

# News



## Braun orders review of college antisemitism responses, policies

By AUBREY WRIGHT  
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Gov. Mike Braun signed an executive order to review public universities' responses to antisemitism since Oct. 7, 2023. (Brandon Smith)

Gov. Mike Braun is ordering a review of state universities' policies and responses to antisemitism.

Braun directed the Commission for Higher Education to lead the review, according to an [executive order](#) signed Friday. He said in a press release that since [Oct. 7, 2023](#), when Hamas attacked Israel, universities have been the epicenter of antisemitic incidents.

"Jewish Hoosiers should know the state of Indiana condemns antisemitism and stands with them," Braun said.

The executive order comes after the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights warned of "potential enforcement actions" against Indiana University Bloomington and 59 other schools if they don't "protect Jewish students on campus."

Leslie Lenkowsky, an IU emeritus professor and member of the [Alliance for Israel](#), said IU has made positive changes recently. He said he expects IU's administration will continue to improve the campus climate for Jewish students, especially amid the education department's investigation.

"Will they be enough?" Lenkowsky said. "Well, we don't know until we see what standards the Department of Education will use."

It's unclear how many specific antisemitic incidents have been reported to IU, the state, and the federal government. In the education department's Office of Civil Rights, IU Bloomington has one open Title VI investigation for national origin discrimination based on religion.

**Read more:** [IU among 60 universities warned by Trump administration to prevent antisemitism](#)

University spokespeople didn't respond to a request for comment. IU Hillel Executive Director Jeff Linkon said the center and other Jewish organizations are preparing a joint statement in reaction to the Department of Education's letter to the university.

On March 7, President Donald Trump's Administration cancelled about [\\$400 million in federal funding](#) for Columbia University because of "persistent harassment of Jewish students." The administration warned it was "the first round of action."

The investigations take time, Lenkowsky said, and it may take longer after [massive cuts](#) to the Department of Education. He said he hopes the department's investigation into IU doesn't result in a loss of funding.

Braun's executive order didn't mention cutting funding for colleges, but a report will be due this fall.

According to a January report by the Anti-Defamation League, Hillel International and College Pulse, [83 percent of Jewish college students](#) said that after Oct. 7, 2023, they experienced or witnessed some form of antisemitism. The majority said they weren't confident in the ability of university administrations to prevent antisemitism.

"I think students are worried," Lenkowsky said. "We still need to do a lot more to build confidence among students so that they understand their concerns are being addressed."

**Read more:** [IU Faculty and Staff for Israel call on leaders to address antisemitism](#)

College students across the country joined in a movement to support Palestine by [camping out on campuses and protesting](#). The protesters called on university leaders to disclose and cut ties with programs, relationships and companies related to Israel. An encampment in IU's Dunn Meadow lasted [100 days](#).

**Read more:** [IU Divestment Coalition opposes arrests of two protesters](#)

In response to a law firm's report on IU's handling of the protests and [dozens of arrests](#), IU made changes.

**Read more:** [Law group releases Dunn Meadow report, WFIU-WTIU interviews Whitten](#)

Lenkowsky said IU's administration has made positive moves to address antisemitism. For example, the university's [Antisemitism Prevention Task Force](#) meets regularly.

Additionally, the Alliance for Israel has supported the university's new [expressive activity policy](#), which applies to activity such as protests.

"A university is a place for debate, but when they cross the line from protected speech to activities that are harassing or otherwise affecting students or classroom behavior, that's not allowed," Lenkowsky said. "I think the IU administration is very much aware of that, and doing what it can at the moment to prevent untoward action."

*Aubrey is our higher education reporter and a Report For America corps member. Contact her at [aubmwrig@iu.edu](mailto:aubmwrig@iu.edu) or follow her on X [@aubreywright](#).*



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