

# Jewish Groups Press for Hearing on Antisemitism Envoy

Three Jewish organizations have written to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to urge its members to hurry up and schedule a hearing on President Biden's pick for an antisemitism envoy, the renowned Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt.

"Antisemitism continues to be a scourge across the globe," wrote leaders from three groups: the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Anti-Defamation League.

"Even for those of our organizations that generally have a policy to neither endorse nor oppose nominees pending before the Senate for confirmation, we are compelled to urge you."

Biden nominated Lipstadt to the post monitoring antisemitism abroad for the U.S. State Department in July. But the envoy position, which was elevated to ambassador level last year, requires Senate confirmation. No hearing on the confirmation has been scheduled yet.

Recently, some members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have complained about Lipstadt's past tweets in which she has criticized Republican senators over various statements. Specifically, she denounced Sen. Ron Johnson, a Wisconsin Republican and member of the Foreign Relations Committee, on Twitter after he defended the insurrectionists who attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, saying, they "love this country."

"She has said enough things on Twitter that it needs to be reviewed carefully—particularly about members of the committee, which is always quite sensitive," Foreign Relations Ranking Member Jim Risch, a Republican from Idaho, told Jewish

Insider.

Lipstadt's credentials are not much debated. She is best known for winning a libel case in the United Kingdom filed by Holocaust denier David Irving. The story of the case inspired the 2016 movie *Denial*, in which Lipstadt was portrayed by Rachel Weisz. She teaches at Emory University where she is professor of modern Jewish history and Holocaust studies.

This week, Lipstadt testified in court on behalf of a group from Charlottesville, Virginia, that sued organizers of the 2017 Unite the Right Rally, in which far-right extremists marched in the streets shouting, "Jews will not replace us."

Nathan Diament, executive director for public policy at the Orthodox Union, said there is an urgency in filling the post because of increasing antisemitism abroad. (The envoy would not be examining instances of antisemitism in the U.S.)

The letter to the foreign relations committee cites increasing European legislation to ban kosher slaughter of meat as well as ritual circumcision.

But the collaboration of the Orthodox Union, the Jewish Federations and the ADL on the letter to the Senate committee suggests the group is also concerned about political squabbling in the U.S. that might delay the appointment.

"We're trying to appeal to senators in different parts of the political spectrum," Diament said. "It's not like we expected her to have a hearing and get confirmed five minutes after she was nominated. Now the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has all the paperwork. Chairman (Robert) Menendez wants to move this forward to a hearing. The delay is not excusable at this point." {eoa}

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