



STATE OF WASHINGTON
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

September 22, 2024

The Honorable Eric D. Fingerhut
President and Chief Executive Officer
Jewish Federations of North America
Wall Street Station
PO Box 157
New York, NY 10268

Julie B. Platt
Chair, Board of Trustees
Jewish Federations of North America
Wall Street Station
PO Box 157
New York, NY 10268

Dear Chair Platt and President Fingerhut:

Thank you for your letter expressing alarm and dismay regarding the disruption of a University of Washington Board of Regents public meeting. I share your commitment to free speech, mutual respect and opposition to anti-Semitism. Public institutions must protect both safety and the public's ability to participate in public meetings.

Prior to receiving your letter, I spoke with members of the Board of Regents. In those conversations, I stressed that the public's expectation, as well as my own, is that the university ensures adequate security so that all speakers may be heard and that all meetings can be held in a safe and orderly fashion.

Public meetings are an essential democratic tradition, and disrupting such a meeting with fear and intimidation is an attempt to undermine our democracy. This incident must not be repeated.

I appreciate that, following these conversations, a Special Meeting of the Board of Regents has been scheduled for September 24 to continue with the interrupted agenda. I recognize that the university adjourned the meeting because the disruptive participants made safe and orderly conduct impossible. This conduct resulted in at least one arrest and the investigation into this incident continues.

Safety is appropriately a leader's first priority, and a review is underway to prevent future Board of Regents meetings from being disrupted in this fashion. I have spoken with community leaders to hear their views, including members of our Legislature, and will continue to have those conversations.

In Washington state, we reject bigotry, incitement of hatred and demonization of religion. I have consistently and purposefully condemned anti-Semitism and, as governor, have prioritized the protection of our state employees and institutions from discrimination and violence. We have also stood in defense of democracy in all its forms and in all our public institutions and I will continue to do so.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor

Cc: Solly Kane, President and Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Lisa Brashem, Board Chair, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Blane Tamaki, Chair, University of Washington Board of Regents