

Board of Directors

Chair

Esta Gordon Epstein

CEO and National Director

Jonathan Greenblatt

Andy Adelson

Barry Curtiss-Lusher

Yasmin Green

Yadin Kaufmann

Alan Lazowski

Glen S. Lewy

Daniel Lubetzky

Nicole Mutchnik

Elizabeth A. Price, Secretary

Ben Sax, Vice Chair

Milton S. (Tony) Schneider

Larry Scott, Vice Chair

Robert Stavis

Christopher Wolf

Global Advisory Council

Barbara Adelman, Co-Chair

Michael N. Sheetz, Co-Chair

National Commission

Faith Cookler, Co-Chair

Joseph A. Goldblum, Co-Chair

Deputy National Director

Kenneth Jacobson

Senior Vice Presidents

Growth

Frederic L. Bloch

Chief of Staff

Emily Bromberg

Policy

Eileen Hershenov

Finance and Administration

Anat Kendal

International Affairs

Sharon Nazarian

Technology

Rafail Portnoy

Talent & Knowledge

Tom Ruderman

Programs

George Selim

General Counsel, Privacy &

Security

Steven C. Sheinberg

Past National Chairs

Barbara B. Balsler

Howard P. Berkowitz

Kenneth J. Bialkin

Barry Curtiss-Lusher

Burton S. Levinson

Glen S. Lewy

Marvin D. Nathan

David H. Strassler

Robert G. Sugarman

Glen A. Tobias



March 4, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing to you regarding the recent comments made by Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota.

At a public forum in Washington, DC, on February 27, 2019, Rep. Omar said, in the context of the US-Israel relationship: "I want to talk about the political influence in this country that says it is okay for people to push for allegiance to a foreign country." On March 2, Rep. Omar, in response to a tweet from House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey, wrote: "I should not be expected to have allegiance/pledge support to a foreign country in order to serve my country in Congress or serve on committee."

Rep. Omar has argued that these statements reflect good faith disagreements about US policy toward Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the relationship between the two. This could not be further from the truth.

Accusing Jews of having allegiance to a foreign government has long been a vile anti-Semitic slur that has been used to harass, marginalize, and persecute the Jewish people for centuries. Sometimes referred to as the "dual loyalty" charge, it alleges that Jews should be suspected of being disloyal neighbors or citizens because their true allegiance is to their co-religionists around the world or to a secret and immoral Jewish agenda. This anti-Semitic allegation posits that non-Jews should not trust the motives or actions of their Jewish neighbors, who may be engaged in deceitful behavior to accomplish their own goals at the expense of others.

For more than a century, ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has fought anti-Semitism and other forms of hate in the United States and around the world. We have written extensively about the charge of dual loyalty and how it has led to the persecution of Jewish people. We have published our research and would be happy to share it with you.

We acknowledge that this situation is taking place at a fraught time. Last week, Rep. Omar herself was victimized by a vicious anti-Muslim smear, which we condemned. Such Islamophobia has no place in our society. Linking Omar (and by extrapolation other Muslim-Americans) to the 9/11 attacks is unconscionable, and an extremely dangerous incitement to violence. However, that offense cannot excuse or rationalize anti-Semitism. If anything, it should remind someone how hurtful such hateful stereotypes can be.

Moreover, we note that the attempts we are seeing to use anti-Semitism for political gain, both within and between our political parties, pose a real danger of undermining efforts to join

together to combat anti-Semitic incidents and violence and other forms of hate. This too is wrong. The leadership of both parties, supported by strong coalitions representing different communities, must work to call out and oppose such cynical ploys.

None of this diminishes the fact that over the past few years, we have seen a disturbing increase in anti-Semitism in our country and around the world. According to our latest report, there was a 57 percent increase in US anti-Semitic incidents in 2017, the largest year-over-year increase that ADL ever has recorded. In recent days, we have seen acts of hate ranging from swastikas being scrawled on school lockers and synagogues to physical attacks on observant Jews walking down the streets in Brooklyn and last fall's Tree of Life massacre in Pittsburgh which was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in American history. In light of these incidents and an overall environment around the world of rising intolerance, we believe it is incumbent upon all leaders to forcefully condemn anti-Semitism, whenever and wherever it occurs and regardless of whomever may be propagating it.

As you and your fellow House Democratic leaders wrote in January in a statement regarding previous comments by Rep. Omar, "Anti-Semitism must be called out, confronted and condemned whenever it is encountered, without exception." We deeply appreciated that show of support; it is a standard that should be emulated.

You and your colleagues also wrote that, "the entire Congress must be fully engaged in denouncing and rejecting all forms of hatred, racism, prejudice and discrimination wherever they are encountered." We could not agree more.

That is why that, in light of these additional anti-Semitic statements by Rep. Omar, we ask that you give the entire Congress an opportunity, through a House resolution, to voice its rejection of her latest slur and make clear that no matter what may divide the 435 members of the House of Representatives, they are united in condemning anti-Semitism. We urge you and your colleagues to send the unambiguous message that the United States Congress is no place for hate.

The entire Congress should commit itself to living up to the pledge that George Washington made to the Jewish community of Newport, RI when he wrote that our country will be one "which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and please let me know if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Greenblatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" being more prominent than the last name "Greenblatt".

Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO and National Director