

United States Senate

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The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

As you are aware, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI") prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin by any organization, program or activity that receives federal financial assistance, including colleges and universities. If recipients fail to comply, the federal agency providing the assistance may terminate funding, and organizations risk losing their eligibility for future funding.

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") is tasked with enforcing Title VI as it applies to colleges and universities. There has been some concern that the OCR may be not enforcing Title VI when Jewish students complain of discrimination, on the theory that such discrimination may be grounded solely in religion and not race, color, or national origin.

I am writing to ask for clarification of the OCR's policy for enforcing Title VI. Specifically, please verify that the OCR interprets Title VI to protect to Jewish students from anti-Semitic discrimination. Further, please confirm that the OCR actively enforces the provisions of Title VI against colleges and universities that allow anti-Semitic discrimination.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter

*I hope we can
agree the statute covers
Jewish students without
additional legislation.*