

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director



June 9, 2021

Ms. Randi Weingarten
American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Weingarten,

I am writing to express ADL's concern regarding the recent announcement by United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), which represents teachers in the LA Unified School District, the second largest school district in the country, of a resolution calling upon the US government to stop all aid to Israel and endorse the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel.

While we appreciate that there are strong feelings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and respect the rights of all to express their opinion, we believe this resolution is not only unconstructive, but potentially detrimental to Los Angeles area students, parents, faculty and administrators.

The BDS campaign is not an effort that promotes constructive initiatives promoting a peaceful resolution of the conflict. It is not an initiative that respects the rights of both the Israeli and Palestinian people to self-determination and security. It is a one-sided effort that fundamentally seeks to deny the right of the Jewish people to self-determination, and typically creates an environment whereby Jews feel targeted and isolated, and where antisemitism often is more freely expressed.

Over the past weeks, ADL has seen an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents across the United States, acts of hate that clearly were triggered by the recent fighting in Israel and Gaza. While waves of Hamas rockets were assaulting the Jewish state, we saw waves of antisemitism here in America as we tracked a 75 percent increase in acts of harassment, vandalism and violence against Jewish people and Jewish institutions during this period of time. Compared to this time period in May 2020, the number of acts were up more than 115 percent.

To be clear, we believe that it is critical to hold Israel to high standards and that its policies and leadership can be criticized completely as one would do with any other country in the world. But when people demonize the country, denigrate its government, negate its

fundamental legitimacy, and hold it to double standards, this can spawn hatred and violence -- as we saw happen in recent weeks, including on the streets of Los Angeles.

The actions by union members in Los Angeles are being replicated elsewhere around the country. We would implore the American Federation of Teachers and its unions to focus on educating our children rather than engaging in counter-productive, one-sided initiatives and inflammatory rhetoric that could serve to marginalizes Jewish students and contributes to a climate of isolation and fear.

Our Los Angeles Regional Office already has reached out to UTLA (copy of letter [here](#)), and we urge you to do the same.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and two short vertical strokes.

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO & National Director