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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Urges University Police Departments to Enforce the Law and Protect Jewish Students from Hate Crimes and Violence



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Following the barbaric terrorist attacks by Hamas and expressions of support for these atrocities on college campuses, Attorney General Ashley Moody is calling for a zero-tolerance policy for hate crimes. In a memo to Florida college and university police chiefs, Attorney General Moody reminded campus law enforcement leaders about laws protecting Jewish students in Florida. Jewish students report feeling threatened by pro-Hamas groups on college campuses. Attorney General Moody outlined specific state statutes that protect these students, and other religious groups, from hate crimes and prohibit support for terrorist organizations.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Florida colleges and universities must act with a sense of urgency to protect Jewish students from unlawful acts motivated by antisemitism and hatred on campus. I reminded university police chiefs of state laws that protect against hate crimes and prohibit the support of terrorist organizations like Hamas—instructing them to make arrests when appropriate. Israel and the Jewish community are being violently attacked by Hamas and now feel threatened here in the United States. We must ensure the safety of Jewish students attending colleges and universities in our state.”

Since Hamas struck Israel in a surprise attack, there have been many pro-Hamas demonstrations throughout the United States. A recent report found that 57% of Jewish college students report having witnessed or experienced an antisemitic incident nationwide.

The memo Attorney General Moody sent to the 21 college and university police chiefs in Florida outlined the various state statutes that outlaw antisemitic hate crimes and supporting terrorist organizations to help protect Floridians, including:

- Section 1000.05, that includes religion as a protected class with regard to discrimination against students and employees in Florida's K-20 public education system. The bill requires a public K-20 educational institution to treat discrimination by students or employees or resulting from institutional policies motivated by antisemitism in an identical manner to discrimination motivated by race;
- Section 775.085, that increases the felony or misdemeanor degree of an offense if the commission of the offense show prejudice based on the race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, homeless status or advanced age of the victim. Section 775.085 also creates a civil remedy for persons or organizations who are the victims of hate crimes; and
- Sections 784.0493, 806.13, and 810.098, that were signed into law by Governor DeSantis on May 1. These laws prohibit the willful and malicious harassing or intimidating of another person based on the person's wearing or displaying of an indicia relating to religious or ethnic heritage and provide further protections for persons on a state university or Florida College System institution.

To read the memo, click here.

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