AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

June 17, 2025

The Honorable Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Torres:

Thank you for your May 28, 2025, letter regarding concerns about alleged antisemitism within the American Psychological Association. We appreciate your engagement on this important issue and welcome the opportunity to address these concerns directly.

The APA unequivocally condemns antisemitism in all its forms. Our 2005/2007 Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice explicitly condemns all antisemitic attitudes and actions, acknowledges the climate of fear such prejudice creates, and commits to promoting fairness, respect, and dignity for all people regardless of religion or ethnicity.

We take the specific concerns you raised very seriously and would like to address each one:

Regarding listserv communications: We are updating our listserv rules to specifically ban racist, antisemitic, and other discriminatory content. The Division 48 listserv where the "Kudos to Hamas" comment appeared in February 2024 was shut down shortly after the incident and has never been reactivated. We are implementing listserv moderator training for the divisions.

Regarding divisional governance: Our 54 divisions operate autonomously with their own governance structures. They elect and remove, when necessary, their Board and Committee members in accordance with their bylaws and the DC Nonprofit Code. All divisional statements must carry a disclaimer that they do not represent APA's views unless endorsed by our Council of Representatives. We continue to encourage respectful discourse across all APA forums.

Regarding Continuing Education Credits: When the Israeli Association for DBT Treatment raised concerns on November 26, 2024, about antisemitic content presented by an APA-approved continuing education (CE) sponsor (one of 900 companies authorized by APA to offer CE credit), we promptly investigated and, as of January 31, 2025, that company is no longer authorized to offer APA-approved CE programs. We continuously evaluate our accreditation standards to ensure alignment with APA's scientific and ethical principles.

Regarding AMENA: Along with 63 other state, provincial, territorial, and ethnic psychological associations, AMENA has one seat on APA's 184-member Council of Representatives. Please note that AMENA is separately governed and not corporately affiliated with APA. We have been assured that AMENA accepts all Middle Eastern psychologists, including Israeli and Jewish members.

Regarding APA advertisements: We acknowledge the controversy regarding an image on our convention registration website. After receiving complaints, we removed an image from the 2024 convention which included a participant wearing a keffiyeh neck scarf. We subsequently restored that image and added other images from the 2024 convention reflecting APA's commitment to diversity.

Regarding Dr. Lara Sheehi: Independent investigations by George Washington University and by the US Department of Education found no evidence that discourse in the educational context crossed into antisemitic speech. Comments made on Dr. Sheehi's personal social media accounts before her tenure as APA Division 39 President were not under APA's auspices.

Regarding Council Member Comment: An individual Council member made a personal comment about Jewish people as a "privileged class." We strive to ensure civil discourse in our Council debates, and such concerns are generally handled confidentially by the Council ombuds participating in the Council meeting dialoging directly with the individual who made an inappropriate comment. Indeed, in this particular debate, recognition of the importance of the protection from discrimination for religious status was recognized in the final resolution Council adopted. February 2025 APA Council of Representatives Policy Statement Reaffirming Commitment To Justice, Human Rights, Fairness, and Dignity.

In response to your suggested actions, we are:

1. **Conducting listening sessions** with members and stakeholders (including a session each exclusively for the Association for Jewish Psychologists and Psychologists Against Antisemitism, among others), through a dedicated Board of Directors subgroup to better understand concerns. The planning for the listening sessions pre-dated your letter.
2. **Reviewing our processes** for CE provider approval and continuing to investigate complaints promptly when they arise.
3. **Strengthening discourse standards** through updated listserv rules, moderator training, and educational resources on recognizing and addressing antisemitism.
4. **Ensuring inclusive representation** by welcoming participation from members of all backgrounds in our educational and policy efforts addressing discrimination.

Additionally, in 2024, we began the process of developing a special issue of The American Psychologist on the Psychology of Antisemitism (expected to issue in 2026) to further the academic research in the field of psychology by bringing together a collection of researchers who delve into the psychological aspects of antisemitism—its roots, dynamics, and manifestations. To promote the general public's knowledge, we have also published resources on "Hate, Bias, and Intolerance: Antisemitism" on the APA website.

We remain committed to fostering an environment where all members can participate without experiencing discrimination. We value your engagement on these important issues and look forward to speaking with you tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Debra Kawahara, PhD
President
American Psychological Association

Wendi S. Williams, PhD
President-elect
American Psychological Association