



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

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Joint Statement on Civil Discourse at San Francisco State University

This week at San Francisco State University, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat was prevented by protesters from speaking to students. Demonstrators were allowed to heckle and harass the speaker and his audience without challenge for almost the entirety of his visit.

The San Francisco-based Jewish Community Relations Council, the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, and the Jewish Federation of the East Bay and The Jewish Community Foundation strongly condemn efforts by anti-Israel activists to censor the speech of others. Such incidents are deeply contrary to the principle of civil discourse; to our American commitment to free speech; and to the university's mission to honor students' diverse roots, stimulate intellectual and personal development, promote equity, and inspire leadership.

The ugly and unfortunate incident highlights the need to ensure a culture of learning on campus. We appreciate SFSU President Leslie Wong's clear statement of support for an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas, his announcement that the Dean of Students and University Police will perform a full investigation, and his commitment to examining campus procedures to better protect student events of this nature. These are essential and important steps.

We also wholeheartedly support San Francisco Hillel, which organized the event, in its efforts to hear from diverse viewpoints and to have the opportunity for respectful dialogue among its members, free of bullying from others. Jewish students have the fundamental right to organize events and forums offering various perspectives – just as all other students do.

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