetts. We must acknowledge the danger antisemitism poses to our Jewish community and to all of us. I’m grateful for our Commonwealth’s leadership in creating an agenda to make Massachusetts safe and welcoming for everyone.”

### **U.S. Senator Edward Markey:**

“Massachusetts and the entire nation are experiencing an historic rise in antisemitism, and it cannot be tolerated. We must call it out and combat it whenever and wherever it arises. The Massachusetts Special Commission has helped to shine a needed light on antisemitism here in the Commonwealth, and I will continue my efforts in the U.S. Senate to fight antisemitic discrimination and violence.”

### **Congresswoman Lori Trahan, Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District:**

“I commend Governor Healey and the Legislature for their swift and decisive action to confront the rising scourge of antisemitism in our nation, particularly here in the Commonwealth. Their leadership reflects Massachusetts’ enduring commitment to protecting all residents from hate, intolerance, and discrimination.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to Commission Co-Chairs State Representative Simon Cataldo and State Senator John Velis, as well as to every member of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism, for their substantive, thorough, and thoughtful work. Over the course of more than a dozen hearings totaling over 50 hours, the Commission heard from experts, community leaders, residents, and students who share a common aspiration: that every person in Massachusetts can feel safe in their community while the fundamental and unalienable right to free speech remains protected.

The Commission’s findings are a sobering reminder that Massachusetts is not immune to the growing threat of antisemitism. Our Jewish neighbors are understandably concerned for their safety and the safety of their loved ones. These concerns demand not only our acknowledgment but our urgent and sustained action. The report’s recommendations make clear that without immediate, coordinated, and sustained efforts, we cannot hope to eradicate antisemitism in our communities – wherever and however it arises.

I am committed to working alongside the Healey-Driscoll Administration, members of the Commission, and leaders at every level of government and across every sector to implement these recommendations and take meaningful, measurable steps to stop antisemitism and all forms of faith-based hate. Together, we will build a safer, stronger Commonwealth for all who call Massachusetts home.”

### **Congresswoman Katherine Clark, Massachusetts 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District:**

“There is no place for antisemitism in America — in our government, our schools, and our communities. I’m grateful for the work of the Massachusetts Antisemitism Commission, as we combat hate and bigotry in every form.”

### **Congressman Seth Moulton, Massachusetts 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District:**

“We need to stop the scourge of antisemitism in our country. I'm grateful for the Special Commission's rigorous and thoughtful work, and I look forward to partnering with state and local leaders to translate these steps into meaningful change that upholds the safety and dignity of all Jewish residents in Massachusetts. At such a time as this, we need to stand up against hate now more than ever.”

**District Attorney Timothy Shugrue, Berkshire County**

“During my three years in office, Berkshire County has experienced a growing number of hate-based incidents, many of which are antisemitic in nature. The recommendations in this report will aide my office in better understanding the trends of antisemitism in both the Commonwealth and across the United States. The recommendations put forward will also provide much needed support for my office and law enforcement through the research and sharing of best practices to address antisemitism in our communities. I am also pleased that there is a recommendation to examine the Commonwealth’s hate crime statues to determine if changes or updates are needed. Antisemitism, and all hate-based language, actions, and crimes, affect entire communities. Every citizen deserves to feel safe in their home: it is a basic human right. This report, and more importantly the recommendations found within it, will bring the Commonwealth one step closer to being able to better support our citizens and prosecute hate-based crimes.”

**District Attorney Kevin R. Hayden, Suffolk County**

“It is vitally important for all Massachusetts residents to recognize forms of hate and take the necessary steps to address them. By providing clear facts and action plans, the Special Commission has helped provide a blueprint for Massachusetts to grow stronger in its efforts to combat hate against individuals and groups due to race, religion, ethnicity, gender identity or any other characteristic. I thank the Commission for its work and I hope Massachusetts provides an example for all other states to follow.”

**President Marty Meehan, University of Massachusetts**

“Antisemitism remains a serious challenge in communities across the nation, and UMass is firmly committed to confronting it through education, dialogue, and meaningful action that ensures all members of our community feel safe, valued, and respected. I commend the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism for its strong leadership and vital work in advancing inclusion, understanding, and mutual respect across the Commonwealth and I look forward to continuing our work together.”

**Chancellor Javier Reyes, University of Massachusetts Amherst**

“Antisemitism and all forms of hatred and bigotry are antithetical to the values we share as an academic community; we applaud any effort that brings people together rather than driving them apart.”