



The Protecting Students on Campus Act of 2024

Senators Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) and John Fetterman (D-PA)

In November 2023, the Senate HELP Committee held a bipartisan roundtable on the rise of antisemitism on college campuses. The roundtable illustrated the need for policy solutions to better protect students on college campuses. The Protecting Students on Campus Act is legislation to empower students to file civil rights complaints if they experience violence or harassment on college campuses due to their heritage. This comes amid rising antisemitic incidents and attacks on college campuses in the aftermath of Hamas' deadly attacks on Israel.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Department of Education (ED) has a responsibility to ensure university programs or activities that receive federal funds do not discriminate against students. Complaints filed by students who face discrimination, or on their behalf, are handled by the ED's Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

Specifically, the legislation would:

- Empower students by improving awareness of how to report alleged civil rights violations.
 - Require colleges and universities to post noticeable links and language on their main webpage on how to file a Title VI discrimination complaint, including accessible links to OCR's complaint website.
 - The information for students shall be posted in a manner to maximize student accessibility.
- Ensure institutions that receive federal funding properly handle discrimination complaints.
 - Require colleges and universities to report the number of civil rights complaints they receive and the actions they took to address the complaints.
 - Require the ED Inspector General to audit institutions that report high ratios of discrimination complaints relative to their student population.
- Require the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights to brief Congress monthly on:
 - How many reports OCR is getting, broken down by type of discrimination.
 - What OCR's plans are to work through those complaints; and
 - How long the complaints have been pending with OCR.