



# 2018: AMCHA's Mission at Work

## MISSION

AMCHA Initiative is a non-partisan, non-profit organization founded by two University of California faculty members that is dedicated to investigating, documenting, educating about, and combating antisemitism at institutions of higher education in America.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2018

- **COMBATING:** AMCHA leads an at-will coalition that grew in 2018 from 60 to more than 100 religious, civil rights, education and advocacy organizations and thousands of grassroots activists. In 2018, AMCHA focused on combating campus antisemitism on two fronts:

**#NoAcademicBDS Campaign** – AMCHA has taken the lead in exposing and successfully combating the direct harm that the implementation of an academic boycott of Israel poses for students on U.S. campuses:

- At the University of Michigan, following a letter from an AMCHA-led coalition, the President announced that serious disciplinary measures would be taken against a professor who refused to write a letter of recommendation for a student wanting to study in Israel, and he outlined further steps the University would take to ensure that Michigan faculty would not be permitted to implement an academic boycott of Israel.
- At Pitzer College, following a letter from an AMCHA-led coalition, the President issued a strong statement condemning a faculty vote to suspend the school's study abroad program in Israel.
- At the University of California, in direct response to AMCHA-led coalition letters, all 10 UC Chancellors signed a [statement](#) declaring that the implementation of an academic boycott of Israel on UC campuses "poses a direct and serious threat to the academic freedom of our students and faculty."
- An AMCHA-coordinated letter, signed by more than 100 organizations including B'nai B'rith International, the Academic Engagement Network, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, many Orthodox, Conservative and Reform national organizations, and the American Zionist Movement, was sent to 250 university presidents alerting them about the threat an academic boycott poses to students and faculty on U.S. campuses, and urging them to pledge to prevent attempts by faculty to implement a boycott on campus.
- At the federal level, in response to an AMCHA-led coalition letter exposing the threat of faculty at federally-funded Middle East Studies programs misusing federal funds to implement an academic boycott of Israel, U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos promised to review the matter.



**Equity Campaign** – In 2018 AMCHA launched a pioneering campaign to ensure that Jewish and pro-Israel students are equally protected from the peer-on-peer harassment that violates their freedom of expression and impedes their full participation in campus life:

- In response to incidents of harassment perpetrated against Jewish and pro-Israel students at 7 schools - Columbia University, New York University, Syracuse University, UC Irvine, Cal Poly SLO, UCLA and San Francisco State University -- AMCHA led successful coalition efforts to educate university leaders about the vital need for equitable responses to harassment, regardless of the motivation of the perpetrator or identity of the victim.
- At the state level, AMCHA's proposal, "Protecting Freedom of Expression on Campus in the Face of Intolerant Behavior" formed the basis for California legislation AB 2374, the "Free Speech on Campus Act of 2018," which was unanimously approved by the State Assembly Higher Education Committee.
- **INVESTIGATING:** The results of AMCHA's studies have proven enormously useful to numerous allied organizations and government officials. In 2018, AMCHA published a groundbreaking [annual report](#) on antisemitic activity on U.S. campuses which found that, contrary to what was being reported in the media and by many organizations, Israel-related antisemitic incidents were considerably more likely to contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students than incidents involving classic antisemitism. A close analysis of incidents from 2015 to the first half of 2018 additionally revealed that Israel-related incidents have become more flagrant and personal, shifting from boycotting Israel to boycotting actual students and student groups. This study's important findings highlighted the dangers that anti-Zionism and BDS pose to Jewish students on campus and was widely covered in media.
- **DOCUMENTING:** As the only publicly-accessible, user-friendly database of antisemitic activity on more than 400 campuses nationwide, AMCHA's website is an invaluable resource for university stakeholders, allied organizations, state and federal legislators and scholars. In 2018, AMCHA transitioned to a new website that included upgraded [database](#) designs, powerful search engines on nearly every page, as well as new searchable photo and video libraries. These enhancements have made it much easier for parents, students, alumni, researchers, journalists, legislators and public policy makers to access and analyze data about campus antisemitism. AMCHA's Antisemitism Incident Tracker has documented nearly 600 in 2018, as well as hundreds of student quotes, BDS votes, faculty supporters of academic BDS, and more.
- **EDUCATING:** AMCHA has successfully brought the problem of campus antisemitism to national awareness with its accessible databases, comprehensive reports and highly effective media campaigns. In 2018, AMCHA's data, studies and efforts were cited in more than 350 articles in outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Hill*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Forward*, *Haaretz*, *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, *Jewish Journal* and many more, and AMCHA's director, Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, discussed the problem of campus antisemitism and AMCHA's efforts to combat it on dozens of radio shows and podcasts.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Educate yourself and others about the problem of campus antisemitism and get involved:**
  - Visit & share AMCHA's website – [AMCHAinitiative.org](https://AMCHAinitiative.org)
  - Sign up to receive our [bulletins](#)
  - Sign the Equity Pledge [petition](#)
  - Join the [#NoAcademicBDS campaign](#)
- **Help us to continue our efforts to protect Jewish and pro-Israel students – DONATE!**
  - Donate online with a single or recurring donation at [AMCHAinitiative.org/donate](https://AMCHAinitiative.org/donate)
  - By sending a check made out to *AMCHA Initiative* to P.O. Box 408, Santa Cruz, CA 95061

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